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SPÉCIALITÉ SCIENCES DE L'ÉDUCATION

Par Cui BIAN

**A Local Comparative Study of Inbound Student Mobility and
Internationalization in Grandes Écoles and Universities**

Sous la direction de : Régis MALET
(co-directrice: Ruth HAYHOE)

Soutenue le 5 Décembre 2014

Membres du jury :

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Titre : L'internationalisation de l'enseignement supérieur en France: une étude comparative locale des stratégies institutionnelles relatives à l'accueil des étudiants étrangers dans les grandes écoles et les universités

Résumé :

A partir d'un travail qualitatif réalisé au sein de deux groupes d'établissements d'enseignement supérieur : deux grandes écoles et deux universités spécialisées en sciences sociales et sciences et technologie, cette thèse contribue à la compréhension des défis de l'internationalisation auxquels les institutions françaises font face à, à travers des pratiques institutionnelles de recrutement et d'accueil d'étudiants étrangers.

L'analyse comparée de deux groupes d'institutions vise à examiner les profils d'étudiants étrangers accueillis dans ces deux groupes et identifier la convergence et la non-convergence des stratégies mises en œuvre dans les grandes écoles et les universités pour recruter et accueillir des étudiants étrangers.

Le travail présent s'appuie sur les entretiens avec trois groupes d'acteurs institutionnels : les personnels administratifs du bureau de relations internationales, les enseignants-chercheurs et les étudiants étrangers au niveau d'études Master ou équivalent; et sur l'analyse des documents officiels institutionnels.

Mots clés : mobilité étudiante, grandes écoles, universités françaises, stratégies institutionnelles, branding, l'internationalisation de l'enseignement supérieur

Title: A Local Comparative Study of Inbound Student Mobility and Internationalization in Grandes Écoles and Universities

Abstract:

The increasing impact of marketization on higher education and global attention on referencing systems has discretely transformed the academic world. We observed some nations' overemphasis on economic benefits in international education and some nations' huge investment in their HEIs building for better ranking positions. We observed the quasi-gratuity of higher education fees in France; and in spite of their unsatisfactory academic performance on international rankings, French HEIs have always been the top favorite hosting destinations. We also observed the lack of knowledge of grandes écoles in the international academic community and a mysterious image created by the complexity of this dual system for French HEIs. To examine the contradictory facts and reveal the complex phenomena, two grandes écoles and two universities specializing in similar study fields were selected to be sites of exploration. The purpose of this local comparative study was mainly to explore how the two groups of institutions have developed their respective strategies in the international student recruitment process in the context of internationalization. This study used a qualitative approach for data collection incorporating interviews and documentation analysis. The analysis revealed both the pain and the gain that the grandes écoles and universities have been experiencing in internationalization and the comparative results related to inbound study mobility in these institutions.

Keywords: student mobility, institutional branding, grandes écoles, French universities, internationalization of higher education

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Résumé substantiel

Introduction générale

L'internationalisation de l'enseignement supérieur et l'accueil d'étudiants étrangers en France

En 2011, près de 4,3 millions d'étudiants font leurs études dans un pays d'accueil étranger, et l'on constate une immense croissance depuis 1975 (Education at a glance : OECD indicators, 2013). Selon ce rapport, la France reçoit 6.2% de cette population, positionnée en quatrième place, derrière les États-Unis (16.5%), le Royaume-Uni (13%) et l'Allemagne (6.3%), la Chine envoie le plus grand nombre d'étudiants, représentant 21% de toute la population des étudiants étrangers inscrits dans l'enseignement supérieur dans les pays d'OCDE (Education at a glance : OECD indicators, 2013). D'après les statistiques de RERS (2013), en 2012, la France recueille environ 289 000 étudiants étrangers et 75% de cette population est inscrite à l'université, représentant 14,8% de l'ensemble des étudiants inscrits, parmi lesquels la proportion d'étudiants étrangers augmentant en fonction du niveau d'étude : 11% du total des étudiants en Licence, 18% en Master et 41% en Doctorat. Quant aux nationalités d'étudiants, les cinq premiers pays d'origine étaient le Maroc, la Chine, l'Algérie, la Tunisie et le Sénégal. Cette tendance reste stable depuis quelques années. En ce qui concerne les domaines d'études : 31,31% d'étudiants étrangers étudient en sciences sociales et humaines, 25% en sciences et technologie, et 19.7% en économie et gestion, pour l'année 2012 (RERS, 2013). Les statistiques montrent également un lien direct entre les choix des domaines d'études, les préférences des institutions d'accueil et les pays d'origine des étudiants étrangers. Quant aux villes d'accueil, la majorité de la population reste en l'île de France et dans les grandes villes françaises (RERS, 2013).

Trois constats généraux sont tirés de ces statistiques : Premièrement, la circulation des étudiants devient plus fréquente avec une population plus diversifiée. Deuxièmement, la France reste un des pays d'accueil de préférence sur le marché international. En outre, la présence stable et majoritaire des étudiants africains implique d'une part l'influence et la présence de la francophonie dans divers pays, et d'autre part la stabilité d'une tradition d'accueil pour la France. Finalement, les étudiants étrangers s'inscrivant majoritairement dans les universités confirment l'attractivité de la quasi-gratuité de la formation universitaire et d'une entrée non-sélective. La présence de certains groupes d'étudiants étrangers dans certains domaines d'études et dans certaines institutions décrit de manière générale les caractéristiques de la formation institutionnelle, ainsi que les profils de ces étudiants et leurs objectifs d'études.

A partir de ces constats, nous nous interrogeons sur quelques tendances mondiales : En premier lieu, l'économie des connaissances et la mise en priorité nationale de l'innovation dans les pays qui mettent en avant la compétition des talents au niveau international. Comment la France participe-elle à la concurrence avec les principaux pays anglo-saxons, en élargissant la population ciblée d'étudiants ? En deuxième lieu, le classement de Shanghai de 2003 attire l'attention mondialement et malgré les critiques sur la méthodologie d'études, il devient un des plus populaires classements mondiaux. D'après les résultats annuels, la performance des universités françaises est loin d'être satisfaisante pour un pays au top de l'accueil d'étudiants étrangers. Comment expliquons-nous cette situation ? Par ailleurs, quelle influence porte-t-elle sur les grandes écoles ? En dernier lieu, la marchandisation de l'éducation renforce l'enjeu économique du recrutement d'étudiants dans les pays anglo-saxons. Quel impact porte-elle sur les institutions d'enseignement supérieur en France ?

La circulation des étudiants n'est pas un phénomène nouveau mais cela implique de nouveaux enjeux durant ces trente dernières années. Nombre de travaux de recherche relatifs à cette étude sont

référencés : Les définitions de l'internationalisation dans l'enseignement supérieur, ses motivations et sa mise en pratique dans le contexte mondial et européen (Knight, De Wit, Altbach, Teichler) ; Les réformes au niveau national de l'enseignement supérieur (Musselin), sous l'influence de l'internationalisation face aux universités et aux grandes écoles ; les études internationales et françaises sur la mobilité étudiante, incluant les questions de motivation, d'expériences d'études et d'insertion professionnelle (Coulon, Paivandi, Papatsiba, Bian) .

Questionnements

Le choix de mener cette recherche résulte d'une double motivation : La première est de donner à voir et comprendre les défis des institutions françaises devant la marchandisation de l'enseignement supérieur dans les pays anglophones et la popularité du référencement dans les systèmes de classement. La deuxième est d'examiner les profils des étudiants étrangers accueillis dans les grandes écoles et les universités, et de clarifier l'influence du système dualiste sur le marché international de recrutement des étudiants étrangers. Cette recherche vise encore à analyser la convergence et la non-convergence des stratégies mises en œuvre dans les grandes écoles et les universités pour recruter et accueillir des étudiants étrangers et explorer l'interaction entre les deux groupes d'institutions dans le processus de l'internationalisation. Ce travail de thèse entend également contribuer à la compréhension du processus d'internationalisation dans les deux groupes d'institutions.

Un double questionnement se trouve tout à la fois théorique et personnel : Le questionnement théorique répond à des préoccupations de recherche sur un champ d'étude très exploré dans les pays anglophones, mais moins développé en France. Les études de la mobilité étudiante ont bien évolué durant ces trente dernières années. Mais mis à part des rapports officiels, souvent quantitatifs, les travaux de recherche qualitatifs sont moins nombreux sur la vie des étudiants étrangers dans les grandes écoles. Le travail présent vise à mettre les deux groupes d'institutions sur le marché mondial pour explorer comment ces institutions décrivent et promeuvent leur image et leur culture institutionnelle, et comment elles attirent l'attention des étudiants étrangers, ainsi que celle de partenaires potentiels afin d'améliorer leur visibilité internationale.

Le questionnement personnel est lié à mon expérience professionnelle et personnelle en tant que chercheuse durant mes études en France. Au niveau professionnel, la recherche sur la population des étudiants étrangers commence durant mes études en Master recherche, en travaillant sur les expériences d'études d'étudiants étrangers en France et en Chine avec une perspective comparative internationale. Cette thèse de Doctorat est considérée comme la poursuite de la recherche sur cette population spécifique en modifiant le contexte de comparaison, ainsi, l'on passe du niveau international à l'intra-national. En cumulant des expériences d'échanges avec des universitaires et des interventions lors d'événements scientifiques, le travail présent s'intéresse à examiner le processus de recrutement et d'accueil des étudiants étrangers à partir des perspectives d'institutions. Au niveau personnel, en tant que chercheuse, j'ai suivi un parcours universitaire en France et le manque de connaissance sur les grandes Écoles est le moteur à l'origine du projet. En bref, la question centrale de recherche dans ce travail est la suivante : Comment les grandes écoles et les universités développent-elles leurs stratégies pour le recrutement des étudiants étrangers ? Quelques questions secondaires sont également posées pour mieux répondre à la question centrale : Quelles sont les pratiques mises en œuvre dans les grandes écoles et les universités pour les promotions institutionnelles, la sélection et l'accueil des étudiants étrangers ? Quelles sont les attentes des établissements d'enseignement supérieur français dans le recrutement des étudiants étrangers ? Quels sont les défis pour la structure duale d'enseignement supérieur dans l'internationalisation de ses formations et de sa recherche? Quelle est l'influence de la coexistence des grandes écoles et des universités sur le marché du

recrutement des étudiants ? Quelles sont les bonnes pratiques que les institutions pourraient apprendre les unes des autres pour acquérir une bonne position sur le marché du recrutement et offrir aux étudiants étrangers de meilleurs services ?

A partir des études précédentes et de nos questionnements dans ce travail, nous avons introduit trois éléments principaux qui peuvent servir à analyser et explorer les données de recherche :

Premièrement, l'approche néo-institutionnelle est présentée pour comprendre le fonctionnement interne d'une institution et la transformation institutionnelle dans son interactivité avec les impacts externes. Cette approche nous permet d'interpréter les réformes en cours dans les deux groupes d'institutions sous l'influence du marché économique et de la décentralisation du contrôle de l'État, ainsi que la transformation de la conscience des acteurs sur l'internationalisation de leurs pratiques. Deuxièmement, les études politiques sur les relations internationales nous aident à dévoiler le rôle de la puissance hiérarchique des pays concernant la circulation des étudiants, des personnels académiques, des ressources virtuelles et des inégalités produites dans les collaborations internationales. Dernièrement, le « branding » nous permet d'explorer les procédures nécessaires pour les deux groupes d'institutions pour se faire connaître et attirer les étudiants étrangers sur la scène mondiale.

Enquête de terrain

Ce travail de thèse de Doctorat sur les stratégies institutionnelles de recrutement des étudiants étrangers dans les grandes écoles et les universités commence en 2011 et se termine cette année, en 2014, ce travail de recherche est financé par le Chinese Scholarship Council (CSC) pour une durée de deux ans.

Voici la présentation de la recherche empirique : Après un travail exploratoire théorique, nous sélectionnons quatre établissements d'enseignement supérieur pour le terrain de recherche, y compris deux grandes écoles et deux universités dans une grande ville française. Trente-huit entretiens d'une durée moyenne d'une heure ont été enregistrés et intégralement retranscrits. Ces entretiens, dans un premier temps, concernent un groupe de personnels administratifs au bureau des relations internationales, y compris des directeurs et des personnels administratifs, ce qui nous a permis de connaître les politiques d'orientation au niveau du développement des relations internationales et des pratiques d'accueil des étudiants étrangers dans leur établissement. Nous conduisons ensuite des entretiens auprès des enseignants-chercheurs qui ont des liens directs avec les étudiants étrangers durant leurs enseignements. Parallèlement, dans ce groupe, nous interviewons certains enseignants-chercheurs assurant une fonction de coordinateurs des programmes internationaux. A travers ces entretiens, nous tentons d'identifier les procédures concrètes de recrutement des étudiants étrangers pour des programmes incluant des profils ciblés d'étudiants étrangers et leurs performances d'études dans les établissements d'accueil. Les entretiens avec les deux groupes mentionnés ci-dessus nous permettent d'avoir plus de connaissance sur les intentions et les activités de ces personnes impliquées dans la promotion internationale de leur établissement. Nous interviewons également des étudiants étrangers accueillis dans ces quatre établissements, inscrits dans les différentes filières d'études avec différentes nationalités, dans différents programmes d'échange ou en mobilité individuelle, au niveau Master ou équivalent. Ces entretiens nous permettent de confronter les discours de deux groupes de personnels à la vie réelle des « témoins ». Nous essayons de connaître la vie d'étude au quotidien des étudiants étrangers et leurs recours aux dispositifs d'accueil mis en place pour faciliter leur intégration au sein de l'établissement d'accueil.

Nous contactons les quatre établissements à la fin de l'année 2012, après la mise en place de grilles d'entretiens et la lettre de consentement pour la participation à cette recherche. Les premiers contacts sont pris par e-mail, avec une présentation brève et une lettre d'invitation aux personnes ciblées. Malgré de nombreux envois, le taux de réponse n'est pas satisfaisant. Ainsi, nous décidons de profiter des entretiens réalisés et à la fin de chaque interview, nous demandons aux interviewés de nous communiquer les coordonnées de quelques futurs candidats. Nous contactons également les quatre établissements au début de l'enquête pour accéder aux statistiques concernant les étudiants étrangers accueillis dans leurs établissements, et après presque un an d'attente, nous ne recevons qu'une seule réponse positive. Malgré le manque de données d'accompagnement, nous parvenons à obtenir des informations descriptives durant les entretiens et des informations plus générales publiées sur leurs sites officiels.

Nous utilisons trois modèles de grilles d'entretiens pour les trois groupes des interviewés. Dans la grille d'entretien pour les personnels du bureau des relations internationales, les questions portent, dans une première section, sur la perception de l'internationalisation de l'enseignement supérieur, la modalité d'ouverture internationale et l'implication de cette ouverture dans l'éducation et la recherche au niveau institutionnel. Une deuxième série de questions concerne l'analyse de ces acteurs institutionnels sur les challenges et les opportunités portés par le « benchmarking » au niveau mondial, et les tendances conjoncturelles de leur établissement. Une troisième série de questions porte sur la perception des étudiants étrangers, leur présentation du service d'accueil et les futures mesures à mettre en œuvre pour l'amélioration de ces dispositifs. Dans la grille d'entretien avec les enseignants-chercheurs, les questions gardent la même ligne, avec plus de focalisation sur la performance des étudiants étrangers en cours et les difficultés d'intégration au niveau linguistique, pédagogique et psychologique pour ces étudiants accueillis. Dans la grille d'entretien avec les étudiants étrangers, les questions se posent de manière plus informelle et sont basées sur leur propre histoire de mobilité : programmes d'études, processus de recrutement, objectifs de la mobilité, intégration à la vie institutionnelle, commentaires sur la qualité de l'enseignement, des services fournis par les établissements, des infrastructures, et de la vie étudiante universitaire.

Les entretiens sont réalisés dans divers endroits : bureau du personnel, cafétéria universitaire, chambres d'étudiants. En s'adaptant au confort et à la disponibilité des interviewés, les langues d'entretiens sont le français (26), l'anglais (9) et le chinois (3). Les entretiens sont réalisés face à face, par téléphone et par Skype. Avant la réalisation de chaque entretien, une lettre de consentement est présentée à l'interviewé en l'informant du sujet de la recherche et de la confidentialité du travail présent ; la signature de la personne interviewée est demandée à la fin de la lettre. Les entretiens sont conduits de manière réceptive afin de donner plus de confort aux interviewés pour raconter leurs points de vue et leur donner envie de répondre aux questions ouvertes (Wengraf, 2001 ; Brinkmann, 2013). Au niveau de la transcription, les entretiens en chinois sont traduits en anglais par moi-même et relus par une anglophone, d'autres entretiens en français et en anglais sont également relus avant d'être utilisés dans l'analyse.

En tant que seule actrice participant à la collecte de données, certaines qualités, en tant que chercheuse, peuvent avoir un impact sur les résultats (Marshall & Rossman, 2011, Creswell, 2012). Au niveau de la langue utilisée pour les entretiens, l'anglais et le français sont des langues très éloignées de ma langue maternelle, ce qui affecte la communication avec les interviewés natifs anglais ou français. Au niveau de l'identité culturelle, faute de connaissance suffisante de la culture française et des mœurs de la société française, sans qu'il n'en soit mon intention, certaines questions mettent mal à l'aise les interviewés. Au niveau des rapports avec les interviewés, étant éduquée et cultivée avec la philosophie de Confucius, je fais preuve de respect vis-à-vis des personnes plus âgées, avec plus

d'expérience que moi, dans la communication, mais là aussi, cette posture peut être mal interprétée par les interviewés. Par ailleurs, le fait d'être moi-même étudiante étrangère facilite le contact avec les autres étudiants, et la relation de confiance s'établit dans les premières minutes de la rencontre.

Le plan de thèse

Nous choisissons d'exposer les résultats de cette recherche en trois parties qui suivent la logique de comparaison de l'internationalisation des institutions et les stratégies qu'elles ont développées dans le processus de promotion de la mobilité entrante d'étudiants étrangers.

Dans la première partie d'analyse intitulée : « L'efficacité et les challenges de l'internationalisation : norme et forme ; les pratiques communes dans les quatre institutions », nous nous intéressons aux points communs relatifs à trois aspects : l'implémentation de l'internationalisation à l'institution, l'application de la langue anglaise à la formation et à la recherche, et les rôles des étudiants étrangers dans les perspectives institutionnelles (Chapitre 4).

Dans la deuxième partie (Chapitre 5), nous présentons l'analyse de comparaison autour de l'application de la théorie de « branding » à leur politiques d'orientation et de pratiques sur le recrutement des étudiants étrangers dans les quatre institutions regroupées en grandes Écoles et universités. Dans un premier temps, l'analyse porte sur l'étape de positionnement des institutions : la création du label d'institution au niveau mondial et le développement des réseaux de collaboration nationaux pour être plus visibles dans un contexte global. Ensuite, l'analyse comparative continue avec l'identification des motivations d'ouverture mondiale et les qualités propres aux deux groupes d'institutions. Dans un troisième temps, l'analyse porte sur la comparaison des stratégies et des pratiques institutionnelles dans leur promotion internationale pour le recrutement des étudiants étrangers.

Dans la troisième et dernière partie de cette thèse (Chapitre 6), intitulée « Le recrutement et l'accueil des étudiants étrangers », nous proposons une analyse comparative et précise des modèles de recrutement, des critères de sélection et des services d'accueil des étudiants étrangers. Nous nous intéressons également aux différents profils des étudiants étrangers accueillis dans les deux groupes d'institutions.

Analyse des résultats

L'efficacité et les challenges de l'internationalisation : norme et forme ; pratiques communes dans les quatre institutions

La première partie d'analyse comparative conclut les points de convergences relatifs à la conscience institutionnelle sur l'internationalisation et sa mise en place dans les deux groupes d'institutions de manière générale. Cette partie d'analyse se divise en trois sous-parties. Dans un premier temps, l'ouverture mondiale de l'enseignement supérieur et de la recherche est considérée comme une norme par les interviewés de trois groupes dans les quatre institutions d'enquête. Nous identifions les formes d'internationalisation ressemblantes dans les deux groupes d'institutions : premièrement, la création récente du bureau des relations internationales ; deuxièmement, l'introduction et l'application de la dimension internationale et interculturelle aux activités étudiantes, d'enseignement et de recherche ; enfin, le développement des programmes internationaux. Cependant, les points de vue des interviewés sur la délocalisation de la formation et la création du campus délocalisé mettent en évidence la

différence entre les deux groupes d'institutions. Les enseignants-chercheurs et les directeurs du bureau des relations internationales dans les deux grandes écoles gardent un avis défavorable sur la délocalisation de leur formation parce qu'ils considèrent que le manque de contrôle et de surveillance de la qualité de la formation pourrait détruire l'image de leurs institutions et dévaloriser leurs diplômes d'établissements privilégiés.

Dans un deuxième temps, les interviewés sont d'accord sur l'implication de l'anglais dans leur enseignement et la recherche, et sur la nécessité de développer les programmes en anglais. L'anglais, le latin du 21ème siècle (Altbach, 2004) manifeste l'importance du rôle de la langue française. D'une part, en tant que langue étrangère la plus étudiée au monde, l'anglais est un outil nécessaire de communication. D'autre part, la domination de la langue anglaise signifie aussi une haute place dans la hiérarchie du pouvoir politique mondial. Malgré les réserves des intellectuels français sur cette tendance, l'anglais devient une langue consensuelle, volontairement ou involontairement construite, dans la formation et la recherche. Néanmoins, les défis de l'application de l'anglais s'exposent de manière différente dans les deux groupes d'institutions et dans les filières de formation. Un constat général décrit que la majorité des enseignants-chercheurs sont assez habitués à publier des articles en anglais mais enseigner en anglais semble relever plus de défis, particulièrement pour les enseignants ayant le plus d'ancienneté. En même temps, la difficulté de l'application de l'anglais dans l'enseignement peut être aussi due au fait que certaines filières se fondent historiquement dans le contexte français et la terminologie est difficilement interprétée dans une autre langue, par exemple : le droit. Au contraire, pour certaines filières telles que sciences, technologie, économie et gestion, l'anglais est une langue familiarisée dans l'enseignement et la recherche car la plupart des références sont rédigées originalement en anglais. D'ailleurs, avec le développement de Masters internationaux et européens, les étudiants locaux sont aussi devenus une partie de la population ciblée par cette formation en anglais. Ainsi, les compétences linguistiques et la volonté de la participation des étudiants locaux doivent également être pris en compte. Comme l'anglais est l'un des critères dans la sélection d'entrée et la délivrance de diplômes dans les deux grandes écoles, les étudiants locaux ont plus de compétences pour recevoir ce genre de formation. Pour les institutions, la mise en place de formations en anglais demande un investissement de plus par rapport au coût de la formation et des ressources humaines. Cela explique la raison pour laquelle les frais d'inscription sont beaucoup plus élevés pour la formation en anglais. Malgré tous les défis, la tendance à enseigner en anglais et le développement de formations en anglais sont nécessaires pour à la fois attirer l'attention des étudiants étrangers au niveau mondial, et renforcer les compétences des étudiants locaux afin qu'ils puissent être plus compétitifs sur le marché du travail.

Dans un troisième temps, le rôle des étudiants étrangers est analysé et les interviewés sont bien conscients de la valeur portée aux étudiants locaux, aux enseignants-chercheurs et aux institutions. En premier lieu, les enseignants-chercheurs déclarent que le recrutement d'étudiants étrangers leur permet de trouver des talents avec lesquels ils peuvent travailler pour leur recherche. En deuxième lieu, les étudiants étrangers sont considérés comme intermédiaires pour l'« internationalization at home » (Nilsson, 1990s) en introduisant une dimension interculturelle dans la vie institutionnelle, enrichissant les expériences d'étudiants locaux et élargissant leur vision du monde et des cultures différentes. En troisième lieu, certains interviewés considèrent les étudiants étrangers comme des bénéficiaires de la gratuité de l'enseignement supérieur en France. Cependant, certains pensent qu'il y a un enjeu économique derrière leur recrutement, dans certains programmes. Nous constatons également une nouvelle relation de développement dans une grande école d'enquête, intitulée : « trainer & trainee » (formateurs & formés). Les pays d'origine envoient leurs étudiants dans cette institution pour être formés, des Bourses très importantes sont mises en place par ces pays émergents pour soutenir les

étudiants dans leurs études au sein de l'institution d'accueil. La naissance de cette nouvelle relation pourra jouer un rôle important sur le développement des relations entre les deux pays et aussi sur la tradition de la communauté académique mondiale.

En bref, cette première partie d'analyse se focalise sur les trois éléments essentiels : la conscience des acteurs institutionnels à l'internationalisation, les défis de l'imposition de la langue anglaise et le rôle des étudiants étrangers au sein de l'institution d'accueil. La description de ces markers classiques d'internationalisation et de ses impacts sur les institutions, prépare un contexte général pour les analyses suivantes.

L'application de *branding* dans un contexte mondial : de la conscience aux pratiques

La deuxième partie d'analyse porte sur l'application de la théorie « branding » dans la formation des institutions au marché mondial. L'analyse se focalise sur les trois étapes essentielles de cette promotion en mettant les deux groupes d'institutions en comparaison.

Premièrement, se positionner est considéré comme la première étape : une étape fondamentale pour les institutions vers la création de leur propre label dans le contexte mondial. Comment faire connaître les qualités de ces deux groupes d'institutions ? devient une question prioritaire et l'approche « corporate branding » est employée comme le cadre d'analyse. En premier lieu, quelques indicateurs relatifs à la création du label d'institution sont identifiés principalement : la gouvernance, le financement, l'accès, le diplôme, le curriculum, l'insertion professionnelle des diplômés, certains parmi lesquels définissent bien les différences entre les deux groupes d'institutions. Les résultats d'analyse confirment les clichés nationaux : d'une part, les universités sont moins autonomes, moins bien financées avec une entrée non-sélective, un curriculum généraliste et un faible taux d'insertion professionnelle des diplômés. D'autre part, les grandes écoles profitent de leur privilège national pour recruter les meilleurs étudiants, obtenir plus de financement et donner accès à des formations plus professionnalisantes et professionnalisées, ce qui facilite l'insertion professionnelle de leurs diplômés avec des réseaux plus larges d'anciens élèves et des liens forts avec les secteurs privés. En deuxième lieu, l'analyse s'intéresse à la question de visibilité dans le contexte mondial. Les universités françaises ont rencontré une double invisibilité d'après les résultats du classement mondial. D'un côté, la performance des universités est comparativement vue comme insuffisante ; d'un autre côté, la taille des universités est jugée comme un impact clé sur leurs positions dans le classement. Du côté des grandes écoles, en vue de la taille, elles sont plus petites que les universités ; en vue de la production scientifique, la recherche n'est pas une préoccupation majeure dans les missions institutionnelles liées aux objectifs et aux cultures de ce groupe d'institution. Ainsi, face à ces défis, elles ont fait le même choix de travailler en partenariat avec les institutions au niveau national. La tendance de fusion des universités commence en 2002 avec une intention de rationaliser les offres de formation, d'implémenter une synergie locale et développer une structure académique plus visible dans le contexte mondial (RERS, 2013). D'après les interviewés des grandes écoles, ils préfèrent travailler avec les écoles homologues au lieu d'être regroupés avec des universités. Nous constatons une réticence au niveau des choix des partenaires auprès des institutions, et aussi une inquiétude des grandes écoles sur la centralisation du contrôle et la diminution de l'autonomie dans ce regroupement.

Deuxièmement, après la création du label d'institution et la mise en place de réseaux pour renforcer la visibilité des institutions, une nouvelle étape se poursuit : l'identification des marchés visés, de la population ciblée et des produits à vendre. D'après les interviewés, les deux groupes d'institutions suivent une stratégie de fonctionnement national et pourtant, l'orientation institutionnelle sur la formation et l'insertion professionnelle devient un indicateur de distinction entre les grandes écoles et

les universités. A l'égard des marchés visés, d'un côté, les deux grandes écoles adoptent une attitude utilitariste en identifiant les pays ou les institutions dont l'intérêt est basé sur leurs propres besoins. La mobilité étudiante sortante des grandes écoles est décrite comme une obligation pour les étudiants locaux afin d'avoir le diplôme d'établissement. Les étudiants locaux partent à l'étranger soit pour valider certains crédits d'études, soit pour réaliser une courte période de stage. Ainsi, les deux grandes écoles sont plus motivées pour chercher des partenaires potentiels et développer des collaborations en formation et en recherche. D'un autre côté, dans les deux universités, la mobilité sortante est une option pour les étudiants locaux et la plupart d'entre eux profitent des réseaux Erasmus pour avoir une mobilité au sein de l'Europe. En comparant avec les deux grandes écoles, les universités insistent sur l'idéologie de cosmopolitisme avec une posture passive de « receveur ». A l'égard de la population ciblée et des institutions visées, en se référant à leur propre profil, les institutions cherchent un groupe d'étudiants et une institution partenaire similaire. D'une part, les deux grandes écoles s'intéressent aux institutions étrangères de qualité et aux talents étrangers ayant de meilleures compétences. En même temps, avec une formation très professionnalisée, elles demandent également aux candidats étrangers d'avoir un plan professionnel clair. D'autre part, les deux universités ont un intérêt plus élargi vis-à-vis des étudiants et des institutions ciblées. Elles préparent une formation plus académique et généraliste et donnent plus de choix aux étudiants sur leurs programmes d'études.

Enfin, l'analyse continue d'examiner comment les institutions d'enquête mettent en pratique les deux premières étapes : positioning et targeting dans le contexte mondial. En premier lieu, le rôle des enseignants-chercheurs est considéré comme primordial pour promouvoir leurs institutions sur le marché international dans les quatre institutions d'enquête. Cette promotion facilite principalement le développement des programmes d'échanges d'étudiants et l'extension de la collaboration de la recherche à la formation se conduit comme une stratégie indirecte pour le recrutement d'étudiants étrangers. Nous identifions également les niveaux et les genres de collaboration entre les institutions et leurs partenaires étrangers. La préférence des formes de collaboration montre une petite nuance dans la distinction entre les grandes écoles et les universités. Pourtant, les quatre institutions respectent les règles de la réciprocité et de l'excellence dans la recherche de partenaires internationaux. En deuxième lieu, les pratiques institutionnelles consistant à faire la publicité au niveau international et à maintenir les relations entre les partenariats sont portées à analyse. Dans les deux grandes écoles, de multiples approches ont été mises en place pour faire de la publicité : les médias traditionnels, internet, les réseaux d'anciens élèves, la présentation des institutions par les enseignants-chercheurs, la participation aux salons de recrutement, etc. Les chercheurs de ces deux grandes écoles ont plus de chances d'obtenir un financement pour faire des voyages à l'étranger que leurs collègues dans les universités qui choisissent une posture passive et dépendante des réseaux universitaires européens. En troisième lieu, le « leadership » est remis en question car nous avons remarqué l'impact des « leaders » dans les quatre institutions sur les politiques et les orientations institutionnelles concernant le développement de la collaboration internationale.

Le recrutement et l'accueil des étudiants étrangers : stratégies, service d'accueil, l'insuffisance et l'amélioration

La troisième et dernière partie de l'analyse conclut les résultats de la comparaison relative au recrutement et à l'accueil des étudiants étrangers dans les deux groupes d'institutions.

Dans un premier temps, nous nous intéressons aux modèles de recrutement et aux dispositifs de services mis en place dans les grandes écoles et les universités. Nous commençons avec une analyse des motivations et des profils d'étudiants interviewés dans les quatre institutions, y compris leur nationalité, programmes d'études, situations de financement et plans professionnels. Cette analyse

dévoile certains critères communs pour identifier les candidats potentiels au recrutement institutionnel. Les étudiants interviewés accueillis dans les deux grandes écoles montrent un profil de cohérence avec celui de leurs camarades locaux : ils ont de bons scores académiques, sont issus d'une sélection très compétitive, sont issus de familles de classe sociale plutôt favorisée. Pour les étudiants interviewés dans les universités, la diversité de leur profil a été remarquée dans les programmes d'études et des filières. Leur performance académique est peu développée dans les entretiens. Au sein de cette population d'étudiants étrangers, le groupe des free-movers remarque aussi une grande différence entre les deux groupes d'institutions. D'après les statistiques fournies par une université d'enquête et les chiffres clés indiqués implicitement dans les documents d'autres institutions, les free-movers recrutés par les grandes écoles sont beaucoup moins nombreux que dans les universités. Notre analyse se poursuit sur une étude détaillée des procédures de sélection et d'admission des étudiants étrangers en identifiant les sélectionneurs et les critères selon les programmes différents dans les deux groupes d'institutions : Erasmus, Erasmus Mundus, programmes d'échanges institutionnels et free-movers. Concernant le groupe d'étudiants Erasmus, d'après les discours des étudiants interviewés, la sélection à l'entrée est symbolique et la plupart d'entre eux sont inscrits dans les universités d'enquête. Quant au groupe d'Erasmus Mundus, un triple critère est mis en sélection : économique, linguistique et académique. Les frais de formation sont très élevés et seuls les meilleurs candidats peuvent avoir des Bourses ou plus de soutien financier venant du programme. Les cours des formations sont principalement enseignés en anglais, d'après les publicités des programmes affichées en ligne. Les deux programmes d'Erasmus Mundus sont pris en charge par les universités d'enquête. Concernant les étudiants des programmes d'échanges institutionnels, une double sélection est assurée à l'admission par l'institution d'origine et l'institution d'accueil et les critères sont le niveau de français, la compétence académique et le plan d'études. Quant au groupe des free-movers, l'admission dans les grandes écoles est très sélective et exigeante concernant leurs performances académiques. Au contraire, la sélection est moins sérieuse dans les universités. L'analyse de cette sous-partie se termine avec une comparaison du service d'accueil dans les deux groupes d'institutions sur le plan administratif, pédagogique et culturel, au niveau des activités d'associations étudiantes. Les discours des personnels de la direction et de l'administration sont mis en confrontation avec les paroles des étudiants interviewés pour montrer les décalages et une amélioration nécessaire à l'avenir. D'une part, nous observons une différence de dispositifs de services pour les étudiants des programmes et pour les free-movers au niveau des groupes d'étudiants. D'autre part, le service de logement et les activités d'intégration sont dits de qualité différente dans les universités et dans les grandes écoles. Notre constat général porte sur deux aspects : les étudiants venant des programmes d'échanges institutionnels profitent d'un double service de la part du bureau des relations internationales et des coordinateurs des programmes ; les étudiants étrangers dans les grandes écoles bénéficient d'une meilleure qualité de service que ceux accueillis dans les universités.

Dans un deuxième temps, les expériences des étudiants interviewés sont examinées et comparées afin de servir à l'avenir pour l'accueil dans les institutions. Les étudiants montrent leurs difficultés au niveau linguistique, des connaissances pré-acquises, des compétences académiques ; les degrés de difficulté sont différents selon les filières d'études et les exigences institutionnelles. A travers leurs interactions avec des enseignants et des étudiants locaux dans les cours, les étudiants étrangers sont d'accord sur l'insuffisance de la prise en compte de la part des institutions de leur présence qui peut servir la dimension internationale et interculturelle de l'enseignement. Avant de terminer cette partie d'analyse, nous dévoilons particulièrement les expériences des free-movers. Représentant la majorité des étudiants étrangers dans les universités, les free-movers ont plus de difficultés sur le plan linguistique, économique et académique. Au contraire, les free-movers dans les grandes écoles sont beaucoup plus aptes à réussir grâce à une sélection sévère à l'entrée.

Avant la clôture de l'analyse d'enquête, nous présentons quelques éléments inattendus et intéressants pour la suite de la recherche. En premier lieu, il s'agit d'un entretien particulier mené avec le directeur du bureau des relations internationales dans une école d'agriculture. Considérant la particularité des spécialités de formations et de la petite taille de l'école, nous avons tenté de connaître ses politiques institutionnelles et sa mise en pratique de l'internationalisation et ses futures mesures, en incluant les défis et les opportunités de cette école. Cet entretien nous a ouvert une nouvelle perspective sur l'impact de l'internationalisation sur les grandes écoles contextualisées au niveau national ou régional. En deuxième lieu, certaines interprétations de la part des enseignants-chercheurs du terme « étudiant étranger » nous font réfléchir à la nécessité de développer de nouvelles connaissances sur la définition de cette population afin de mieux mettre en place les dispositifs d'accueil. L'égalité et l'étrangeté sont deux aspects importants pour identifier des sous-groupes au sein de cette population. Les institutions d'accueil doivent évoluer en termes de connaissances des différentes cultures dont sont issus les étudiants étrangers afin de mieux répondre à leurs besoins. En troisième lieu, partant de la définition du terme « stratégie », nous voulons montrer que le recrutement des étudiants étrangers ne doit pas être isolément traité et qu'il est plus qu'un produit de collaboration internationale de recherche. Les institutions d'accueil devraient prendre plus d'initiatives et être plus actifs sur le marché des étudiants internationaux.

Conclusion

Cette thèse de Doctorat est conduite autour de la question suivante : Les stratégies mises en place dans les grandes écoles et les universités pour le recrutement et l'accueil des étudiants étrangers. Après le recueil de données d'entretiens et l'analyse des documents officiels, nous remarquons quelques éléments de convergence dans cette étude de comparaison. Premièrement, au niveau de la visibilité et la reconnaissance sur le marché international, les deux groupes d'institutions adoptent une attitude comparativement traditionnelle aux grandes universités anglo-américaines et emploient une méthode passive pour faire de la publicité dans le contexte mondial. Nous pensons que le manque de ressource d'accueil et d'enjeu économique peut expliquer le positionnement de ces institutions à l'international. Deuxièmement, nous constatons une grande similarité dans la mise en forme de l'internationalisation au niveau de la formation et de la recherche dans les institutions. Malgré des niveaux de difficultés différenciés, les deux groupes d'institutions sont bien conscients de la normalisation de l'internationalisation dans leurs établissements et de l'importance du recrutement d'étudiants étrangers et du développement des programmes en anglais et internationaux. Dernièrement, nous identifions le fait que le recrutement des étudiants étrangers dans les institutions est encore un produit dérivé de la collaboration liée à la recherche, dans laquelle les chercheurs jouent un rôle clé d'initiation. A l'égard de l'accueil institutionnel, basé sur les discours des étudiants interviewés, nous remarquons une insuffisance de services et de connaissances nécessaires des cultures dont sont issus les étudiants accueillis au sein des institutions. En plus de ces points généraux et communs, de nombreux éléments de divergence sont également identifiés dans cette étude comparée. En premier lieu, le privilège et les avantages des grandes écoles servent directement leurs démarches sur le marché international. Le fait d'avoir plus d'autonomie permet aux grandes écoles de réduire les procédures administratives et de développer des collaborations à différents niveaux et de différents types. Le fait d'avoir plus de financement permet à leurs chercheurs de réaliser des voyages à l'international et de faire de la publicité pour les institutions ; cela permet aux grandes écoles de fournir une meilleure qualité de service, d'enseignement, d'accompagnement pédagogique, d'équipement et d'infrastructure. Le choix de la sélection à l'entrée permet aux grandes écoles d'avoir plus de chances de recruter des talents étrangers. En deuxième lieu, les caractéristiques de la formation et la finalité de l'éducation

prédéfinissent les cibles d'étudiants différents dans les deux groupes d'institutions. En troisième lieu, l'accessibilité à l'admission se trouve à différents niveaux dans les deux groupes d'institutions et la compétition se trouve sur le marché des talents étrangers entre les grandes écoles et les universités. En dernier lieu, les initiatives et les objectifs du développement de la collaboration se différencient entre les deux groupes d'institutions.

La question de la motivation des institutions concernant l'accueil d'étudiants étrangers est beaucoup traitée dans les études existantes au sujet des perspectives politiques, économiques et culturelles. Nous trouvons également des explications similaires à travers des accords et des formes de collaborations internationales, à travers la représentation de la population des étudiants étrangers accueillis au sein des institutions. Malgré les réserves des universitaires sur l'effet économique, nous remarquons quand même une augmentation de l'enjeu économique dans le recrutement et l'accueil des étudiants étrangers dans les institutions : développement des programmes de formation avec des frais plus élevés et plus professionnalisés. Nous remarquons également une transformation discrète au sein des institutions au niveau de la gouvernance et des perspectives internationales sous l'influence du marché économique et la décentralisation du contrôle de l'État, qui permet aux institutions d'avoir plus d'autonomie, de développer leurs propres programmes, et diversifier la population d'étudiants.

Le système dual d'enseignement supérieur français est aussi remis en question sur le marché international des étudiants étranger. Après l'analyse des réponses des personnels institutionnels et des étudiants accueillis dans les institutions d'enquête, nous pensons que la coexistence des grandes écoles et des universités est à la fois une contrainte et une forme de complémentarité du système français. D'un côté, les critiques des universitaires nous montrent les inégalités produites par ce système concernant la sélection des étudiants, l'allocation des ressources humaines et de financement, et l'insertion professionnelle des diplômés dans les deux groupes d'institutions. La méconnaissance des grandes écoles de la part des étudiants étrangers dévoile la complexité de fonctionnement du système dual dans le contexte mondial. De plus, l'effet de la visibilité des institutions françaises et de la performance des universités françaises dans les classements sont également limités sous l'impact de cette coexistence. D'un autre côté, le système dual est une richesse historique et nationale, et favorise le recrutement des étudiants étrangers. Les voies d'accès et la particularité de la formation et de l'orientation professionnelle sont des éléments de distinction entre les grandes écoles et les universités mais la question essentielle est la suivante : Comment envoyer ce message clairement aux étudiants internationaux sur le marché du recrutement ? En outre, l'harmonisation des systèmes d'enseignement supérieur en Europe facilite la création de formations servant de passerelles entre les deux groupes d'institutions au niveau national. Et le développement de multiples voies d'accès pour les étudiants étrangers aux grandes écoles est aussi favorable à la promotion de ce système. A travers cette enquête, nous ressentons une volonté forte d'ouverture internationale, particulièrement dans les grandes écoles. L'interaction entre les héritages institutionnels tels que les méthodes de travail, les cultures institutionnelles des élites françaises et l'introduction de la dimension internationale et interculturelle peuvent à la fois enrichir la formation des élites nationales et renforcer leur compétitivité sur le marché international du travail ; et exercer l'influence de « soft power » de la France à travers la formation des élites étrangères.

Dans cette recherche, nous employons notre propre version de « branding » pour analyser des politiques et des pratiques institutionnelles dans le recrutement et l'accueil d'étudiants étrangers. Certains éléments nouveaux apparaissent dans notre analyse. Au niveau du développement des relations internationales dans les institutions, nous identifions sept types de collaboration dans trois niveaux différents et les différents genres de partenariats. Au niveau de la circulation des étudiants étrangers, nous classifions la population d'enquête en trois catégories basées sur leurs objectifs

d'études et leurs plans professionnels. Le nouveau type de relation « trainer-trainee » entre les étudiants étrangers venant de certains pays et l'institution d'accueil est considéré comme une modification d'effet « brain drain » ou « brain gain ». En plus des aspects nouveaux, nous trouvons également des éléments inattendus et intéressants qui pourront nous conduire à une nouvelle recherche : notre intérêt porte sur la manière dont les petites écoles dans le groupe des grandes écoles répondent à la normalisation de l'internationalisation. Notre interrogation porte sur la nécessité de faire évoluer la définition du terme « étudiant étranger », ce qui demande plus de connaissances de la part des institutions sur l'implication de l'étrangeté des étudiants en termes de cultures et de langues, et de l'égalité à l'accueil. Notre proposition auprès des institutions est de former une logique de recrutement plus active et systématique.

Cette étude exploratoire et qualitative est construite et basée sur les données recueillies dans les quatre institutions d'enquête et nous tenons compte de l'influence du choix de la ville d'enquête et de la population interviewée non-représentative de la population globale à l'université et dans les grandes écoles, pour les résultats de l'analyse. De plus, nous prenons également en considération mon implication par rapport à mon identité culturelle dans le processus d'enquête, ainsi que des enjeux linguistiques et étymologiques dans la rédaction. Néanmoins, au niveau théorique, dans la mesure où la thèse est rédigée en anglais, cette recherche peut servir à la diffusion de connaissances du système d'enseignement supérieur français et sur la population d'étudiants étrangers accueillie au sein des institutions françaises dans les pays non-francophones. En outre, le sujet d'étude est rarement traité et nous donne plus d'espace afin d'explorer et donner à notre travail de recherche plus de valeur. Au niveau pratique, nos résultats d'analyse peuvent à la fois informer des institutions d'accueil sur les bonnes pratiques mises en place par les institutions d'enquête dans leurs actions de promotion sur le marché mondial, et aider les institutions d'accueil à comprendre les décalages entre ce qui est décrit dans les documents institutionnels, ce qu'elles font, et les expériences des étudiants étrangers, afin qu'elles aient une attitude plus compréhensive et plus ouverte à l'égard de ces étudiants venus d'ailleurs.

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Acronym

UIS - UNESCO Institute for Statistics

OECD – Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development

RERS – Repères et Références Statistiques

TCF – Test de Connaissance du Français

DELFL – Diplôme d'Etudes en Langue Française

DALF – Diplôme Approfondi en Langue Française

IUT – Institut Universitaire de Technologie

EU – European Union

ERASMUS - European Action Scheme for the Mobility of University Students'

CNOUS – Centre National des Œuvres Universitaires et Scolaires

CROUS - Centre Régional des Œuvres Universitaires et Scolaires

MESR - Ministère de l'Enseignement Supérieur et de la Recherche

CPAM - Caisse Primaire Assurance Maladie

ARWU - Academic Ranking of World Universities

ICPs - Inter-University Cooperation Programs

EHEA - European Higher Education Area

ECTS - European Credit Transfer System

UOE – UNESCO, OECD, Eurostat

BAC – baccalauréat

MEN – Ministère de l'Education Nationale

ICT - Information and Communication Technology

STS – Section de Technicien Supérieur

INSEE - Institut National de la Statistique et des Etudes Economiques

ENS – Ecole Nationale Supérieure

CPER - Contrat Plan Etat- Région

U3M - Université du troisième Millénaire

LOLF - Loi Organique relative aux Lois de Finance

ANR – Agence Nationale de la Recherche

LRU - Loi Relative aux libertés et responsabilités des Universités

CNRS - Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique

PRES - Pôle de Recherche et d'Enseignement Supérieur

RTRAs - Réseaux Thématiques de Recherche Avancée

AERES – Agence d'Evaluation de la Recherche et de l'Enseignement Supérieur

HEI – Higher Education Institution

EUA - European University Association

PUF - Presses Universitaires de France

IEP – Institut d'Etudes Politiques

HEC – Ecole des hautes études commerciales de Paris

CGE - Conférence des Grandes Ecoles

CPGE - Classes Préparatoires aux Grandes Ecoles

LMD – Licence, Master et Doctorat

CPU – Conférence des Présidents d'Université

R & D – Recherche & Développement

THE – Times Higher Education World University Ranking

DIRD - Dépense Intérieure de Recherche et Développement

DNRD - Dépense Nationale de Recherche et Développement

PIB - Produit Intérieur Brut

OIF – Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie

IaH – Internationalization at Home

ORPEA - Observatoire Régional Parcours Etudiants Aquitains

CTI - Commission des Titres d'Ingénieur

CDEFI – Conférence des Directeurs d'Ecoles de Formations d'Ingénieurs

BRICs - Brazil, Russia, India, China

CEF - Centre d'Etudes pour la France

OVE – Observatoire de la Vie Etudiante

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Introduction

This chapter began with the narration of how my personal interest in the topic arose from my own experience and finally turned into doctoral research. It continued with a background introduction to the situation of international students in France in comparison to the wider global context. Then the presentation elaborated the thesis's central research questions and sub-questions as well as objectives. The chapter ended with a brief explanation of the significance of the study and the possible limitation.

Evolution of the study: from personal interest to academic research

Our readers have a right to know about us. And they do not want to know whether we played in the high school band. They want to know what prompts our interest in the topics we investigate, to whom we are reporting, and what we personally stand to gain from our study. (Wolcott, 2010, p.30 quoted in Creswell, 2012, p.47)

Like every artistic creation, in order to understand the product, especially the hidden message, we should focus on the artists' intention and the creation process. No studies are value-free and the values of the inquirers and their biases in qualitative research should be detailed as well as the "value-laden nature of information" collected from the research field. (Creswell, 2012, p.20) Fan Zeng, a renowned Chinese painter, poet, calligrapher, writer and professor at the University of Beijing, wrote a phrase in his poems (2011) to describe the process of scientific research: "真情妙悟铸文章". This phrase points out the essence of how to do research in a very philosophical way. Loosely translated, Zeng writes a good scientific research requires researcher's sincere passion for the research topics and his creative reflections and the whole research process should be molded, deliberated and worked over many times before the results are published.

The research topic in this thesis didn't come from nowhere; it is closely related to my personal experience and has evolved as a research interest during five years' study. I've been studying in France since September 2008 and the longer I stayed here, the more I realized how little knowledge of the higher education system I had acquired before coming to France. I succeeded in my application to study in France thanks to an intermediary agency that helps Chinese students prepare all the documents, language tests and interviews; sometimes it even chooses the university for applicants. To be honest, until the moment of my arrival at the airport in Paris, I just knew that I would take intensive French courses for a year in a language

training center affiliated to a French university. As the majority of my classmates at that time followed the same trajectory as mine, I used to think it was the only way.

Later when I enrolled in postgraduate study, I luckily got a small, part-time job in the student service center, helping international students who had just arrived in France with their problems related to the resident card application, accommodation, social insurance and health care, etc. Thanks to this job, I realized that in addition to my type of international students, there were “others” such as exchange students, students for courses taught in English and ‘do-it-yourself’ students who prepared the application all by themselves. Meanwhile, their individual experiences and their difficulties had aroused my personal interest in the international student population. Moreover, considering my previous studying and teaching experience in universities in China, it seemed interesting to conduct a comparative study and that was how my master thesis had been initiated. With the guidance of my supervisor Dr. Régis Malet, we analyzed with a comparative approach, data collected in interviews with two groups of international students in France and in China. The study analysis showed that the process of students’ preparation abroad, their experiences in the host country and their personal transformation were closely related to the different profiles of international students. Considering that the study concentrated on the students’ individual experiences, we realized that the profiles of the interview participants might influence the findings and more importantly, we found that the hosting contexts both at social and institutional levels had had an important impact in students’ experience. We thought more profound study should be conducted on this research subject from different perspectives.

After having committed to continuing the research, three-months of reviewing literature and discussions with my two supervisors, Dr. Régis Malet and Dr. Ruth Hayhoe, we reached an agreement on giving up this international comparative perspective because of the complex problems that could be encountered by the many differences in terms of social, political, economic, cultural and educational aspects in France and in China. I was intrigued by Dr. Malet’s proposal of working on an intra-national comparative scale of international student populations in *grandes écoles* and universities in France. This appealed to me mainly because of my lack of knowledge of *grandes écoles* and the project sounded challenging and interesting. Meanwhile, being a participant observer of my boyfriend’s experience in an engineering school (a *grande école*) and later in a university during these years, I witnessed some interesting facts which made me want to know more about these institutions. In order to avoid my personal suffering when some international students shared with me difficult

moments in their experience, we finally decided to focus on studying the international student mobility from the perspective of host institutions.

Every research project starts from a general topic and its development requires more exploration, tests and reflection. Three factors need to be noted in this study for potential readers: 1/ I am Chinese; 2/ the majority of my readings are produced by English-speaking academics and the thesis is written in English; and 3/ the research sites are French higher education institutions. The readers of the thesis can easily identify the marks created by the three cultures' hybridization. It is also evident that two important elements could be decisive for the accomplishment of this study: how to construct my own conceptual framework and how to compare. In the exploration of the answers to these two questions, my two supervisors supported me attending international conferences to test my on-going research frameworks. Two important meetings, one in France and one in Canada, helped me understand more about the possible difficulties that I could face at my oral defense and made me realize the importance of my study as well. Meanwhile, thank to my supervisor Dr. Malet, I got the opportunity to teach several courses and held a few seminars in comparative education for his postgraduate students, during which I learned more about the comparative approach and gained precious insights through collective sharing on international education. To sum up, the study was initiated by personal curiosity and conducted with an exploratory and reflective attitude, during which cumulative knowledge and practice were considered indispensable. In the following section of this chapter, I presented a detailed description of the research background, central research questions and objectives, significance and limitations of this study.

Background

The international student picture in France

According to the Global Education Digest (2009), the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS) defines internationally mobile students as those who leave their country or territory of origin and move with the objective of study to another country or territory of which they are not a permanent resident. This definition shows a conceptual evolution compared to the traditional understanding of 'foreign student', which is constructed generally by the criterion of citizenship. Considering the intra-European mobility and immigration legislation,

international students are generally defined as “students who are not permanent or usual residents of their country of study or alternatively as students who obtained their prior education in a different country, including another EU country”. (Education at a glance 2013: OECD indicators, p.315).

In 2011, around 4.3 million students were enrolled in educational institutions outside of their country of origin, compared to 3.3 million in 2009 and 0.8 million in 1975 and the increasing number represents a remarkable expansion (Education at a glance 2013: OECD indicators). With regard to the country of destination, the United States (US) still hosts the largest share (16.5%) of the whole international student population and keeps its position as the most favorite country of destination. It's followed by the United Kingdom (UK) (13%), Germany (6.3%), France (6.2%), Australia (6.1%) and Canada (4.7%). With regard to the countries of origin, in 2011, China was still the largest sender and the students from China represented 21% of all the international students enrolled in tertiary education in OECD area.

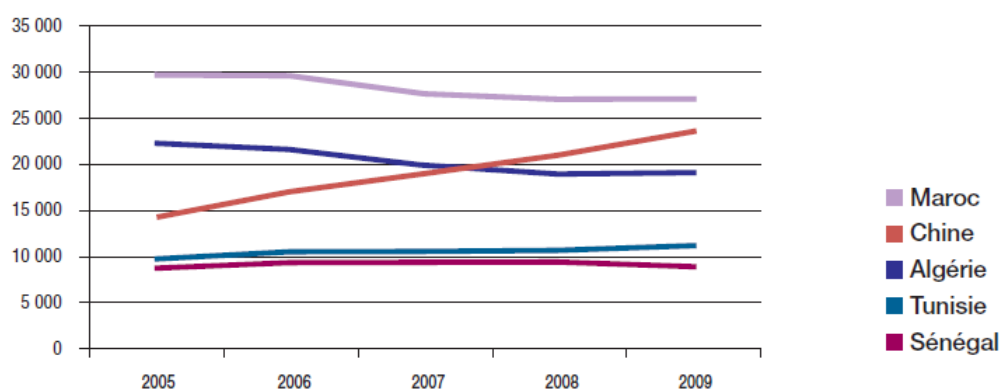
A snapshot of international students in France is presented in the following section including their home country, fields of study, study levels and types of host institutions.

According to *Repères et Références Statistiques (RERS) 2013*, the number of international students in France started considerably increasing by the end of the 1990s and the total number has increased by 78.4% from 1998 to 2005. Following a period of enrollment decline in 2006 and 2007, the nation has recently experienced positive trends, with a 1.9% increase in 2008; 4.8% in 2009; 2.5% in 2010, 1.3% in 2011 and 1.5% in 2012 to 289,000. Meanwhile, over these years the international student population has occupied a stable share of 12.1% in the French higher education system. In 2011, the number of international students had almost doubled in the engineering schools or business schools/schools of management, sales and accounting since 2004. In 2012, 75% of the whole international student population chose to study in the universities, which represent 14.8% of the total enrollment and the proportion of international students increased with academic levels, 11.0% for undergraduate students, 18.0% for postgraduates and 41.4% for PhD students.

The top sending countries for France in descending order are Morocco (32100 students), China (30300), Algeria (23000), Tunisia, Senegal, Germany, Italy, Cameroon, Vietnam, and Spain in 2012, together accounting for nearly half of all international students. Compared with the top 5 sending countries published by Campus France in 2011 (Graph 1), we find the results remain the same, which indicates that regardless of the small upwards and downwards

changes, France still keeps its traditional share in the international student market. Meanwhile, it also explains the fact that most research work has been focusing on certain groups of international students, particularly African students (the Maghreb included). However, the impressive increase in Asian students, especially Chinese students in the French higher education system has begun to attract researchers' attention (Agulhon & Xavier de Brito, 2009). Furthermore, with the modification in the composition of the international student population, we find some nuances in their experience in France, which demands more discretion from researchers to distinguish different types of students in their research and more flexibility and reflexivity from host institutions to attract more international students and offer them better service.

Graph 1 top 5 international student home countries in France since 2005



Source: Campus France Chiffre Clés 2011

With regard to the choice of study fields, according to RERS 2013, 31.31% of the total number of international students studied in the social sciences and humanities, 25.8% of them in science and technology and 19.7% in economics and management in 2012. Meanwhile, the statistics also reveals the interconnections between students' nationalities and their choice of study fields.

During the year 2012/2013 (Table 1), approximately 14.7% of international students in French universities chose law as study field, 12.7% chose economics and management, 46% chose social sciences and humanities and 15.2% chose science and technology and sports.

Table 1 Study fields of international students in French universities in 2012/2013

Group	Law	Economy and Management	Social sciences and humanities	Sciences and technology & Sports
European (Russia included)	14.7%	12.7%	46%	15.2%
African	11.6%	23.2%	19.7%	32.4%
Asian	6.5%	24.8%	31.4%	28.1%
Total	11.3%	24%	34.3%	26.2%

Edited by Bian (2014) Source: RERS 2013

In 2012, 32.4% of the whole African student population studied in science and technology or sports; 23.2% of them chose economics and management and 19.7% chose social science and humanities. Furthermore, this kind of choice difference within the students of the same nationality is evident also for other groups of students.

It's worth mentioning here that in the last twenty years, with the increasing number of international students from non-French-speaking countries, particularly Asian students, the intensive French language training program has been well-developed. The program is generally sponsored by universities nationwide and housed in an academic department. However, sometimes this kind of training program could be provided by agencies like *Alliance Française*, as part of compulsory training for non-French-speaking students before their enrollment in universities. This group of students usually get enrolled for a semester (six months) or one year or more to reach a certain level in a French proficiency test (TCF or DELF/DALF), and in general, level B2 is required for most disciplines in higher education institution enrollment; for some majors related to French language and culture studies, level C1 is demanded. Unlike the general free education programs in the universities, the training courses have set prices. According to the official information published on the website of the education service in the Embassy of China in France, until April 2011, more than 300

intensive French program centers (private and public) were created in France. However, only 50 were officially recognized in China. Therefore, we could imagine the financial profits that the program could bring to language training centers. Even though there are no specific statistics about this group of international students because of the particularity of their program, we could still tell that with the increasing study application of Asian students, the potential candidates for these intensive language training programs could be considerable.

Meanwhile, the official statistics also indicate that international students from different countries of origin have their preferences of institutions. For example, in 2011, Moroccan students made up comparatively small proportion (56% of the whole Moroccan students in France) in the universities compared to their presence in engineering schools (10% against 4% for the whole international student population). By contrast, Chinese students chose universities against Chinese students in *grandes écoles* comparatively less than other international students but more often go to engineering schools (7%) and schools of business, management and accounting (10% against 6% of all international students). However, the majority of students from Algeria stay in universities (IUT: *Institut Universitaire de Technologie* (University Institute of Technology) and engineering program excluded): 86% against 70% for all international students.

With regard to the geographic factors, international students tend to be concentrated in île-de-France (17.6% in Créteil, 16.6% in Paris and 12.6% in Versailles), Strasbourg, Nice, Montpellier and Lyon. The proportion of international students is less than 10% in Orléans-Tours, Bordeaux, Nantes, Rennes, Dijon, Lille and Caen.

French policies for promoting inbound student mobility

Intra-European promotion

New social theory reminds us of the necessity of abandoning a state-centrism perspective and developing a more global approach to examine social processes (Hettne & Söderbaum, 2000).

Rising regionness does not mean that the so-called nations-states are becoming obsolete or disappearing, but rather that they are undergoing major restructuring in the context of regionalization (and globalization) and the complex interplay of state-market-society relations. It also means that they end up as semi-independent parts of larger regional political societies.

The unbundling of state functions forms part of a new structure of multilevel governance where the region constitutes one level. (p.465)

As a member of European Union, France has contributed to and benefited from the process of Europeanization. Intra-European student mobility has been considered as a political activity since the 1980s (Papatsiba, 2006) and the ERASMUS (European Action Scheme for the Mobility of University Students') program was launched as in 1987 as a response to this political demand. The program has proved a great success and more than 2, 2 million students conducted their study or internship in another European country till 2011 (Campus France, 2012). The 33 participant countries in this program hosts around 220,000 mobile students every year. The program offers the mobile students a monthly scholarship for a period up to one year and provides some financial support for institutional collaboration and reforms on recognition of students' study experience in Europe (Teichler, 2009, p.98). Papatsiba interpreted the rationales of ERASMUS student mobility from two major aspects (2006): economic or professional and civic. On one hand, she considered the mobility experience could help mobile students to develop more skills for their professional lives and promote the European labor market. On the other hand, the mobility experience could facilitate the development of European citizenship and strengthen intercultural awareness and mutual understanding. According to the statistics published by Campus France in May 2012, during the year 2009/2010, France hosted 22, 022 Erasmus students and 70,260 European students got enrolled in French higher education institutions, representing 25% of the total international student population and 75% of them chose to study in universities.

The statistics show that being a participant country of the Erasmus program has made possible a comparatively stable proportion of European students in France. Moreover, the subsequent European higher education system reform, including harmonization of systems and the transferability of credits have greatly encouraged intra-European mobility.

International promotion

Besides being a participant and beneficiary in the process of Europeanization, France has developed its own strategies for internationalizing its higher education. As the international spokesman for France, Campus France occupies a unique place in promoting French higher education and French language and culture in the international student market and it has

become the image creator of France overseas. The Campus France Agency was created in 2010 as a public institution and resulted from a merger with the association of Egide supervised by the Ministry of European and Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Higher Education and Research and the institution has further developed through active engagement with the *Centre National des Oeuvres Universitaires et Scolaires* (CNOUS) since September 2012. The appearance of this new agency not only reinforces the traditional role of Campus France in the promotion of French higher education but has also expanded its influence and supervision over international student services and over support for the international development of French higher education institutions.

According to the Campus France annual report (2012), 133 Campus France centers and 38 branch agencies have been established in 108 countries with an increase of 10% in 2010/2011, among which, around 30% are located in Europe, 20% in Africa, 13% in the Middle-East, 14% in America and 23% in Asia. Accompanying with the global expansion of Campus France centers, the number of French higher education institutions which have established a cooperative relationship with Campus France, reached 266 in 2011 from 7 in 1998. Table 2 shows the augmentation of the frequency of events organized by Campus France and of the presence of French higher education institutions during the period of 2004 - 2011.

Table 2 Evolution of events organized by Campus France (2004/2011)

Évolution des manifestations CampusFrance depuis 2004								
	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Nombre de manifestations	15	15	14	21	20	15	27	35
Nombre de participations d'établissements	426	364	336	555	403	331	612	817
Nombre de visiteurs salons	101 475	155 390	150 880	292 936	164 193	177 650	205 832	307 229

Source: Campus France annual report 2012

Furthermore, the development of another francophone cultural and language promoter, *Alliance Française* has also been playing an important role in attracting international students. According to the statistics published on its official website, 1,016 *Alliance Française* offices have been created in 135 countries with 492,461 students by 2010.

Table 3 *Alliances françaises* in the world (2014)

Region	Number of countries	Numbers of Offices of Alliance française	Number of students
Africa	37	126	82,994
North America	2	103	41,328
Latino America-Caribbean	34	207	224,415
Asia-Oceanic	31	117	116,083
Europe	33	258	88,200

Edited by Bian (2014)

Source:

official figured published on AF website (<http://www.fondation-alliancefr.org/?cat=1> retrieved on March 5th, 2014)

The rapid development of *Alliance française* offices promotes French language learning and helps more international students get acquainted with French culture and realize the importance of cultural diversity in the world. Meanwhile, its presence in France not only facilitates the cultural and linguistic integration of international students into the national society but also has become one of the principal providers of intensive language training courses closely related to French higher education institutions.

In short, the two promotional agencies, Campus France and *Alliance française*, have been working hand in hand on internationalizing French language, culture and education which facilitates the international student recruitment and has created a very positive trend towards internationalization at home.

National practice

As previously mentioned, the overall percentage of international student higher education enrollment globally reached 12.3% in 2007, which puts France into the 4th place compared to approximately 20% in Australia, 15% for the UK, 14% in Germany and less than 4% in the US (Bhandari & Chow, 2007). While other countries are engaged in developing new

strategies to recruit international students, simplifying application procedures and immigration policies and delivering new attractive degrees and professional programs, what's the situation in France?

Unlike the situation in the UK or the US, higher education in France is considered a public service. The registration fee of universities is almost nominal and the price remains the same for all students: domestic students, EU students and Non-EU international students. For the international students, especially for those majoring in arts, letters and architecture, France is always an ideal destination country for its well-known and precious cultural heritage. The low cost of study could be considered a great attraction. However, with the increasing commodification of higher education in the global context, particularly in English-speaking countries, we are told by the market sometimes a low price might imply low quality, which might create some second thoughts for students and families who support the idea of "price=quality" and see a connection between price and quality.

According to the statistics published by *Ministère de l'Enseignement Supérieur et de la Recherche* (MESR: Ministry of Higher Education and Research) (2012), the fee for the 2012/2013 academic year are 181 € for undergraduates, 250€ for university postgraduates (engineering program: 596€), 380 € for PhD students. Moreover, for those who plan to get enrolled in the *grandes écoles*, particularly Business Schools, the tuition fees are comparatively higher than university programs around 4500€ to 7000 € on average per year, which is still far less expensive than the same kind of programs in the US and the UK.

Beside the low registration fees, international students enjoy the same social and medical rights as domestic students. Accommodation and medical care are always considered as the top two priorities in our daily life and they seem extremely important for international students. The massification of higher education has resulted in a greatly increasing student population and made the accommodation system overloaded. However, international students can access all information concerning the location of residences, living conditions, rent and size of rooms on the website of *Centre Régional des Oeuvres Universitaires et Scolaires* (CROUS) and apply directly online. For example, for a simple room (9 m²) in a university residence with shared toilet, bathroom and kitchen, it costs around 150€ per month and 230€ for a simple renovated room (9 m²) with bathroom, toilet and a small kitchen equipped inside.

Besides the housing availability, the well-developed medical care system could be considered as another 'plus' for France. International students under the age of 26 pay the medical

insurance fees at the time of their university registration and they have the benefit of 70% reimbursement in medical care. Those over the age of 26 can apply for basic medical insurance from *Caisse Primaire Assurance Maladie* (CPAM) with 70% reimbursement and some international students with low-income family resources can get free medical care.

Last but not least, all the benefits mentioned above can serve positively to attract international students only if the information can be properly accessed by them; thus arises the question of language for information diffusion. As indicated in Altbach (2004, p.66), “Higher education worldwide must grapple with the consequences of the dominance of English as a factor in globalization and he called English the Latin of the 21st century”. For the majority of international students, their first contact with the host institution starts from browsing its website. The language(s) used on its website seems to be not worth being mentioned, yet it plays an important role in helping international students to receive the necessary information on educational programs and services in the institution. During my master’s research, some of the interviewees had complained about this problem and given their level of French, they considered the institution’s website should be written in at least two languages, French and English. Out of professional curiosity, I checked all the websites of the 82 universities (the latest number after the two big universities’ merging: University of Strasbourg in 2008 and University of Lorraine in 2012) in France on the basis of universities’ official websites published by the Ministry of Higher Education and Research to verify how many languages have been used to construct their websites.

Chart 1 Language version of French University Website (numbers)

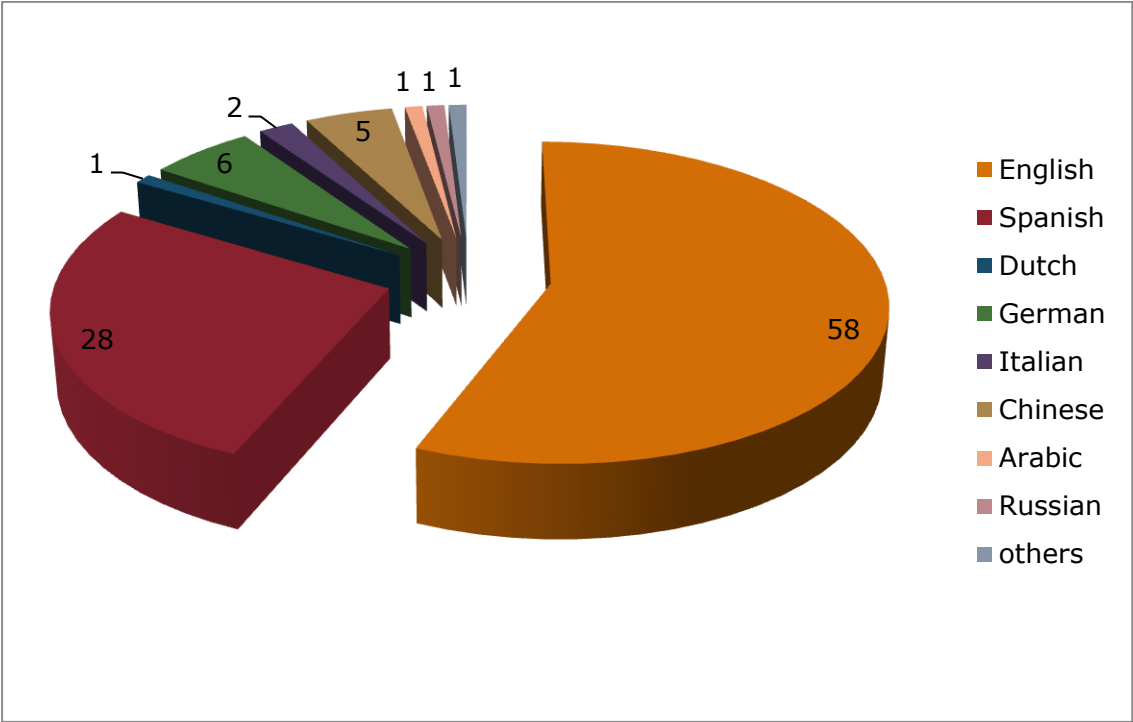


Chart 2 Language version of French University Website (Percentage)

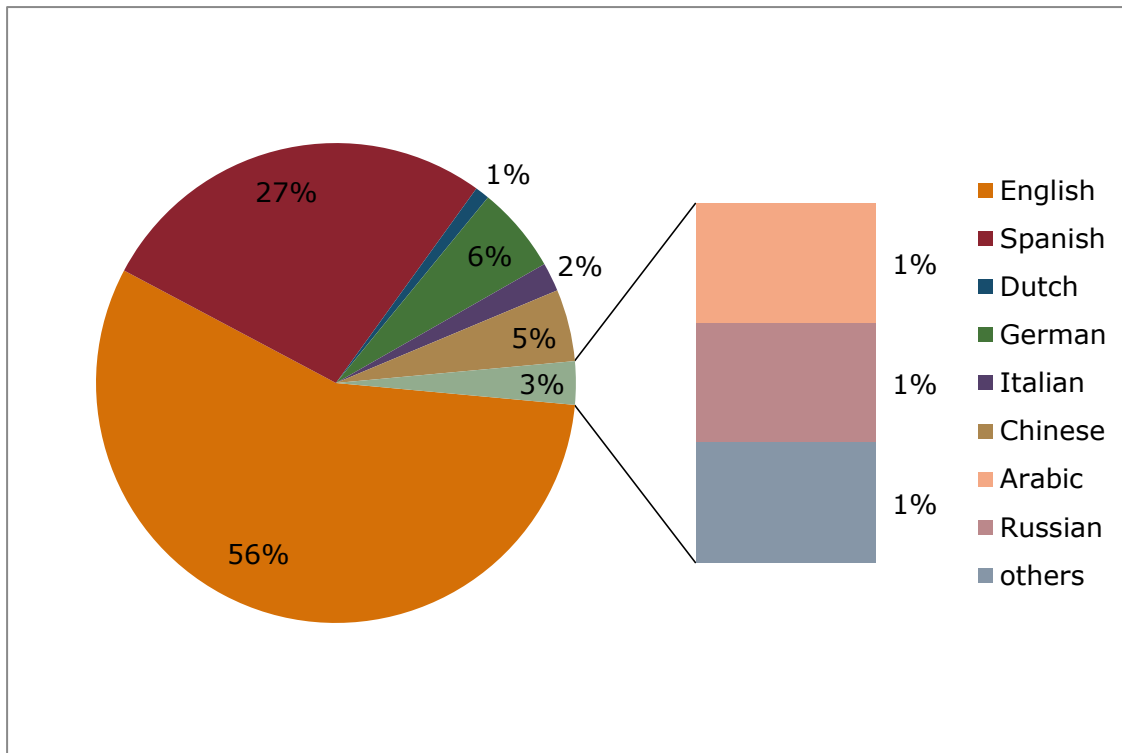


Chart edited based on university information from MESR (Ministère de l'Enseignement Supérieur et de la Recherche) by Bian (2013)

Very few universities offer the complete version of institutional information in another language, except for the column “international relationships”. From the two charts above, more than half of the institutions (58%) have an English version, 27% in Spanish, 6% in German and 5% in Chinese for their international students. If we compare the language percentage with the distribution of international student population, we could easily find the consistency.

To summarize, this section has provided a general picture of how France is developing its plan on international student recruitment at global, European and national levels. As a member of the EU, France has benefited from its membership maintaining the consistent development of the Erasmus student population. Meanwhile, the knowledge related to French culture and education has been well delivered to international partners by offices of the *Alliance française* and Campus France. Furthermore, the strong relationship between Campus France and CNOUS/CROUS makes it simpler for international students to access to all kinds of information in their study and daily life in France and to get better service and support.

Last but not least, the low registration fees, the easy access to and low expense of accommodation and medical care are all factors that prepare the prerequisite conditions for offering international students better service.

Research questions and objectives

The description of international student population in France and the presentation of French policies in promoting inbound student mobility have provided a general context for this research and the research curiosity started from issues relating to the popularity of France and French higher education institutions.

The development of massification and commodification of higher education has intensified the competition among different higher education institutions both on a national and an international scale. The creation of the ranking system partially offered some references to different stakeholders involved in higher education. Meanwhile, building a world-class university has become the driving force for some institutions to internationalize their education programs and research. In the Academic Ranking of World Universities (ARWU) 2011 conducted by Shanghai Jiao Tong University, it showed that only two French universities were ranked among the top 50, University of Paris Sud (Paris 11) (40th) and Pierre and Curie University (Paris 6) (41th). According to the latest results in 2013, the total number of French universities remains the same but the two universities got some progress in the ranking with 39th place and 37th place. Even though various factors could be used to criticize the inaccuracy or inadequacy of this ranking system, the performance of French higher education institutions has reduced their international visibility. Orivel (2004) summarized six characteristics shared by the top 20 universities: best student quality, best academic staff, better funds, pluridisciplinarity and considerable institution size. He considered that not all of these criteria can be employed to describe French universities.

Nevertheless, according to the statistics of UNESCO, France is still one of the top host countries of international students (3rd in 2006, 4th in 2009 and 4th in 2012), which definitely implies the great attractiveness of its institutions. Therefore, how could we understand this phenomenon?

The commercialization of higher education has made us stop asking the question of whether higher education service be considered as a commodity, although this still remains disputable.

The appearance of various education providers, reforms in different national contexts of higher education, closer relationships developed between higher education institutions and private industry and the modification of international students' profiles, all contribute to the tradable aspect of higher education service nowadays in the context of globalization and internationalization. The fact is also confirmed by the theory that universities are essentially defined by the needs of potentially interested 'clients' with social responsibilities and social demands, imposed by the market instead of being forged by an abstract ideal type (Verger, 1986).

Nevertheless, in contrast to the orientation towards the commodification of higher education and a strong competitive spirit in attracting international students to their world-class universities in some countries, such as the US, the UK and Australia, France has maintained its own traditional approach in offering international students zero or comparatively lower tuition fees with the same rights as domestic students in accommodation and medical care. Does this policy work in the wider context of international recruitment for revenue generation?

Besides the "price card", France has its unique specialty which produces paradoxical effects in its practice of recruiting international students. French higher education is often generalized as a dual system with the coexistence of *grandes écoles* and universities. More precisely, on one hand, the *grandes écoles* are considered as elite schools, comparatively small-scale institutions with higher selectiveness in students' recruitment, better quality in education and a closer relationship with private industry sectors. On the other hand, the universities are taken as public institutions for knowledge transmission and innovation with nominal registration fees and lower criteria for student recruitment. In the nation-state-oriented period of higher education development, it could be argued that this dual system served the best interest of the country's social, political and economic needs. However, in the context of Europeanization and internationalization, the question of how to make international students understand the system and how to attract them to study in these institutions has become a priority. France has met great challenges in standardizing its higher education system to avoid being seen as over-complicated to outsiders and to harmonize the coordination between the two groups of institutions.

Research Questions

In face of the context which has been laid out in this chapter, the central research question is defined as how *grandes écoles* and universities develop their respective strategies for recruiting international students. Some sub-questions need to be addressed in order to answer this central question:

1. What are the challenges for the French dual system in internationalizing its education and research?
2. What are the rationales for French higher education institutions in recruiting international students?
3. What are the practices implemented differentially in *grandes écoles* and universities for institutional promotion, international student recruitment & admission and service provision?
4. How does the coexistence of *grandes écoles* and universities affect the international student recruitment market? What kind of lessons could the institutions learn from each other to gain a good position in the recruitment market and offer international students better service?

Research Objectives

The research is envisaged to achieve the following objectives:

1. To identify the convergence and non-convergence of the strategies implemented in *grandes écoles* and universities for international student recruitment and try to explain the reasons behind them
2. To profile the international student population recruited in these two groups of institution
3. To examine the awareness of internationalization and its practice in *grandes écoles* and universities
4. To clarify the influence of dual system on recruiting international students: constraint or complementarity?

5. To explore the unconscious/conscious interaction/communication between *grandes écoles* and universities in the process of international student recruitment

Significance & Limitation of the study

Significance

The importance of this study could be explained from two aspects. On the one hand, from academic perspective, there has been little in-depth research on both international recognition of the unique dual system of higher education in France in terms of organization and management and on international student mobility in *grandes écoles*. The majority of research works on *grandes écoles* and universities focus on interpreting the dual system from a historical perspective and revealing the possible difficulties in the context of internationalization at a macro scale. Furthermore, with regard to the study of the student population recruited to *grandes écoles*, most of the research concentrates on the domestic students and the international student population has barely been mentioned, in particular, in qualitative studies. On the other hand, most of the scientific research on the dual system of study is written in French, which has influenced the international circulation of research results, to some extent, especially in English-speaking countries and in Asia. Therefore, this doctoral thesis in English will hopefully contribute to knowledge about an important aspect of French higher education in a wider arena. Furthermore, a comparative study of international student recruitment in *grandes écoles* and universities will be a pioneering move, since little has been written on the international role of *grandes écoles*, and it will add to previous knowledge created through research and systematic study of the two groups of institutions. Last but not least, this comparative study is highly contextualized at the institutional level and it'll help to provide an inside look into these two types of institutions.

Limitation

“How could we explain something created and formed in a specific national context and in another language?” This is the first question for me to deal with in this study. I have been confronting the difficulty produced by the different logic in language expression and transferring from one language to another. Given the fact that most of the research on

international student recruitment has been produced in English and most of the references on France's dual system in French, I have to be very careful and vigilant about the understanding of the meanings transmitted in different languages.

Then, there's the etymological problem of employing several terms, such as recruitment, market, brand; which could possibly be disputable for some researchers. Even though the reasonability of these terms' usage is justified, the floor is open for discussion, considering the specificity of the French national context.

Last but not least, regarding the research sites and participants' selection, the research results are highly localized and couldn't be considered as representative of the country as a whole.

The chapter began with a personal narration of how the study was initiated and turned into its maturity for a doctoral research project. Then, the introduction continued with more factual information about the international students in France and the French politics in promoting student mobility was specifically presented at international, European and national levels. Relating the multiple facts of international student recruitment in a wider global context to the French political guidelines, we elaborated our major research focus and objectives in this study. In the last section, the importance of the study was described and our concern about the possible insufficiency was also expressed. After the general introduction, the next chapter mainly dealt with the theorization of the key words in this study and presented the previous major research work on the relevant topics.

Chapter 1 Literature Review - internationalization of higher education & student mobility: from global to local, from past to present

International student mobility was considered as a key component and result of the internationalization of higher education and it has also accelerated the development of this process as well. History told us that the earliest mobility of students and scholars could be traced back to the Middle Ages; however, did this mobility have the same meaning from medieval time to nowadays? To answer this question, we should start from the study of the contexts.

This chapter began with a presentation of research work on conceptualizations and rationales of internationalization of higher education. Considering the widespread use of the term “internationalization” in different research fields and applied by researchers in different disciplines such as sociology, political science, economics, and education, this part of the literature was selectively presented for the purpose of constructing a conceptual framework for this thesis. Furthermore, the research work on the European version of internationalization was also presented to show the impact of the rising regionness on higher education development and a historical review was adopted to understand the on-going development of European Higher Education in which student mobility has been playing a principal role.

The second section mainly referenced the research on the historical development of the dual system in French higher education and the challenges it was facing in the context of internationalization. It started with a brief review of the creation of the dual system from social, political and economic perspectives. By tracing back to some key historical sources, the creation and institutional growth of *grandes écoles* and several significant reforms in French University history were precisely and selectively elaborated. The second subpart mainly concerned how internationalization challenges the two groups of institutions in terms of governance, finance and organization structures. The issue of how to survive the competition for international students both at national and international levels has become a very serious problem to deal with for this highly nation-state oriented dual system and some profound reforms may be required.

The last section was a brief introduction of previous research work on international student mobility. The review was composed of studies on students’ motivation to study abroad and university choice; international students’ intercultural experience abroad and some official reports published at national, regional and global levels. We also presented the results of my

previous research on the international student experience in France and China. On the one hand, we intend to show the continuity of my research trajectory and the evolution of my research perspective in this doctoral thesis. On the other hand, considering the lack of studies on the international student population in China, I tried to present some of students' experiences in Chinese higher education institution as well as in their daily lives. This can bring a small comparative element into our review.

1.1 Internationalization: international and European versions

1.1.1 Global context: conceptualization and rationales of internationalization of higher education

Internationalization is not a new term to describe the development of higher education and it did exist long time ago. According to Teichler (2009), the term of re-internationalization is more appropriate to describe the recent development in higher education.

The claim that higher education is internationalizing or ought to be is somewhat surprising, because universities have long been considered one of society's most international institutions.
(p.95)

The growing interest and debates about internationalization during the last two decades have helped us develop new perspectives on internationalization and the heterogeneity of contexts produces different approaches to internationalizing higher education. Before getting into the research works on definition and rationales of internationalization in general, we would like to present a historical perspective on internationalizing higher education at a global scale and this part of review mainly drew up from the work of Knight (1995, 2003).

As Kerr stated in his essays on 'The Nation-State and the Internationalization of the Enterprise of learning' (quoted in Knight & De Wit, 1995, p.6), universities are by nature international institutions functioning in a national context and striving for the advancement of universal knowledge. After more than eight hundred years of development, higher education went through three important models or typologies (Kerr, 1994; quoted in Knight & De Wit, 1995, p.6):

- 1) 'a convergent model' of universal education;

- 2) 'a divergent model' in which higher education became an essential aspect of national identity development in service of the administrative and economic interests of the nation-state;
- 3) 'a partial reconvergent model', in which the national and transnational development of higher learning is supported by the nation-state.

The international dimension of education was first represented by the pilgrimage of student elites and scholars in pursuit of the universality of knowledge in the Middle Ages. During the period from the end of Renaissance to the second half of the 20th century, a highly nationally oriented higher education appeared and was represented by the export of higher education systems from colonizing countries to their colonies and other developing countries and the international mobility of scholars and students on a small scale. From the end of the Second World War to the present day, the development of the internationalization of higher education was greatly influenced by certain political and economic factors in the world. In the early period after the Second World War, the two superpowers of the Cold War era, the United States & the Soviet Union, mainly controlled the international education market and international student mobility was more related to diplomacy than to academic and cultural cooperation. From the 1980s to nowadays, the collapse of communism, the rise of new economic powers (Japan, China, India, Brazil), the strengthening of the European Community, the increasing South-South cooperation, etc. have led to a more diversification in international education activities.

On the basis of the development of international activities in higher education, many researchers have analyzed the rationales of internationalization from political, economic, and cultural aspects in general. Knight (1995) pointed out that different stakeholders in internationalization of education, such as "international, national and regional governments; private sector; institutions; faculty and students" (p.9), have different ways of explaining the internationalization phenomenon. She also categorized the rationales of internationalization of higher education in two aspects in summing up the previous research work on this question.

On one hand, in terms of economic-political incentives, internationalization of education, mainly higher education, is considered as "diplomatic investment in future economic relations and in future political relations" (p.11) and it pushes economic growth and foreign policy development with technological development, prepares the graduates with more international experience to improve their competitiveness in the global labor market. The financial

interests produced by the higher tuition fees for international students which have been adopted in some countries (such as the UK and US), by the international technical assistance and advisory service, by the collaborative educational programs have become one of the important driving forces of the internationalization of higher education.

Meanwhile, the commodification of higher education stimulates international academic mobility and commercial forces have occupied an increasingly legitimate even dominant place in higher education. (Kirp, 2003; Altbach, 2002; Altbach & Knight, 2007) Moreover, with the changing profiles of international students from scholarship holders/elites to more self-supporting students, the sending countries have given students more freedom to study abroad and meanwhile, the host countries, particularly the top destinations facing the great demand from the market, have developed a more comprehensive system of educational programs responding to international students' needs. The more politically-diplomatically oriented student exchange has developed to a more economically driven mode.

The World Trade Organization (WTO) will provide a regulatory framework to encourage international trade in education and service-related industries as part of negotiating the General Agreement on Trade in services (GATS). (Altbach & Knight, 2007, p.291)

On the other hand, in terms of cultural-educational incentives, internationalization has a 'cultural function' to play. For some nations in particular, this function was interpreted as export of national, cultural and moral values. Others considered that internationalization should reinforce the cultural function of the University and it was elaborated by the former director of UNESCO, Federico Mayor in the following way:

...the cultural function of the European university goes hand in hand not only with its humanistic research, but also with its international dimension. To develop an awareness of the interdependence of peoples and societies in today's world must be one of the basic functions of the universities. (Knight & De Wit, 1995, p.12)

For the institutions, internationalization of higher education pushes them to develop more international collaboration programs which provide the institution with more academic resources and enlarge its international social networks to help its own development. With regard to the academic aspects, the international and intercultural features introduced in the process of internationalization will stimulate the academic staff's critical thinking and remind them of the complexity of the questions and perspectives that they are dealing with in their research. The internationalization efforts are meant to accelerate the mutual understanding and appreciation of the interdependence of nations in terms of social, economic and political

domains. Considering the influence on the faculty and students, international mobility, as one of the major activities of the internationalization of higher education, provides them with more chances to live and study in another culture. This intercultural experience has an effect both on their personal and professional development. For those less mobile faculty members and students, internationalization creates a globalized atmosphere in their study and teaching or research, which helps to increase their awareness and understanding of new developments in different fields in different countries.

The diversification of the rationales indicates that internationalization of higher education nowadays becomes more of a necessity than a choice. This leads to another key question: as the term “internationalization” has been recently frequently used in different research fields, does it mean the same thing when they use the term; in other words, what’s the definition of internationalization, the one that is employed in the conceptualization of this research?

In Knight’s article ‘Strategies for internationalization of higher education: historical and conceptual perspectives’ (1995), she listed some of the previous definitions in other researchers’ works and analyzed them from four different approaches to internationalization: “activity, competency, ethos and process” (p.16).

- The activity approach: in terms of categories or types of activities, exclusively focuses on academic activities.
- The competency approach: in terms of developing new skills, attitudes, knowledge in students, faculty and staff, focuses on the human dimension.
- The ethos approach: focuses on developing an ethos or culture in the university or college that values and support intercultural and international perspectives and initiatives.
- The process approach: frames internationalization as a process which integrates an international dimension or perspective into the major functions of the institution.

On the basis of these previous works, and considering the appearance of new phenomena of internationalizing higher education in recent years, she has produced her own definition and later developed it:

[...] the process of integration the international dimension into the teaching, research and service functions of an institution of higher education. An international dimension is described as “a perspective, activity or program which introduces or integrates an

international/intercultural/global outlook into the major functions of a university or college.
(1995, p.15)

An updated definition was also proposed by Knight in 2003:

Internationalization at the national/sector/institutional levels is defined as “the process of integrating an international, intercultural or global dimension into the purpose, functions or delivery of postsecondary education.” (p.2)

The evolution of the definition proposed by Knight implied the changes and challenges in the new context after years of development. The growing numbers of education providers and the diversification of their educational interests and approaches reinforced the necessity of the embodiment of an international, intercultural and global dimension. Meanwhile, the more general terms such as “purpose, function and delivery” are employed in order to respect the different profiles of education providers and their educational objectives. However, the terms “process” and “integration” stay in the new definition, which re-affirm the continuity of internationalization from a developmental perspective and its basic neutrality. Meanwhile, the term “integration” re-describes the process starting from the individual’s awareness to embedding the international and intercultural dimension into official commitments. Regarding the different emphasis of the definitions given by researchers, this study will be conducted on the basis of Knight’s theory of internationalization and considers that internationalization of higher education is a process starting from awareness or a positive attitude towards developing the international or intercultural dimension in higher education, followed by the endorsement of this attitude in an institutional/sector/national culture, putting the ideas into practice and reviewing the results frequently in order to get improvement.

1.1.2 Regional context: construction of the European Higher Education Area

The previous section mainly concentrated on the theoretical development of rationales and the conceptualization of internationalization of higher education from a global perspective, in other words, it drew a general conceptual map for internationalization of higher education. However, the internationalizing process is highly contextualized in terms of socio-historical and geopolitical development. Here in this section, the internationalization of higher education in Europe is closely examined by going through the important phases of higher education institutional development related to the mobility of students and scholars, particularly in the Middle Ages and after the Second World War.

Four volumes of “A History of the University in Europe” edited by Ridder-Symoens (1 & 2) & Rüegg (3 & 4) and published by Cambridge University Press, have provided the main historical resources for the researcher to understand the origins of the modern university and the related questions that had been raised since its creation but still stay on the focus today.

The university is a European institution; indeed, it is the European institution par excellence...it is a creation of medieval Europe, which was the Europe of papal Christianity...it's moreover the only European institution which has preserved its fundamental patterns and its basic social role and functions over the course of history.... the university is a European institution because it has, in its social role, performed certain functions for all European societies. It has developed and transmitted scientific and scholarly knowledge and the methods of cultivating that knowledge which has arisen from and formed part of the common European intellectual tradition. It has at the same time formed academic elite, the ethos of which rests on common European values and which transcends all national boundaries. (Rüegg, 2003, v.1, p. xix)

Several key elements are well presented in this brief introduction of the European University. First of all, the University is an institution, more than an organization. Secondly, it keeps its fundamental patterns after centuries of development, which implies modifications and changes have been conducted in different socio-economic contexts during different historical periods. Thirdly, it has a social role to play which shows its tight relationship with the development of the whole society. Last but not least, the production and transmission of scientific and academic knowledge have been inherited as part of the European intellectual tradition and the whole academic ethos has been formed based on European values. All these elements are very helpful for us to understand the on-going higher education system reforms in Europe and its relative issues.

The two oldest universities (Bologna and Paris) were created in Europe by the end of the 12th century and in the early 13th century and by the end of the 15th century, a large number of universities were created in the whole of Europe. During this period of time, the mobility of the students and teachers, so-called European “academic pilgrimages” (Ridder-Symoens, 2011, v.1, p.280) had developed into a phenomenal movement. Students and scholars traveled from one country to another, motivated by their eagerness to learn from the best scholars in the most prestigious universities and some of them even studied in several countries. Besides their passion for scholarly knowledge, what other elements exerted push- and- pull in this mobility? To answer this question, we have to concentrate on two main aspects: financial and academic. With regard to the financial support, the profiles of the few elite confirmed their social-economic privilege, which guaranteed all their expenses during the mobility. Moreover, some of the universities also offered scholarships. With regard to the academic support, Latin, the only language for teaching until the 17th century, common curricular

design and the delivery of common degrees in all European universities were identified as the fundamental accelerators for the development of this mobility. Even though the number of these few “elite” was not significant, we could still see its long-lasting impact on the whole European society in terms of knowledge transmission and intercultural communication and understanding between different countries.

Besides their academic knowledge they took home with them a host of new experiences, ideas, opinions, and political principles and views. Also- and this is important – they brought back manuscripts and, later on, printed books. They had become familiar with new schools of artistic expression, and with living conditions, customs, ways of life and eating and drinking habits all previously unknown to them. As most itinerant scholars belonged to the elite of their country and later held high office, they were well placed to apply and propagate their newly acquired knowledge. (Ridder-Symoens, 2011, v.1, p.303)

All the above analysis of European academic pilgrimages remind us of the approaches that we still use nowadays to study student mobility and meanwhile, the principal factors that promote or influence the mobility have been still functioning today.

In the following nine centuries, universities experienced different historical periods and their functioning models and development were greatly influenced by the nationalism of the societies, however, they survived and still stay as key institutions in Europe (Barblan, 2011, v.4, p. 572). By 1939, around 201 universities were created in Europe with 300 specialized institutions of higher education which prepared students for professions in the military, medicine (including veterinary medicine), agriculture, education, music engineering and commerce (Rüegg, 2011, v.4, p.12) and the increasing number of the universities reinforced the idea of the nation-state development. The diversified national education programs, curricula, teaching in national language, and national degrees destroyed the prerequisite conditions for student and scholar mobility. However, the outbreak of the Second World War acted as a turning point for the revival of student and scholar mobility.

The Second World War led to great economic depression for European countries and devastated the university landscape as well, particularly in Eastern Europe. The destructiveness of the war made the world realize two things: the importance of the development of science and technology and the importance of enhancing the communication and mutual understanding among countries. Thus, universities have become the main mission-carrier to fulfil these two demands. In responding to the first demand, universities needed to form more competent and diversified human capital for the overall development of sectors in the society and a series of reforms were implemented: increasing student enrolment,

introducing new learning subjects, diversifying education programs, short-cycle formation in particular and developing the relationship between universities and the private sector, etc.. In responding to the second demand, the globalization of university relationships has become a necessity and meanwhile, some supranational institutions were founded for the purpose of accelerating global stability, economic and cultural development. Several exchange programs of professors and researchers were initiated, such as Fulbright program in 1948 and Humboldt Foundation in 1953 (Rügg, 2011, v.4) and Inter-University Cooperation Programs (ICPs) were also developed in the 1980s.

With regard to the student mobility, we could see its imbalanced development at intra-European and international levels. In the 1950s and 1960s, the major concern of Europe focused on the reconstruction of society and economic recovery. At the international level, the circulation of degree seeking international students was mainly the elites from the developing countries to the colonial and imperialist powers, mostly to the United Kingdom, France and Germany. In the sixties, with a changing relationship between the colonial world and developing countries, the students from developing countries were offered more opportunities to study with scholarship in colonial countries, especially those students whose home countries had a strong cultural and linguistic relationship with host countries. Meanwhile, developing countries received more academic expertise and material support in order to improve their own institutions. At European level, the cross-border student mobility and the intra-European study recognition were mainly promoted by the European Community, the most “active political actor” since the 1970s (De Wit, 2002; European Commission, 1994; Wächter et al., 1999; Teichler, 2009). Multiple programs were implemented in the 1980s and 1990s, such as Erasmus (1987) for student mobility, European Course Credit Transfer System (ECTS, 1989) for a uniform system of credit transfer, Tempus for assisting Eastern and Central Europe etc. (Rothblatt, 2011, v.4, p. 271). After the treaty of Maastricht (1992), various programs have been reconstructed or merged into two large programs: SOCRATES for education and LEONARD DE VINCI for vocational training and ERASMUS became a sub-program of SOCRATES. While maintaining scholarship for mobile students, the program has enlarged the investment in teaching staff mobility and curricula innovation. The success of ERASMUS created a good educational atmosphere not only for the mobile students but also for those domestic students who got benefits from the curricular innovation implanted with a “European dimension”.

The most important reform of the higher education system in Europe started from the 1990s and the construction of a European Higher Education Area (EHEA) was initiated by the well-known “Bologna Process”, which refers to the on-going multi-national reforms among some European countries (signatory nations) and intends to create a ‘barrier-free’ (Papatsiba, 2006) higher education area by establishing structural convergence. The whole process has been considered as turning point in the development of European higher education (Haug, 1999; van der Wende, 2003; Papatsiba, 2006). In the whole context of the Bologna process, increasing student mobility has been taken as the ‘uncontroversial’ aim and one of the ultimate reasons for establishing EHEA (Papatsiba, 2006, p.97). In terms of economic development, students, the major human resources in the labor market, could enlarge their visions and enrich their professional and personal skills, which could be very helpful and productive for the market development. In terms of civic development, the mobility experience could be a facilitator for reinforcing mutual-understanding and forming their identity as European citizens (Papatsiba, 2006).

Moreover, we should also be aware of an important external element which kept pushing the development of EHEA: competing with the American hegemony in higher education. As previously elaborated, the University model was invented in Europe and well-developed during several centuries. The adoption and contextual adaptation were successfully implemented in the US, particularly the further development of the combination of teaching and research and these elements made American higher education institutions more attractive and competitive (Rüegg, 2011, v.4, p.26). Thus, the construction of the EHEA could be one of the means to ameliorate the attractiveness of European higher education and improve its competitiveness for the best talents for study and research at international level; in other words, it’s a way to respond to the internationalization of higher education. Teichler (2009) employed the term ‘Europeanization’ to define the on-going reforms in higher education as the regionally oriented version of internationalization or globalization.

It is frequently addressed with reference to cooperation and mobility. Beyond that, this term also covers such issues as integration, convergence of contexts, structures and substances (European dimension, European culture, European higher education space) or to segmentation between regions of the world (“fortress Europe”)(p.95)

In his definition, Europeanization is interpreted as a process of cooperation and harmonization in terms of contexts, structures and contents in order to facilitate the intra-European mobility and improve the attractiveness of European higher education. Increasing the competitiveness of higher education at a national and European level and creating well-known institutions at a

world level has become the driving force of Europeanization of higher education. However, we should also realize the difficulties, governance problems in particular, facing the universities in the Europeanization and internationalization process.

With the foundation of new universities and other higher education institutions and the spread of mass universities, the nation-state met great funding difficulties. Meanwhile, with the introduction of liberalism in higher education sectors and the transition to entrepreneurial management, universities had difficult choices to make: sticking to the ideology of higher education as a public good or adopting a market model in higher education?

Since the 1980s, we observed two different strategies implemented by the institutions related to their financing system: the British model and the traditional European model, which definitely had great impact on international student mobility.

From 1919 onwards an autonomous university organ, the University Grants Committee, distributed the state's contribution to the universities on the basis of submitted development plans and their implementation. The British universities thus had to compete with one another to finance their basic needs. The Jarratt Report of 1985 recommended the introduction of business-like administrative control systems. The British universities still gained their funding predominantly through competitive bids for public moneys, but the business methods introduced into their administration brought about greater transparency and planned fund-raising. (Rüegg, 2011, v.4, p.15)

The British government adopted the business-like model and started charging students tuition fees. International students enrolled in British universities could pay twice as much as the local students, or even three times. According to the statistics published in the report "Overseas students and Net migration" in February 2013 (presented by the Secretary of State for the Home Department to Parliament), "Education exports (encompassing higher education and further education, schools, English Language Teaching and educational products and services) contribute more than 14bn£to the UK economy each year." However, most countries in Western Europe, in particular Germany, France, Italy and Spain, have zero or low tuition fees which benefits both EU students and other international students without differentiation. They adopted a move towards greater collaboration and exchange and programs were designed to stimulate cooperation in Research and Development (R&D) and in education.

Regardless of the different functioning models of universities in Europe, we could still observe the remarkable achievement of the student mobility. The International educational statistics on education in Europe, principally collected by UNESCO, OECD and Eurostat (UOE), provides researchers with detailed data of student mobility. In 2002-2003, 1.1 million

foreign students (EURODATA term, 2006) were enrolled at institutions of tertiary education in 32 EURODATA countries (EURODATA term, 2006). More than half of the foreign students came from outside of EURODATA countries, among which around 40% were Asian students, 31% African students, 15% European students, 8% Latino-Americans and 6% Northern-Americans. Meanwhile, Chinese students occupied the top of list of this foreign student population. With regard to the host countries, the UK, Germany and France enrolled the largest numbers (more than 60%) of foreign students in EURODATA countries.

1.2 Dual institutional context: a historical product in the global context

The research in higher education development was mainly conducted from economic and management perspectives and focuses on the challenges on the reforms of the system in the French case. In contrast to the measures that have been implemented in the Anglo-Saxon countries (US, UK, Australia, Canada) for raising the numbers of “paying” international students, reforms on the system in terms of teaching and research were considered as a major concern in France. As elaborated Vinokur (2010), “France seems much less interested in increasing its share of the international market of HE teaching services than in developing a competitive R-D university-industry sector.” (p.205) This remark well described the priority of the national higher education reform and in order to understand the rationales, we have to take into account the particularity of the system and its relationship with the nation-state and the private sector. The transformation to a knowledge economy and the globalization of production and transfer of science and technology have been challenging its traditional functioning system. Thus, France has taken the demand of internationalization as a kind of external resource for pushing the internal reforms in its national higher education (Vinokur, 2010). The external impacts and potential internal reforms have mutually worked on each other and created a double role for France: norm-maker and norm-taker (Vinokur, 2010).

As an international society member and participant in the construction of EHEA, France has been trying to figure out how to develop its own strategies for keeping its advantages in the international higher education service market. On one hand, as one of the key members in the European Union, France has been active in promoting intra-European student/academic mobility and research & development collaboration. On the other hand, France has conformed to the demand of developing an international dimension in its higher education and the corresponding reforms have also been implemented.

In a comparative study on internationalization strategies in Europe, Frolich and Vega (2005) explained that

[...] the internationalization of higher education is a complex, multidimensional and often fragmented process. The factors that foster or impede internationalization activities developed at an institutional level cannot be viewed only in the national and international context. There are influences deeply rooted in the normative and cultural insights, such as history and culture; academic and disciplines and subjects; the higher education institution's profiles and individual initiatives; national policies; regulatory frameworks; finance; European challenges and opportunities; and globalization." (quoted by De Wit, 2010, p.5)

Some important perspectives can be drawn to interpret the internationalization of higher education from this comprehensive remark. Firstly, it's no doubt that the institution is the main actor in the internationalization game. In order to better understand an institutional strategy, we should not only contextualize it at national or international level, but also consider it on an individual basis by taking into account its functional system (governance, finance, pedagogical and research activities) and development history. Secondly, the implementation of different institutional activities during the internationalization process is deeply influenced by national culture and norms and the culture of an institution, as developed over time by generations of former leaders sometimes plays a decisive role in nurturing its approach to strategizing internationalization. Finally, as a complex and multi-dimensional phenomenon, the process of internationalization will certainly meet some ups and downs which may be expressed in various forms of cause-effect on the basis of contexts at different scales. In this study, institutional strategy for the attraction of inbound graduates was defined as the core question. Therefore, before getting to the strategies, we should first clarify "what kind of higher education institutions are involved here?" The next section referenced mainly the historical studies on the development of *grandes écoles* and universities (Maguilo 1982, Musselin 2000, 2001, 2007, 2008, 2009). The following one will review the studies on major challenges facing by these two groups of institutions in the new context.

1.2.1 Dual system: a historical product

Few studies were conducted on higher education, universities in particular, before the May 1968 movement. The "Héritiers" (Bourdieu & Passeron 1964) was considered a path-breaking contribution. The scarcity of research continued in the 1990s in terms of historical and sociological studies on French universities (Charle & Verger 1994, Musselin 2001). However, this situation was totally changed later. The review on the development of the dual system

was mainly drawn upon the studies conducted by Verger (2003), Magliulo (1982) and Musselin (2001, 2003, 2006, and 2009).

“Universities” and “colleges” could be considered as two terms globally recognized and employed to describe higher education institutions. For international students or scholars, the term “*grandes écoles*” seems to be confusing. The first question they would like to know is “are they universities or colleges?” or “what are they?” The explanation and definition could be both simple and complicated as well. For those who have some basic knowledge of French higher education, the answer could be “they are elite schools”. By why are they elite schools, what are the differences between universities and *grandes écoles* in France, how to explain the coexistence of these two types of institution? Finding answers to these questions is definitely useful for promoting this group of institutions worldwide, particularly for attracting international students and a historical review of the rationale for the development of this dual system is a ‘must’ beginning.

As noted previously, one of the oldest universities, University of Paris, was created in France at the end of the 12th and in the early 13th century. Its birth was considered as a compromise (Verger, 2003, v.1, p. 51) in the conflict between different parties: the prolific private schools where the masters taught various disciplines and the ecclesiastical authorities.

The University of Paris was in fact a ‘university of masters’, a federation of schools in which, while maintaining their personal authority over their own pupils within their particular schools, the masters, by means of their councils and their elected officers, collectively administered the whole of the studium and abided by a common agreement as regards all matters concerning teaching and examinations. (Verger, 2003, v.1, p.52)

The powerful role of the masters and the federal nature of these institutions mentioned in this remark had greatly influenced the development of the French University model even if the meaning of “University” was changed several centuries later.

In the 16th and 17th centuries some ‘new institutions’, ‘*écoles spéciales*’ (usually translated as special schools), the predecessor of “*grandes écoles*” were created by several French Emperors in response to social demand in terms of science and technology development. In contrast to the disciplines that were taught in the universities (law, medicine, theology, grammar, arts...), these institutions were more utilitarian and oriented to social and economic needs. The title of these institutions also implied the authorities’ intentions to professionalize education in order to cultivate civil engineers and administrative technicians for that epoch. They were designed on a smaller-sized scale, compared to universities, which simplified the

central management and control under the authorities. Two of the world's oldest engineering schools were founded during this period of time, *École des Ponts et Chaussées* (1747) (*École des Ponts ParisTech* nowadays) with specialization in civil engineering and *Écoles de Mines* (1783) in response to the need for the exploitation of mines as a high-technology industry.

With the scale expansion of the special schools and their consolidation in the 18th century, for students, getting educated in these institutions became a guarantee of a privileged employment opportunity in the future. The graduates from these special schools greatly responded to the urgent needs in science, technology and military fields.

During the French Revolution, the universities were closed and replaced by some special schools (Rüegg, 2011, v.4, p.10). The imperial university was founded during 1806-1808 by Napoleon Bonaparte and this new institution was designed on the basis of an extremely utilitarian and minimalist conception. The faculties of the Imperial University were simply divided into two categories: law & medicine and letters & sciences, with one in each academie. The former one aimed to provide education for the future professional practitioners of law and medicine and the latter prepared students for the pursuit of further studies. Therefore, the nationalization and institutionalization of different disciplines became the main reform results. The rules of an individual discipline were followed nationally which reinforced the relationship between peers in different institutions, however the communication between different faculties was greatly reduced, which weakened the University's autonomy in managing different faculties. According to V. Karady (quoted by Musselin, 2001, p.27), the novelty of this reform existed more in integrating the teaching units into a nationally centralized administration system than in creating more new institutions.

In the French model, given its final form by Napoleon, higher education dedicated to the training of higher civil servants and officers, and the academic profession under the control of the state, fell under a bureaucratically organized administration. The same bureaucracy regulated curricula and examinations in detail, supervised the political and religious conformity of teaching, and subjected the behavior of the staff to a quasi-military discipline. This model was very successful in the meritocratic selection and specialized training of highly qualified officials. (Ruëgg, 2011, v.4, p.11)

Meanwhile, the number of these special schools increased somewhat under the reign of Napoleon Bonaparte. Napoleon also made some reforms to reinforce the nation's centralized control of higher education so that it could be used as a tool to serve national objectives. He implemented a tuition fee policy for some special schools, appointed certain members to control the schools board of directors, and modified entrance exams and teachers' recruitment

in these schools. The centralization trend in his reforms accelerated the emergence of the dualism in the higher education system.

During one century's development (1816-1914), the number of special schools grew from 7 to 85 and this considerable expansion resulted in some changes in the schools' geographical locations, their social identity and the centrality of professional needs in their teaching activities. Geographically speaking, most of the oldest special schools were located in Paris, which reflected the centralized control and power of authorities over this sector of higher education. However, after 1816, a group of new special schools were constructed in some main provincial cities. With their proliferation in different geographical locations, some new institutions' identities became more diverse. The diversification mainly resulted from the impact of economic forces on the management of the schools, which on one hand, liberated public authorities from full financial responsibility for running these schools and on the other hand, encouraged the creation of private institutions. Last but not least, social economic development greatly influenced the orientation of teaching programs in these schools and more and more business schools appeared. In spite of all the modifications, these institutions still remained small in scale and stuck to the adaptation of their teaching activities to professional needs. Meanwhile, the competitive entrance selection, non-free tuition policy and monopoly in employment opportunities for their graduates were inherited. All these criteria deprived nearly all working-class students of any opportunity to enter these schools which became officially the transmission center of social privilege. It was also during this period of time that *grandes écoles* became a more preferable title to describe these schools though *école speciale* (special school) didn't disappear completely until the end of the Second World War. According to Magliulo (1982, p.67), the adoption of the new title *grande école* was more than a name change but implied the socio-political intentions for education reform. He indicated that the original reason of the name-changing stemmed from the authorities' counter-proposals of establishing a unique higher education system at the end of the 19th century and the new name showed the eminence of these institutions and their superiority to universities. Meanwhile, in the pedagogical evolution in these institutions during the last three centuries, especially during the 19th and 20th, their production objectives were oriented from specialist talents in a generalized field to generalist talents in a specialized field.

Being considered as social elites, the graduates of these special schools were expected to dedicate their knowledge and power to social and economic development. The teaching courses in these schools were designed to combine both traditional courses, such as classical

humanities, history, literature, etc. with some technical and professionalized courses, such as mathematics, physics and other sciences. After the exam of BAC (baccalauréat) at the end of high school, only top students were recruited to the preparatory classes whose objective was to help them succeed in the entrance tests in these special schools after two or three years' preparation. The winners of the rigorous competition would study for two or three years in the special schools before getting a high-level job in the French civil service. On one hand, the design of courses reflected the impact of social technology and science development on educational programs, which could be considered as the very beginning of the relationship building between training in academic institutions and demands from professional fields. On the other hand, the entrance selection revealed two distinctive co-existing characteristics in the students' profile: academic elites and high social status. In other words, the privilege of being accepted in these schools wasn't open to everyone. Excellent scores and high status family affiliation became the decisive criteria in the selection. This tradition even lasts to nowadays and the social inequality in the highly limited access to this elite formation still remains at the center of social discussion.

In the interval between two world wars, the diversion of social demands from a need for a high-level technical and administration elite to a great demand for qualified workers created a pause in the development of *grandes écoles*.

The title "University" was reborn in the official articles of law promulgated on July 10th 1896 which helped academe to find its place in the French higher education system. According to Renant (1995, quoted in Musselin 2001), it was the first time after the French Revolution that the term "University" reappeared in the administration language. The rebirth of the title was accompanied by reforms which were greatly influenced by the German university model created by Wilhelm Von Humboldt in the early 19th century and the basic principle of Humboldt model was to guarantee academic freedom in teaching and research and the "purity" of scientific research which should not be influenced by social-economic factors.

The driving force behind this emulation of the German mode was quite evident. The French authorities intended to achieve some development in the fields of economy, politics and military defense by imitating the German universities whose scientific "products" greatly contributed to the reinforcement of German national power. However, they didn't take into consideration the specific characteristics of the higher education system in France. In other words, French higher education was highly controlled and designed to maximize its service to

the political needs of the authorities. Thus, academics couldn't obtain genuine freedom over teaching and research. Furthermore, lack of communication and cooperation between different faculties made the reform even more impossible in France. Therefore, the reform at this period ended in failure for the reason that instead of distributing more liberty to universities, it reinforced the centralized control of the authorities.

Although universities re-gained their legal administrative identity, they were still incapable of functioning as an organic institutional body. If we compare the university as a complex system which can be divided into several groups and subgroups, the hierarchy between groups and subgroups could be interpreted as a vertical relationship and the communication among supra-groups or supra-subgroups as a horizontal relationship. Universities of this period still inherited the previous tradition of a discipline-centered way of functioning and the supra-disciplinary cooperation barely existed. Moreover, the development plans of universities were oriented by the objectives of faculties. The management of the academic profession was representative of the overall situation at that moment. It was still discipline-oriented though with some diminution of government's intervention, universities had more and more autonomy over the management of the careers of their academics. The dean of each faculty elected by his or her peers became the main actor in the development of disciplines and each faculty had its own rules or ways of management. Thus, the University existed as a nominal group of different faculties but each faculty functioned in its own way. This historical observation reminds us of the 'power of masters and federation of different schools' in the University of Paris model. The exchange between peers in the same discipline from different universities appeared to be more frequent than the communication between different disciplines in the same university. This situation lasted till the student movement in 1968. As noted by Musselin (2006), 1968 could be seen as an official date for the rebirth of French universities as institutions, however, they were still very weak actors (Charle & Verger, 1994; Freidberg & Musselin, 1989 quoted by Musselin, 2006, p.713). Moreover, the inequality between different disciplines was obvious, which also influenced the prospects for the professional development of academics. Last but not least, on the basis of the economic and political development in different regions and the degree of local authorities' intervention, there was a strong geographical discrepancy between faculties.

After the Second World War, just like other European countries, France was dedicated to promoting social and economic recovery from the destruction of the war. The Trente Glorieuses (glorious thirty years from 1945-1974) proved the effectiveness of the

industrialization process, which helped France achieve a prosperous socio-economic period of thirty years. Considering the development in the universities, the professionalization of education programs, particularly the growth of the short-cycle formation in this period ameliorated the image of universities and turned them into stronger competitors to *grandes écoles*. The positive feedback from employers greatly encouraged the professionalization process in universities. However, it threatened the recruitment and employment of the elites in *grandes écoles*. Therefore, in responding to the implementation of some professionalized specialties in universities, a profound pedagogical, organizational and material modification was launched in *grandes écoles* in order to keep their attractiveness and competitiveness in the higher education market.

Nevertheless, a new social and economic crisis disrupted this prosperous development trend and introduced new problems to these two systems of institutions after 1974. Greatly influenced by the economic crisis, enterprises adopted the strategies of internal qualitative development instead of scale expansion, which caused a large diminution in employee recruitment. The enterprises preferred internal promotion of working staff to hiring new graduates. The expansion of higher education and the reduction in employment opportunities caused serious diploma devaluation. Although the elites from *grandes écoles* were more preferable than the university graduates in the job market, the economic crisis still limited their development.

Meanwhile, comparing with the *grandes écoles*, universities were facing more serious challenges with massification and democratization on one hand and constantly reduced funding from the authorities on the other.

French higher education experienced a very strong quantitative evolution from the early 1960s to late 1990s. During these four decades, under two major evolutionary waves, the registered student population increased sevenfold, from 309,700 to over 2.1 million (MEN: National Education Ministry, 2002). The first wave appeared in the 1960s for the generation who was born between 1930 and late 1940. Even though higher education started to open its door to more candidates, it still remained as a form of relatively elite formation with less than 20% of the young generation who was born between 1948 and 1950 having higher education diplomas. The second wave arrived in the 1980s and lasted till the mid-1990s and for the generation who was born between 1960 and 1977, 43% graduated from higher education institutions. The student population in universities and *grandes écoles* both expanded during

these thirty years. This fast demographic expansion was not specific to France but affected most developed countries to different extents.

The democratization of education could be considered as the foundation of this massification phenomenon and it was also defined as a historical turning point from elite privilege to education chances for the masses. A lot of research has been done from qualitative and quantitative perspectives in order to show whether democratization of education guaranteed the real equality for students in access to universities, such as social equality, sex equality, equality between different disciplines, etc. (Grémy, 1984; Florens, 1984 ; Merllié & Prévot, 1999; Vallet, 2001; Duru-Bellat & Van Zanten, 1999; Merle, 1996 & 2002 ; Euriat & Thélot, 1995...). Besides the aspect of democratization of higher education, three other important elements played important roles as well in the massification of higher education. On one hand, the “the shift to a post-industrial economy” and “the rise of the knowledge economy” (Altbach, Reisberg & Rumbley, 2009, p.v) indicated the transformation from a traditional industrial economy, such as manufacturing industries, to a knowledge-based economy, which means that with the development of ICT (information and communication technology), the power of knowledge seems more important than ever and universities where the knowledge is produced and transmitted shouldered more responsibilities than ever. Therefore, the society requires more and more people to get educated in higher education institutions in order to keep up with the needs of social and economic development. On the other hand, the rise of service industry implied that higher education could be treated more as merchandised service, which could be traded. The appearance of this new phenomenon resulted in a very strong tendency towards the commercialization of higher education and made universities question their traditional ways of governance, organization, teaching and research. In confronting these doubts and pressure, universities found no way out but reform in order to survive the imposition of harsh marketing rules.

The rapid increase in student enrollment needs called for support in financial, human and physical resources, which unfortunately was far underestimated during this massification. The lack of physical infrastructure, inadequate student housing conditions, insufficient quality assurance of teaching, learning and research, all resulted in proportional school drop-out rates and students' academic failure. Thus, the growing population in higher education lowered academic standards to some extent. Meanwhile, students who didn't succeed in finding a chance in domestic higher education chose study mobility to another country, which is considered as one aspect of the motivation for international student mobility.

In order to maximize the openness of education to people, a profound transformation in the higher education system was inevitable. As a result, came the creation and development of short-time professionalized training courses, adult education, lifelong learning and some non-traditional educational forms, such as education at a distance and virtual education in universities. All those reform programs were put forward to better respond to social and individual demands. With regard to the professionalization of education in universities, IUT and STS (*section technicien supérieur*, University Technical Institutes) were created and they actually produced some positive results which met the social demand for high-qualified workers in science and technology domains for the industrialization development during the Thirty Glorious Period. Meanwhile, other forms of education (adult education, lifelong learning, education at distance and virtual education) greatly relieved the constraints of traditional school age and presence requirement, which facilitated the formation or training of employees. The extended sense of “student”, the development of different forms of being educated and the flexible study duration, the embodiment of the lifelong learning idea greatly motivated different groups of the population with diversified social and economic profiles.

The extension of study duration for students started after the end of the Second World War and became a more prominent phenomenon during the mid-1980s. The proportion of the baccalaureates increased to more than 60% in the mid-1990s, compared to 4% of the generation five decades ago. According to INSEE (*Institut national de la statistique et des études économiques*) (2011), the number of students participating the baccalaureate exam reached 627,520 in 2003 (success rate: 80.1%; 502, 016) increased to 638, 661 in 2006 (success rate: 82.1%; 524, 341), dropped to 621, 521 in 2008 (success rate: 83.5%; 518, 970) and after a short increase in 2009 (625, 713), it reached to 621, 215 in 2011 (success rate: 85.6%; 531, 760). In spite of the decreasing number of the baccalaureate participants, the student population who got recruited in higher education institutions kept a moderate increase because of the rising proportion of successful entrants.

If we combine the statistics of the baccalaureate and the whole population, it's easy to find that the big rhythm of demographic expansion has passed. However, in response to the mass demand of access to higher education, the number of higher education institutions has still increased during these years. Therefore, a new situation was created in which these higher education institutions had to compete for the best candidates and divert their focus to a qualitative and durable development plan. The growth in the number of international students

in France since the 1990s has compensated, to some extent, the deficit created by the decreasing local student population and the enlarged number of institutions.

From this overview of the chronological development of *grandes écoles* and universities, it's obvious that there have been quite some divergences in the initiatives of their creation, the level and orientation of their development.

According to MESR, « Sous l'appellation “*grandes écoles*” sont regroupées les écoles d'ingénieurs, les écoles normales supérieures (E.N.S.), les écoles de commerce et les écoles vétérinaires. Ces *grandes écoles* se caractérisent par le niveau élevé de leur diplôme (le plus souvent BAC +5) et par une forte sélection à l'entrée. » On the basis of this official description, we can easily identify the categories in the grande école family and identify the major characteristic of this group of institutions. The rigorous entrance selection can be considered both as a guarantee of recruiting the best students and of offering their graduates the best chances for employment with a high-level diploma.

- Écoles d'ingénieurs (Engineering Schools in sciences and technology)
- Écoles normales supérieures (elite higher education institutions in humanities, letters, education, economy and sciences etc.)
- Écoles de commerce (Business and Management Schools)
- Écoles vétérinaires (Veterinarian Schools)

By re-examining the definition of *grandes écoles* given by MESR, we could find that the delimitation of study duration is missing. Corresponding to various specialties in different *grandes écoles*, the school years differ. Most importantly, with the democratization of higher education and the creation of parallel programs between universities and *grandes écoles*, more and more *grandes écoles* start to accept high school graduates, especially business schools). Considering these differences, we can summarize the lengths of the courses into two periods (Veterinarian Schools not included): three years' study for the candidates from preparatory class who succeed in the entrance selection or candidates from universities recruited by document application; five-year consecutive study for high school graduate winners in the entrance selection in some *grandes écoles*.

On the basis of social, political and educational aspects incorporated in the creation and historical development of *grandes écoles*, they could be described as comparatively small-scale institutions with high selectivity in the recruitment of students, close relationships with professional employment fields, with imposed social responsibilities. Meanwhile, the *grandes*

écoles are also very diversified and ranked differently in terms of their specialties, social identities, reputations, selectiveness and graduates' employment percentage.

According to Veltz (2007, p.9), the *grandes écoles* system is confronted with a profound reform challenge for social, ethical and efficiency reasons. The highly-restricted social categories and orientation towards producing homogenous social elites put French higher education institutions in danger. The separation of research institutions and professionalized teaching institutions held back both scientific and technological development and the adaptability of its higher education system in face of the challenge of internationalization. As a result, together with universities, both types of institutions are meeting more challenges from the social development demands at national and international level and public criticism of their effectiveness, efficiency, re-orientation, new missions and accountability.

1.2.2 A brief review of reforms in French Universities in the last three decades

Many critics refuse the view that higher education should respond to the market and their principal argument relies on the fact that education is a public good in Continental Europe, particularly in France. France has a tradition of anti-globalization (Meunier, 2010; quoted by Hoareau, 2011) for three reasons: avoiding the potential international competition in human resources and economy, the influence this would have on decreasing government authority and strong opposition to the idea globalization, which is seen as equal to Americanization. (Hoareau, 2011)

Researchers nevertheless think that under the national resistance to globalization and the neo-liberal theory in France, some important reforms in higher education governance are still going on. Some researchers explain the French higher education system reforms with policy transfer theory, which was developed in the US context to describe the spread of policy ideas from one state to another (Walker 1969, Gray 1973, quoted in Hoareau, 2011) and refer to “the process whereby one policy setting uses one or many elements from another policy setting” (Hoareau, 2011, p.224). The policy transfer in Europe is considered as a top-down transfer from European institutions to member states or from one state to another. On the basis of this theory, the French domestic governance mode is considered as a replication of the modes of governance and policy ideas inspired by international organizations. However, Musselin & Paradeise (2009) hold that the deep transformation of the French higher education

system is more of a very French process than a product influenced by European and international trends in the last two decades. Here in this study, we would like to evoke two main aspects reflected in the previous reforms: the relationship between HEIs and public authorities, and the relationship between HEIs and the private sector.

As noted before, the current multidisciplinary universities were created after the suppression of faculties of the old republic by the Faure Act in 1968. However, as a young administrative organization, the discipline-based logic was still well preserved in central administration. Even after the replacement by Savary Act in 1984, the management situation in the universities remained weak. The real change started from the introduction of the four-year-contract in 1988. (Musselin, 2001, 2009) The government modified its traditional criteria for allocating funds to the universities and decided that a small proportion of the budget would be allocated through the negotiation conducted between the universities and the Ministry of Education in the frame of a four-year-contract. This reform was passed with surprising ease without raising any conflicts from any parties. Musselin explained this resulted from the viability of the notion of contract (Hall, 1989 quoted by Musselin, 2009) employed in this reform and different parties involved interpreted it in their own way. Musslin (2009) also pointed out that three major effects were witnessed in this contractualization reform.

Firstly, the introduction of this contractual logic has modified the long-time discipline-based assessment and procedures of central administration and in order to validate a contract, they have to consider the feasibility and comprehensiveness of the project at the whole institutional level on the one hand; on the other hand, the real dialogue between the Ministry and the presidents of the universities began, which has enforced the power of the presidents as the head of the whole institution. Secondly, this reform has changed the state-university relationship. The effect of the university president's voice being heard not only strengthened their authority inside the universities but also has changed the hierarchical relationship with the central administration. The contractual procedure has improved the transparency of university governance and the new relationship between state-university demands more openness and trust. However, it also enforced the control from the State (Musselin, 1996 quoted in 2009). Finally, the reform has created an opportunity for the heads of the universities to build up a collective institutional identity. The introduction of this contract affirmed the importance of the 'university' as an entity and the authoritarian way of allocation from the ministry became more flexible and negotiable. The re-definition of the State role to a

certain level strengthened universities' autonomy and this contractual policy was just the beginning of a series of reforms for universities in the context of internationalization.

With regard to the relationships between the local public sectors (regions, departments or cities) and universities, the Region-State 5 Year Contracts (*CPER for Contrat Plan Etat-Région*) started the investment of regions in public research organizations and universities. Many local authorities realized the important role of higher education in the development of the local economy and thus their funding is related to an expectation and a demand. In the 1990s, the programs 'University 2000' and 'U3M' (*Université du troisième millénaire*) were launched by the Ministry to associate the local authorities and enterprises with the planning and funding of the universities in the regions. These contractual policies and programs resulted in the sharing of the higher education and research expenditures between different levels of administrations from ministries to municipal partners. The diversification of funding lessens the state-centered control over universities; however, it also increased the demand for collective competence from the universities in the negotiation of funds with different partners.

In 2006, the introduction of new law LOLF (*Loi Organique relative aux Lois de Finance*) officially announce the membership of France in the New Public Management (NPM) family which has been experimented within higher education in several countries since the 1980s. The LOLF, the law on the new public budgeting and accounting system improved the transparency of the budget system and made it more efficiency-oriented.

Non-selective entrance and massification of higher education have tended to hamper the capacity to provide infrastructure for cutting-edge research (Krull, 2013; Benner, 2011; Caouette & Bian, 2014 in review). Wishing to close the gap with other knowledge societies, some European countries have developed a strategy to concentrate research funding in the highest performing universities through "excellence initiatives" (Benner, 2011; Caouette & Bian, 2014 in review). First invented in 2005 in Germany, the *Exzellenzinitiative* intended to motivate research institutions to compete to win prestigious 'elite' positions (Nature, 2010; Schmoch, 2011). Similarly, the Innovation Platform was developed in 2003 in the Netherlands to promote efficiency and innovation (Marginson et al., 2008). France also followed the similar strategy to develop its research capabilities, the '2008 campus policy' with a 3.5 billion euros competitive funds and the *Initiative d'Excellence* in 2011 with a 7.7 billion Euros budget in order to develop 5 to 10 excellent research clusters (ANR, 2010).

The contractual policy can be seen as a first move by the French central administration in charge of HE in the direction of a more 'evaluative state' (Neave 1988, Neave and Van Vught 1991), relying on procedural rather than substantial intervention. (Musselin 2009, p.30)

The recent introduction of the LRU (*Loi relative aux libertés et responsabilités des universités*, 2007), which could be considered as following-up on the university performance contract, reinforced the importance of university autonomy. Universities are expected to be able to define their own criteria of recruitment of students and employees and have independent fiscal control for reallocating resources according to their own criteria. Considering the long march of the fight for autonomy, the loi LRU redefined the different modes of orientation for universities' development. On the basis of the content of this law, we can understand the unique national context in France and the demands of this internal context on higher education institutions. The main content is divided into five parts, among which the Public service mission of higher education (*les missions du service public de l'enseignement supérieur*), University Governance (*la gouvernance des universités*) and the New responsibilities of Universities (*les nouvelles responsabilités des universités*) are listed as the top three. The orders of content seem to imply the roles of universities as both keepers and survivors in this era. Higher education is considered as a public service which shows its traditional mission of general culture transmission and civic education. As service giver, universities should keep this primary mission in mind. Then, the next two parts elaborate the necessity and obligation of reforms in the new contexts at international, national, regional and local levels. According to the fourth annual report (2011) after the promulgation of this LRU, even though the doubts and critics from the public involved still exist, an awareness of the irreversibility of this movement towards University autonomy has been unanimously reached. The LRU assured the universities of the necessary autonomy for its social partnerships and particularly gave them major responsibility over their internal governance. However, the process of turning a legislative and regulative rule into customary practice is still in a testing period and universities need more support in order to make good use of their autonomy, which is clearly stated in the report:

La question qui se pose aujourd'hui est celle de la réalité de cette autonomie, de son appropriation par les universités et du rôle de l'Etat. Elle doit aller au-delà d'une simple autonomie de gestion afin de donner aux universités toutes les cartes leur permettant d'assurer leur triple mission et de fédérer toutes les forces en présence sur un même site. (Ponsot, 2012, p.5)

With regard to research, the creation of the CNRS (*Centre national de recherche scientifique*) in 1945 established the predominance of this public research organization and it recruits the best researchers to contribute mainly to scientific production. However, to some extent, its presence greatly influenced the research work conducted in the universities where the lecturing professors have to accomplish their teaching missions. The dual system of teaching and research resulted in French universities being badly depicted in the ranking systems, particularly in the first Shanghai Ranking in 2003. In order to improve the research-based performance, a series of research acts have been adopted: PRES (*pôle de recherche et d'enseignement supérieur*) in 2007 offering new territorial networking schemes including universities, *grandes écoles* and the public research organizations, RTRAs (*Réseaux thématiques de recherche avancées*) for developing localized leading edge research with substantive funds and the “*Pôle de compétitivité*” for grouping the industrial research and applied public research activities developed in universities and research organizations (Musselin, 2009). Strong legal and financial incentives have been developed behind all these programs for pushing the HEIs and public research organization’s scientific productivity and meanwhile, all the local and institutional, public and private stakeholders have been fully involved.

Autonomy is always accompanied by demands for accountability. The more freedom the universities enjoy, the more responsibility they have to shoulder and the more accountability they have to respond to external demands. Two importance agencies were created: AERES (Evaluation Agency for Research and Higher Education, 2007) for assessing and evaluating research and teaching in public higher education institutions and ANR (French National Research Agency, 2005-2007) for providing public funding for basic and applied research with evaluation.

Before ending this short review, we have to consider another important mission of HEIs: teaching. As previously stated, the harmonization of higher education structures inside Europe and the credit transfer system challenged the French HEIs, *grandes écoles* in particular. Moreover, structural convergence and incorporation have been also promoted between *grandes écoles* and universities and more professionalized educational programs were introduced to the universities (Dobbins, 2012). Last but not least, the increasing connectedness between local authorities and HEIs, private sectors and HEIs has also influenced the curricula designing and research project orientation.

Academic systems in other developed countries have been confronting similar forces of competition and social demand (Goedegebuure et al., 1994; Dill, 1997). The transformation of the society from industry-based to knowledge-based has put higher education institutions in the center, as they are expected to respond to the increasing demands for scientific research and a high skilled workforce and the performance of the institutions could be decisive for the society's economic competitiveness. Therefore, the effectiveness and efficiency of the higher education system has been continuously questioned and numerous changes and reforms have been demanded. University governance and the relationship between the nation state and higher education institutions are considered as a very important element for the modernization of Europe's universities. (EUA, 2011)

How far have the reforms succeeded? Musselin (2009) noted that since the foundation of the Imperial University of Napoleon four higher education laws have been passed in France (1896, 1968, 1984 and 2007) and the result was summarized as providing more autonomy for universities with its governance transformation. Moreover, she thought that the key to realize this objective was to transform the whole higher education system. The Autonomy Scorecard project was conducted by the EUA (European University Association) to assess the institutional autonomy situation in 26 European countries and offer updated information from "University Autonomy in Europe I" (Estermann & Nokkala 2009). The scorecard intends to be used as a benchmarking instrument and a reference for national policies and higher education institutions. The university is scored in terms of organizational autonomy, financial autonomy, staffing autonomy and academic autonomy. According to the Autonomy Scorecard 2010 (EUA, 2011), French universities were ranked 16th in the medium low cluster (59%) for organization autonomy, 22th in the medium low cluster (45%) for financial autonomy, 27th in the medium low cluster (43%) for staffing autonomy and 28th in the low group (37%) for academic autonomy. It's quite clear that the autonomy of French universities didn't score well and lack of autonomy results in the inflexibility of the whole system to develop its own strategy for internationalization. If we cross the reform effort with the intra-European comparison statistics, it's obvious to get the conclusion that the reform hasn't completely succeeded, and is even far from that.

1.2.3 Studies on *grandes écoles*

Compared to the consecutive reforms that intended or succeeded in changing the French universities, it's a bit strange to find a scarcity of studies on *grandes écoles*. While the French universities were occupied with fighting for their autonomy, what happened in the group of *grandes écoles*? In the preparation for this part of our literature review, we searched again the books, articles and other forms of scientific production related to the internationalization process of *grandes écoles*. The results were not very satisfactory and we would like to summarize some of the long-lasting questions that have continued to fascinate researchers.

The first group of studies focuses on the development of the *grandes écoles* from a historical-social-political perspective, which is also referred to in my description of the dual system of French higher education earlier in this chapter. As noted before, the basic knowledge of this unique national institution is mainly drawn from the book by Magliulo (1982) published by the prestigious publishing editor PUF (*Presses Universitaires de France*). Considering the publication date of this book, it's crystal clear that the information needs to be updated a lot, especially with the economic transformation and the development of new technology and communication.

The second group of studies concentrates on access to the *grandes écoles* in terms of social equality and cultural diversity. In spite of the large expansion of post-compulsory education since the 1950s, the education reforms didn't actually narrow down the social class inequalities in access to education (Brown et al., 2010). The education-based meritocracy is considered as a sustainable characteristic in democratic societies. On the one hand, it offers a justified resolution for managing the tension between egalitarian values and the ongoing reality of inequality. On the other hand, it corresponds exactly to a democratic ideology: the inborn equality and right to fight for one's own position in society (Brown et al., 2010).

In 2001, Sciences PO (Paris) implemented a pioneering step towards cultural diversity by allocating numbers of places for the high school students in the ZEP (*zone d'éducation prioritaire*: products from the positive discrimination politics in France) and this initiative has been imitated by more and more institutions in the group of *grandes écoles*. This kind of the gesture was greatly appreciated in the society. According to Brown et al. (2010), the implementation of the policy came from a very good intention; however, it ignored what is required to decrease the social inequality in access to education. This point of view brought us back to the theory of '*capital culturel*' in Bourdieu's works (1979). It was also evoked

“*aptitudes égales*” and “*visés égales*” (p.166) transmitted the similar information from Bourdieu (1989) “*structure sociale*” and “*structure mentale*” and all these terms implied the interaction between the social status and education. The positive discrimination policies could change the forms of the entrance to *grandes écoles*; however, in order to benefit from the forms of access, students’ must have the competences and meet the expectations. If we consulted the previous social inquiries into the family backgrounds of students in *grandes écoles* (Théolot & Euriat, 1995; Bourdieu, 1987; Albouy & Waneq, 2003), the stereotype is quite clear and *tel père, tel fils* (Thélot, 1982) is a good phrase to summarize the results. Family’s cultural, financial educational and social network situation have played very important roles in children’s educational and later professional development. If the society couldn’t provide better conditions for the families’ evolution, the great intention of all the policies to diversify the access to *grandes écoles* and promote the social ascension of the lower classes will just be like all luxury goods. They are too good to be true because we know we couldn’t afford them and even if we could have them, not so much opportunities we could really make good use of. The expression might be a little banal but the reality is vividly depicted. Therefore, the reforms on the elite formation couldn’t adopt an output-oriented logic but an input-oriented one.

The last group of studies, which is also the emerging one, focuses on the internationalizing process in some privileged *grandes écoles*. A recent research thesis was completed by Darchy-Koechlin (2013), a study of international student mobility in four *grandes écoles*: ENS, X, HEC and Sciences PO. This study presented to us different models employed in its internationalization and the international student population studies and showed these international ‘talents’ institutional experiences in the most prestigious French *grandes écoles* .

Before closing this small section, we would like to say a few words briefly on tuition fees. The coexistence of *grandes écoles* and universities in France is unbelievably accepted and respected, while its existence itself is completely contrary to the deeply rooted egalitarian value in the French society (Musselin & Paradeise, 2009). As noted before, even after decades of reform, the free-tuition fees and non-selection for the universities still remain because charging fees and selection definitely would bias the equality of opportunity and reduce the education opportunities of young adults from the lower social status families. This social consensus confirmed and strengthened the legitimacy of the elite formation and strong selectiveness in *grandes écoles* and mass civilized education in universities. However, we would like to quote another example mentioned by Pechar & Andres (2011) related to welfare

regimes studies. In the liberal welfare regime, US for example, charging high tuition fees is considered as keeping social equity. As the rich families earn much more, lower tuition fees will be unfair for the other social class families considering the fact that some proportion of the taxes paid by the families have already been invested in education. If the universities charge lower fees, the rich families will get more benefit from it. This example is mentioned here not to show which logic is right or wrong but just to introduce another way of thinking. Moreover, the different tuition systems are always accompanied with the corresponding student subsidies and it's quite clear the social student subsidies are comparatively more limited in France than in US, student loan systems for example.

This next section turns to the future of the French higher education. The relationship between universities and *grandes écoles* has always been one of the hottest questions concerning French higher education. Among the several references related to this subject, it is very interesting to often find “*l'impasse* (impasse)” (Picavet, 2007) et “*la fin*” (the end) (Veltz, 2007) to describe the situations in which the dual system are located and to indicate the structural problems created by the ideology of the *grandes écoles*. We could categorize the researchers' view into two groups: (1) the system has met serious difficulties and changes needs to be done. (2) the model of *grandes écoles* should be terminated because it doesn't correspond to the demands of the internationalization of higher education and the globalization of economy. Or, to better respond to the international market demand, the *grandes écoles* should be brought closer to universities and to some extent, the creation of PRES (2007) was oriented to that direction.

We observed more and more bridges have been constructed to facilitate the access to *grandes écoles* for universities students. According to the public statistics publishing by CGE (*Conférence des Grandes Ecoles*) in 2012 on the basis of the data collected from its member écoles in 2011, 54.56% of the total number of students were recruited in 2010 by the ‘concour’ after baccalaureate or after two years study at the CPGE (*Classes Préparatoires aux Grandes Ecoles*); 45.44% by the so-called ‘*voies passerelles*’ (parallel selection mode) among which the majority has conducted their study in the universities and more than 5% of students have already obtained a foreign bachelor degree. The diversified methods of selection have offered comparatively more opportunities for students in pursuit of their elite formation even if the proportion remains still low. More importantly, the more frequent communication between *grandes écoles* and universities prepared for the internationalization of the whole higher education system. As noted before, the LMD structure and the ECT

system are generated in the construction of the EHEA and it also influenced the educational program design and diploma offered in *grandes écoles*. Furthermore, the fusion of the higher education institutions of different levels, is on-going and in June 2013, the minister of higher education and research, Genevière Fioraso signed three “contrats de sites” (site contracts) with Alsace, Lorraine and Avignon, which proposed the fusion of universities and *grandes écoles* (engineering, business/management, etc.) public or private in order to push the intra-regional institutions’ coordination, develop collective research projects maximize the allocation of resources and educational program offers. This contract has replaced the PRES by *communauté universitaire* (University Community) and is criticized by many researchers and institution leaders (Le Monde 2013, enseignementsup.blog.lemonde.fr), among which the principal critic insists on the overly developed administrative body and lack of new mode of governance.

Another recent proposition in the Fioraso Law has also raised a hot academic discussion: curriculum entirely in English will be soon developed on a large scale in French higher education institutions (etudiant.lefigaro.fr). This proposition is based on the expectation of increasing French shares in the international student market, particularly in attracting more non-francophone students (from actual percentage of 12% to 15% by 2017). Even though some French language defenders, especially researchers in Letters are not satisfied, this proposition is warmly welcome by the CPU and CGE because in fact 30% of the courses are already in English in engineering schools, 80% in business schools and with regard to university education program, having a certain percentage of courses in English for postgraduates majoring in sciences and technology or management is quite prevalent. Moreover, the importance of English is also predominant in research.

The last part of the studies focuses the diversification of training programs in different *grandes écoles* and most research contributors are closely related to the different groups of *grandes écoles*, engineering schools and business schools in particular. The official definition of ‘*grandes écoles*’ quoted before gives a very general description of internal classification. Meanwhile, the hierarchical positions inside the group also exists to distinguish one from the other in terms of their relationship with the different ministries, funding resources, legislative status, connectedness with the private sector and graduates’ employment.

Different levels of privilege the *grandes écoles* enjoy are decisive for degrees of competition they are put in. It’s evident that the most national prestigious *grandes écoles* in France have

no or few rivals from inside the country; however, they're facing more competitors at the international level which means when they develop their institutional strategies, they're more internationally-oriented. Nevertheless, for the most members in this group of *grandes écoles*, they're not that 'grande' and benefit comparatively less resources than the 'big' ones. For them, they have their own priorities on the list of strategies, such as gaining more shared at national level, developing closer relationship with the local public and private sectors and creating more job opportunities for their graduates.

Internationalization of educational programs aiming at helping students develop their international competences in *grandes écoles*, business schools and engineering schools in particular started in the middle of the 1980s. The demands from enterprises and the support of Foreign Ministry were considered as a 'push' factor in the development and many intra-European programs were created. Many indicators were identified to evaluate the internationalization level of these institutions: international network building, double diploma agreements, curricula harmonization, development of joint diploma with foreign institutions, proportion of international students recruited, percentage of foreign researchers in the research laboratories (Lazuech, 1998). Although the indicators have been more diversified during these years, we could still tell the internationalization awareness and practice were far more developed in *grandes écoles* than in universities.

Universities and *grandes écoles* both are facing some serious challenges in the context of internationalization; however, we should also differentiate the nature of the problem. Sarkozy (2007) mentioned that the autonomy of the universities have been the key to succeed in the global economy, which is exactly what the universities has been going through during the last three decade and even if it's still earlier to predict the results of the LRU, we could consider it a good start. This first step is very important for the following reforms. On the other side, for the *grandes écoles*, they possess all the privileges as noted before, in terms of student resources, teaching quality, financial situation, human resources and infrastructures etc.. Fifteen years ago, Lazuech summarized the two major questions in the internationalization of *grandes écoles*: how to achieve an international excellence for its national elite formation and how to gain good reputation in the international market (1998, p.66). Fifteen years later, we know they're confronting more than that. The professionalization of their teaching programs and the great responsiveness to the private sector are not enough in this new context and that explains why the third 'mission' appeared: innovation, the challenges produced by the new mode of knowledge-based economy.

1.3 International student mobility research

Recruiting international students seems so natural nowadays and few have interest to ask why. It was only around two decades ago that researchers started to get interested in international student mobility which was considered as a product of increasing cross-border education and a classic component in reinforcing the development of the internationalization of higher education (Teichler, 2004; Altbach & Knight, 2007; Knight, 2004; De Wit, 2010, 2011).

Why do international students want to study abroad? How do they choose the host country and institution? How do they live their experience abroad? Why do host countries / institutions want to recruit international students? How do they host international students? Finding the possible answers might help us better understand the complexity of international student recruitment. Numerous research works have tried answering these questions from different perspectives.

1.3.1 General studies on international student mobility

Firstly, to explain why international students seek education abroad, the ‘push-pull’ model has often been employed to understand their motivation and choice of host country. (Neice and Braun, 1977; Cummins, 1986; Lee and Tan, 1984; Agarwal and Winkler, 1985; Glaser, 1978; Rao, 1979; Altbach and Lulat, 1985; Mazzarol and Soutar, 2002; Sirowy and Inkeles, 1983; Chen, 2007) For some of them, it is a good chance to broaden their cultural and intellectual horizons. For others, their main purpose of going abroad is to seek better education resources, especially for those who study a pioneering field which is academically under-developed in their home country, or for graduates of high academic level. All of these factors could be considered as ‘push’ elements from their home countries. Meanwhile, there are ‘pull’ factors that also have an impact on students’ choices of destination, such as the good reputation and strong academic influence of the host institution, which is definitely an attraction for students coming from abroad. In response to student mobility, some countries have raised the tuition fees for international students, while others have made favorable policies in order to attract high-skilled immigrants.

However, in recent years, we observed that sometimes the ‘push’ factors could work in an untraditional way. The economic development in some Asian countries, such as China and the Republic of Korea, contributes to an increasing population of Asian students abroad. Better

financial situations provide them with more opportunities to study abroad. In a word, 'push' and 'pull' theory does explain the reasons for student mobility to some extent. However, it focuses mainly on the objective context. Student mobility can be interpreted not only as a phenomenon that reflects the politico-economic development of international society and the attraction of different cultures, but also as a matter of personal choice and agency.

Secondly, international student's intercultural experience has been another focus of research. Numerous studies and surveys have been conducted from different perspectives on international student's experience abroad in English-speaking countries concerning international students' identity development (Pederson, 1991; Hayes and Lin, 1994; Appadurai, 1996; Sen, 1999; Marginson, 2010); international students' linguistic proficiency and their social/academic integration (Yang et al., 2006; Hayes and Lin, 1994; MacIntyre et al., 1998; Li and Gasser, 2005; Hullett and Witte, 2001; Matsumoto et al., 2004; Ward et al., 2004; Perruci and Hu, 1995; Marginson, 2010); international students' financial situations and work (Abu-Ein, 1995; Xia, 1991; Cheng, 1999; Li and Kaye, 1998; Curtis and Williams, 2002; Marginson, 2010); intercultural relationship and network building (Church, 1982; Triandis et al., 1988; Misra, 1999; DiTommaso and Spinner, 1997; Rosenthal et al., 2006; Brislin and Yoshida, 1994; Demir and Tarhan, 2001; Berry et al., 1989; Berry, 1997; Marginson, 2010).

Papatsiba (2003) noted that mobility could be a project of constructing the self (*trajectoire de la construction de soi*) as well as a process of self-reorientation. The process is characterized by self-re-identification, a re-consideration of one's relationship with one's original country and culture, a test of one's adaptation abilities and a reflection of openness and socio-cultural tolerance. Furthermore, for a student, the principal purpose of mobility is to enrich one's knowledge, broaden one's worldview and prepare for future professional life. Therefore, in spite of the differences in their social, financial and educational backgrounds, to be flexible, proficient in the host language and be active in social/academic integration, are the keys for international students to succeed in this experience. However, mobility experience can also be a double-edged sword. On one hand, the cultural dialogue can help students enlarge their views and get a better understanding of a different social and cultural context; on the other hand, mobility sometimes might result in misunderstanding or stereotyping of the host country (Spencer-Rogers, 2001; Fatima, 2001; Lee and Rice, 2007; Spencer-Rodgers and McGovern, 2002; Li and Kaye, 1998; Butch and McGrath, 2004; Li et al., 2002; Marginson, 2010). This contradictory situation explains why Murphy-LeJeune (2003) recommended

inventing a new definition of the word “foreigner”, appropriate to contemporary social development. In her opinion, the combination of strangeness and familiarity perceived between actors from different cultures produces divergence along different dimensions (spatial, social, cultural and symbolic) and the contemporary “foreigner” could be defined as an actor capable of adapting to new social situations. Her new definition of “foreigner” implied that international students should be foreigners of a new type in this era and equipped with diverse competences for their adaptation to their host country.

Finally, it is important to examine the official reports, documents and statistics published by national, regional and international organizations. The quantitative resources from these documents clarify the dimensions of international student mobility from a macro perspective, providing primary information on such aspects as demography, geography, education level & fields, source & target countries, etc. Meanwhile, considering the diversity of difficulties and problems encountered by international students, some reports based on host countries’ policies and studies of students’ actual experience show us various possibilities to help them out.

1.3.2 Studies on international student mobility in France

Compared with the scientific contributions to international student mobility studies in English-speaking countries, French/French-speaking researchers’ works were a little behind. Most references in France have been produced by international postgraduates and PhD students (Coulon, 2003). Among the existing literature (masters and doctoral theses and part of doctoral thesis not included), some reports introduced the general study and living situations of international students in France at a national level (Borgogno & Vollenweider-Andersen, 1998; Salma, 1999; Coulon, 2003; Ennafaa & Paivandi, 2008); some focused on the study of a specific student population, including their linguistic, academic and social integration problems (Hu, 2004; Mazzella, 2009; Agulhon & Xavier de Brito, 2009; Gaultier & Masselin, 1973; Traore, 1985; Guimont, 1998; Amougou, 1997); some are more concerned about the challenges and opportunities for France in the context of the internationalization of higher education (Cohen, 2001; Harfi, 2005; Harfi & Mathieu, 2006).

The three main parts in this literature review have summed up in general the research works related to the study in this thesis. The first part of the presentation explained the theoretical

framework for understanding the incentives of internationalization. The second part concentrated on the influence of internationalization at regional at national levels. This part started with the description of the process of the Europeanization of higher education, the construction of EHEA in particular and major evolution of standardization of system inside Europe. Then, at national level, the dual French higher education systems was reviewed from its creation and development process and followed by a summary of the big reforms of the system in the last three decades. The last part in this chapter mainly focused on international student mobility research and numerous studies of this phenomenon that have been conducted from different aspects including motive-centered, experience-centered and output-oriented research either from nation/institution or international student perspectives at national, regional or international level.

1.3.3 My master research: a comparative study of international student's experience in France and China

A comparative study of international students' experience in China and France was conducted by the researcher in 2010 which was based on the experiences of 16 international students in two universities in France and China. Three levels (micro, meso and macro) of analysis were implemented on three phases of students' experiences abroad (preparation phase, adaptation phase and transformation phase) by considering students as individuals, members of family or community and of a society. As host countries, France and China both have their distinctive advantages to attract international students in terms of culture, economy and politics. Regarding the students' adaptation to the host context, the macro-environment sometimes creates barriers, such as the hosting policies, the provision of services and social atmosphere. Meanwhile, the micro-factors, such as students' personality, experiences, cross-cultural adaptability and study ability also help to understand the students' adjustment process. It also shows that frequent exchanges between different countries help students develop an increasingly receptive mindset, while reinforcing their adaptive skills. With regard to the data analysis, the host country's cultural-social-political features and students' personal interests & future professional development concerns are considered as the main motivation for mobility. Meanwhile, different roles played by the students in this experience of mobility, as traveler, explorer and investor were also taken into consideration.

According to the interviewees' discourses in this study, from the cultural perspective, the international students' experience in their host country could be considered as a process of discovering and exploring the richness and diversity of cultural heritage. As a core component of culture, language holds the key to open the door of a country; therefore, the choice of a host country is above all language-oriented. It's easy for students to choose a host country whose language system and culture is quite similar to theirs. Meanwhile, the image creation and information diffusion about the host country also have great influence on international students' decisions of mobility. For example, high fashion, luxury products, romantic love, freedom, architecture, etc. are usually the fantasized elements of France for international students. From the economic perspective, the choice of mobility can be seen as a student's personal investment, which follows the common rules of all investments and a background check of the intended investment field is a first step. From a social perspective, the government policies related to visa requirements, specifically those concerning financial requirements and employment opportunities are students' major concerns. At the institutional level, the provision of service before and after students' arrival has big influences on their decision and on account of the imbalanced level of development in host countries; all these differences do exist in various ways. From a future professional development perspective, considering the priority of science and technology in international collaboration, the production of new knowledge is placed on the top of the list in every country's development policies. This has led, in turn, to a standardization of higher education, which makes higher education more accessible to international students, giving them more chances to obtain globally recognized qualifications. At the same time, the inflation of degrees has caused intense social competition and some devaluation of academic standards. As investors, international students have clear idea of potential payback for their studies. For those who can't continue their study at home because of the extremely competitive atmosphere there, international mobility offers them a second chance. In addition, the degree devaluation in the job market in some countries pushes their students abroad for better working opportunities. With the development of economic globalization, students with an international study and work background are likely to have more leverage in the job market.

On the basis of the data analysis in this study, the interviewees considered that their mobility experience really helped them with their personal development. Studying abroad meant they had to deal with everything by themselves, which could be painful but encouraging. Starting from their daily life, they were in charge of the housework, cooking, arranging time schedule,

personal consumption budget and all the trivial problems, which would have been taken care of by their parents at home. Then most importantly, they realized the importance of being independent and they drew lessons from what they experienced. Living in two cultures, on one hand, gave the students a new perspective on their original culture and society; on the other hand, it created the inevitable cultural conflicts corresponding to the distance between two cultural systems. Most of the students were very open-minded in facing cultural differences. Meanwhile, the contact with students from different cultures helped them develop their tolerance with different personalities and behaviors. The international students could also take advantages of the mobility experience to see the reality of the host country with their own eyes.

In addition, as explorers, their mobility was considered as a journey of self-development and world discovery for international students. The experience abroad strengthened students' social and cultural identity as a product of their own country; on the other hand, the experience made them realize different ways of doing things and different interpretations of reality. By contact with people of different cultures, they got chances of learning in an international context. The opportunity of living in a new context made students think and reflect.

Last but not least, students' motivation for studying abroad had an impact on their future orientation during the mobility. For some, the experience of mobility served them as a tool to find a job. For some, it was an important period of time during which they could figure out what they really want to do in the future. Their curricula vitae were more attractive with the mobility experience, which showed their future employer their ability to adapt and work in an international context and their linguistic competence. Meanwhile, mobility helped them make acquaintance with their future colleagues, familiarized them with the development level of certain fields and led to opportunities for future cooperation.

Mobility abroad is both an academic and emotional journey for students, since they will grow professionally and personally in a new environment. It gives students confidence in their strong points as they have the opportunity of practicing what they have acquired. It also helps them find out what they should learn and discover their potential, in terms of autonomy, adaptability, self-confidence and communicative skills, in a brand new environment. At the same time, it brings them face to face with risks they may encounter in exploration of the unknown.

Chapter 2 Conceptual Frameworks: from a review to a reconstruction of the views, from a revisit to a re-interpretation

The richness of research on the internationalization of higher education and international student mobility has prepared the general framework for this study. However, looking at the institution as both the key agent for internationalizing its activities and programs in order to attract inbound student mobility and for being internationalized under the socio-economic-political impact from different scales needs more specific institutional frameworks.

2.1 Interpreting the French HEIs transformation with a new-institutional approach

According to UNESCO's declaration (2005, quoted in Brennan et al. 2008), the development of a global information society demands changes in both internal and external functions of HEIs. Externally speaking, institutional reform has to be oriented by politics at regional, national and international levels and it should better serve the economic-cultural development of society. Meanwhile, higher education institutions should build harmonious relationships with schools of different levels and as well as with other HEIs in order to make their educational programs more accessible to all and meet the need of the majority. Internally speaking, besides the traditional mission of general education and cultural transmission, institutions should create better educational and research conditions for their students and faculties.

The political environment and market impact are considered as external constraints or incentives for the institutions, both universities and *grandes écoles*. The external forces can only work through the internal factors of the institution in order to achieve their political or economic demand from the institutions. Thus, the construction of the framework starts with the theories of institution, which is considered as the first and fundamental step for the following theoretical construction.

2.1.1 Institutions and institutional theory

In this study, the word "institutions" has become a general term to replace both *grandes écoles* and universities. According to the Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English (7th edition, p. 805), "institution is a large important organization that has a particular

purpose, for example a university or bank”. According to the Dictionnaire CULTUREL en Langue française (Robert, 2005, p.2030), “les institutions sont l’ensemble des formes ou structures fondamentales d’organisation sociale, telles qu’elles sont établies par la loi ou la coutume (dans un groupe humain), et spécialement, celles qui relèvent du droit public ”. From the definitions of institution in two languages, we can easily understand the relationship between institution and organization, which is described more clearly in the French version.

Institutions are defined as “multifaceted, durable social structures, made up of symbolic elements, social activities, and material resources”. (Scott, 2001, p. 49) Institutions are relatively resistant to change (Jepperson, 1991, quoted by Scott, 2001) and tend to be transmitted across generations, to be maintained and reproduced (Zucker, 1977, quoted by Scott, 2001). However, Scott still argues that

Although institutions function to provide stability and order, they themselves undergo change, both incremental and revolutionary. Thus our subject must include not only institutions as a property or state of an existing social order, but also institutions as process, including the processes of institutionalization and deinstitutionalization (p.50)

His argumentation shows that the institutions could experience a process of change either slowly or abruptly. It reminds us that under the influence of the by-products of internationalization of higher education, particularly in international student recruitment, the HEIs are also facing a process of change. In order to understand how the change happened, we should be aware of the basic characteristics of the institution.

According to Scott (2001), institutions exhibit these properties because of the process set in motion by “regulative, normative and cultural-cognitive” elements which are also considered to be three pillars of institutions. The pillars should be distinguished from each other in order to identify the change process and the environmental situation confronting the institutions. However, as the inter-pillar communication does exist in reality, it could be difficult to make the distinction. (Scott, 2001, p.69-70)

The regulative pillar functions as the part that constrains and regularizes behaviors and “these regulatory processes involve the capacity to establish rules, inspect others’ conformity to them and as necessary, manipulate sanctions in an attempt to influence future behavior”. (Scott, 2001, p.52) The definition indicates that a coercive mechanism is set up to keep the structure of the institution and the rules, regulations, laws and sanction are the indicators in the pillar.

Normative pillar includes values and norms, “defining goals and objectives and designating appropriate ways to pursue them. It is typically viewed as imposing constraints on social behavior and empowering, enabling social actions”. (Scott, 2001, p.54) The prescriptive, evaluative and obligatory dimensions are introduced to social life. The rules in this pillar are considered as norms and values to guide the behavior of actors. The moral dimension is fundamental for stabilizing the institution and making it legitimate.

The cultural-cognitive pillar signifies the “shared conceptions that constitute the nature of social reality and the frames through which meaning is made”. (Scott, 2001, p.57) The taken-for-grantedness and the shared understanding are taken to be basic factors.

Graph 2 Three pillars of institutions (Scott, 2001, p.52)

	<i>Pillar</i>		
	Regulative	Normative	Cultural-cognitive
<i>Basis of compliance</i>	Expedience	Social Obligation	Taken-for-grantedness Shared understanding
<i>Basis of order</i>	Regulative rules	Binding expectations	Constitutive schema
<i>Mechanisms</i>	Coercive	Normative	Mimetic
<i>Logic</i>	Instrumentality	Appropriateness	Orthodoxy
<i>Indicators</i>	Rules Laws Sanctions	Certification Accreditation	Common beliefs Shared logics of action
<i>Basis of legitimacy</i>	Legally sanctioned	Morally governed	Comprehensible Recognisable Culturally supported

As noted in the definition of institution, it’s fundamentally a social organization, which implies that it can be influenced by and also be able to respond to its environment. Moreover, in face of the same or similar environment, the institutions won’t have the same experience or respond to the demand of environment in the same way (Oliver, 1991; Lawrence & Lorsch, 1977; Scott, 1998; quoted by Luijten-lub, 2007). Two explanations were identified for this parallelism between organizations and their environments: “The formal organizations become matched with their environments by technical and exchange interdependence and

organizations structurally reflected socially structured reality (Berger and Luckmann, 1967)” (Meyer & Rowan, 1977, p.346)

As previously evoked in the literature review, considering the fact that the centralized control of government over HEIs in terms of governance and financial support, the government performs as the regulative pillar, which establishes the rules to constrain the HEIs and gives guidance for their future development. However, in an era of globalization, higher education is not only regulated by government which is called an external hierarchy by Wagner (2004), but also the marketing and community. With regard to the national context, French higher education could neither be regulated by market rule nor be isolated from the international trend. The declining control from the government will lead to the increasing impact of market rules on higher education and demand efficient and pro-active responsiveness from the institutions themselves. In Wagner’s theory (2004), “higher education institutions can be hierarchically organized and internal hierarchy is often strengthened as higher education institutions are seen in need of increasing their capacity to act and react in an ever more fluid and mobile environment” (p.11). The internal hierarchy functions in the way of a normative pillar and the institutions define their own objectives and ways of realization by taking account of their own structures of organization, the value of academic freedom and pursuit of knowledge. Besides the marketing and hierarchy regulation, higher education is also regulated by the community rules, such as the interrelationship between colleagues, students-teachers, the institution’s culture & ideology and characteristics of individual disciplines. Thus, we observed that the process of change in the institution is under the impact of the external factors and the interactive relationship between the external influence and the internal pillars could produce the real change. In this study, the French HEIs are experiencing an incremental change in the global context of internationalization under the impact of the declining central control from the government and increasing market functioning logic. All of these external factors have been challenging the three pillars of the HEIs but what kind of change are we expecting?

In this study, the theory of the institutional isomorphism is also employed as useful frameworks because “institutional isomorphism’ may help explain a sector’s convergence on particular organizational models” (DiMaggio and Powell, 1991; Scott, 1995 quoted by Kaplan 2006, p.241). The powerful dominance of the American-model practices on internationalization of higher education has made institutions and states to consider it as best practice and imitate. Is it real and in what way?

Institutional transformation is defined as “alters the culture of the institution by changing underlying assumptions and overt institutional behaviors, processes and structures; which is deep and pervasive, affecting the whole institution; which is intentional and occurs over time.” (Eckel et al. 2001, p.5) Several markers were identified to show the evidence of transformation and they were classified into explicit indicators: visible changes in structures, policies and practices; and implicit indicators: attitudinal and cultural evidence. (Eckel et al. 2001, p.8)

In this study, the new institutional approach is adopted to analyze the HEIs’ transformation in the global context of the internationalization. New institutionalism is principally interpreted in three approaches: economic/rational, sociological and historical. (Aspinwall & Schneider, 2000; Hall & Taylor, 1996; Kariithi, 2001; Powell & DiMaggio, 1991; quoted by Witte, 2006) The three strands of institutionalism are considered similar because they’re all exploring the influence of the institution on individual’s behavior (Hall & Taylor, 1996; quoted by Witte, 2006). However, they’re distinguished from each other in terms of definition of institution, the assumptions about actor behavior and the relationship between institutions and actors.

Graph 3 Three new institutionalisms

Dimensions	Sociological institutionalism	Historical institutionalism	Economic/rational choice institutionalism
Concept of institutions	Institutions as ‘culture’; stresses norms and values enshrined in ‘patterns of behaviour’, but also includes rules	Equal weight given to formal and informal rules, procedures, norms and conventions	Rules, procedures

Dimensions	Sociological institutionalism	Historical institutionalism	Economic/rational choice institutionalism
Relationship between institutions and actors	Institutions provide "moral or cognitive templates for interpretation and action" (Hall & Taylor, 1996). Institutional norms & values internalised by individuals	Institutions influence actors perceptions and preferences, but do not determine them	Institutions provide the incentives, scope and limits for action and thus constitute the framework in which utility maximising behaviour of individuals takes place
Actor motivation	Concern with legitimacy and appropriateness (March & Olsen, 1989); 'culture'	Self-interest as well as normative goals; modified egoism; 'calculus' and 'culture'	Narrowly defined economic self-interest; 'calculus'
Concept of agency	No separate agency	"institutional actor" = agency constrained or structured by common agreement	Methodological individualism
Time horizon	Long term	Long term	Short term
Independent and intervening variables	Institutions as major independent variables and actors as intervening	institutions as independent variables and actors as intervening	Actors as the independent variables and institutions as intervening
Typical research method	Inductive; case studies, thick description	Mixture of inductive and deductive approaches; analytical case studies	Deductive; illustration of hypotheses

Source: adapted version from Aspinwall & Schneider (2000) by Witte (2006)

In this study, our research perspective is closer to the historical institutionalism.

Historical institutionalism is concerned not just with how a particular set of rules affects the strategic orientations of individual actors and their interactions, but also with the broader issue of the ways in which institutional configurations define what Skocpol has termed 'field of action' that have a very broad influence not just on the strategies of individual players but on the identities of actors and the networks that define their relations to each other. (Thelen 2002, 104 quoted by Witte, p.35)

It helps us understand the divergence of the actors' reaction and action in the universities and *grandes écoles* in the process of institutionalization of internationalization and their internationalizing approaches, because the two groups of institutions are strongly influenced by the informal rules and institutional configurations.

2.1.2 External incentives in higher education

The basic knowledge of institutions' functioning system helped us understand how they could react to the external and internal demand. This part focuses on the elaboration of the emerging universal mechanism to challenge or transform the higher education system through which we would like to explore whether there's a model for the French institutional transformation in the context of internationalization.

The institutions of government and higher education has been changed under the impact of economic force worldwide (Dill, 1997). If ten years ago the nations argued about the introduction of market in higher education, it seems that nowadays, not matter what the debate is, nobody could escape away from the market influence because the academic system are facing the similar competition and demands from the society (Goedegebuure et al., 1984; quoted by Dill, 1997).

The global dimension has created and developed the benchmarking system and the heavy weight of knowledge-driven economic development pushed the nations and institutions to find and initiate the best international practice. As noted before, the institutional isomorphism is theoretically an offer to consider; however, the hegemony of one single model seems unreasonable for a simple reason that besides the embeddedness in national context and traditions, each institution has its own story and uniqueness. Facing the pressure from both national and international level and the changing realities, institutions have to develop its adaptive competence to the external environment and transform to be more efficient and responsive. Higher education institutions are being involved in multiple levels of competition; however, the results of each level are closely related.

We'll start from the birth of global referencing system. According to Altbach (2011), mass higher education, competition and commercialization of higher education are the main causes for the appearance of ranking systems, which have become more and more widely accepted with the internationalization of higher education. Marginson & van der Wende (2007) considered that only one model of institution was covered in the global comparison, which is the comprehensive research-intensive university. And he also noted that the ranking systems couldn't completely describe the true situations of higher education and this incompleteness could be highly biased for some HEIs. The Academic Ranking of World Universities (ARWU) conducted by Shanghai JiaoTong University and the Times Higher Education World University Rankings (THE) are widely considered as two major international rankings.

The first publication of ranking was issued in 2003 by Shanghai Jiao Tong University and it has aroused a global reaction from different stakeholders in higher education. Six objective indicators are used to rank world universities: ① numbers of alumni and staff winning Nobel Prizes and Fields medals, ② number of highly cited researchers selected by Thomson Scientific, ③ number of articles published in journals of Nature and Science, ④ number of articles indexed in Science Citation Index – Expanded and Social Sciences Citation Index, and ⑤ per capita performance with respect to the size of the institution (<http://www.shanghairanking.com/aboutarwu.html>).

Table 4 indicators and weights for ARWU

Indicators and Weights for ARWU			
Criteria	Indicator	Code	Weight
Quality of Education	Alumni of an institution winning Nobel Prizes and Fields Medals	Alumni	10%
Quality of Faculty	Staff of an institution winning Nobel Prizes and Fields Medals	Award	20%
	Highly cited researchers in 21 broad subject categories	HiCi	20%
Research Output	Papers published in Nature and Science*	N&S	20%
	Papers indexed in Science Citation Index-expanded and Social Science Citation Index	PUB	20%
Per Capita Performance	Per capita academic performance of an institution	PCP	10%
Total			100%
* For institutions specialized in humanities and social sciences such as London School of Economics, N&S is not considered, and the weight of N&S is relocated to other indicators.			

Source: Academic Ranking of World Universities 2013 (retrieved May 4th 2014) from <http://www.shanghairanking.com/ARWU-Methodology-2013.html>

The sub-rankings are also available in different subjects (mathematics, physics, chemistry, computer sciences and economics/business) and fields of study (SCI, ENG, LIFE, MED, SCO). Although we could easily find the bias of the indicators favored in special fields and for some very strong research universities, we couldn't deny the fact that today it's still one of the most consulted ranking systems by students and families, HEIs, policy-makers and employers. The THE seconded the place after the SJTU ranking by evolving more fields and subjects of study in its system, such as arts and humanities and more importantly it takes the teaching aspects of the universities into account. Five categories are set up with 13

performance indicators for ranking the overall universities: ①teaching: the learning environment (30%), ②research: volume, income and reputation (30%), ③citations: research influence (30%) ④ international outlook: staff, students and research (7.5%) ⑤industry income: innovation (2.5%). Compared to the SJTU ranking, it put more emphasis on the institutional reputation and internationalization of HEIs and as a result, the ranking is considered as give more favor to those institutions with more presence at the degree market (Marginson & van der Wende 2007). If we cross-examine these two rankings, we could easily identify the similar positioning of universities, particularly the most prestigious ones. Following the prominence of the two rankings, more and more nations and agencies are interested into building their own ranking worldwide, among which we find QS World University Rankings by Quacquarelli Symonds, Performance Ranking of Scientific Papers for World Universities by Higher Education Evaluation and Accreditation Council of Taiwan, Ranking Web of World Universities by CCHS, CHE-Excellence Ranking by Center for Higher Education, UTD Top 100 Business School Research Rankings by the UT Dallas' School of Management, etc. Why the global rankings are so popular? What's in common in all these ranking systems? What does the ranking system serve for?

Hazelkorn (2011) mentioned that global ranking is inevitable because cross-national comparison is by-product of globalization and she also predicted that the popularity will be intensified in the future. The popularity of the global ranking is also interpreted by Marginson and van der Wende (2007) as satisfaction for the readers because it confirms the reputation of the most well-known universities in the US and the UK and seems plausible. As noted before, the comprehensive- research-intensive universities are mostly targeted and favored in the global ranking and the research output is particularly highlighted as a performance indicator. On the one hand, research is the most globalized activities in higher education and this global dimension seems comparatively easier to be measure. On the other hand, the research capacity of the universities has played both important roles in promoting national economic development but also in attracting the other institutions, international students and academics and investment from different sectors (Marginson & van der Wende, 2007). However, this special focus in research could be taken as one big limitation for the three types of institutions in which ①research isn't the principle mission, ②specialize in arts and humanities, ③ research capacities are seriously under-developed because of lacking of funds, academics and physical resources. Meanwhile, two big winners wrapped up most of top 50 list on the global rankings, US and the UK because of the dominance of English in publications and citations

and it's kind of penalizing for those nations and institutions in doing the research in their national language. In spite of the simplified interpretations of indicators and the limitations in the methodological approach, the global ranking has played some positive roles. It acts as an external incentive to make the nations to re-consider about their national higher education policy and the relationship with national HEIs. The influence of the global ranking on European nations was particularly remarkable, which resulted in some reforms and strategic policy-making in European higher education systems. On the basis of the studies on international student institution choice, the national identity of institutions' is valued more than the institutional identity of the individual institution (OECD, 2004 quoted by Marginson & van der Wende, 2007)The strong competition originated from the global ranking might produce several effects, which were concisely summed up by Marginson & van der Wende (2007). It could reinforce the already existed vertical differentiation between different grades of research-intensive HEIs or between the research-intensive-HEIs and other institutions. Meanwhile, it could increase the stratification of the research labor and academic professions both at national and global level. Last but not least, it could promote certain national typology of higher education system over others, which could be harmful for some national system where vocational or professional education has been well-developed (p.324). Global university ranking has become an arena from which universities couldn't escape and it's better to enter and view the scene. However, that doesn't mean all universities should fight for precious places in the top league table.

'World-Class University' is a term that has been often used by the researchers and national policy-makers worldwide and also a by-product of ranking system. It's like an ideal for universities and nations to fight for but nobody could give a precise definition about what that is. Altbach mentioned several of his references for the world-class university on the journal of *Academe* in 2004. Some basic components seem inseparable (p.22):

- Excellence in research which implies the recruitment of the top-quality professors and academic staff with favorable working conditions (job security, salaries, benefits)
- Academic freedom and stimulating intellectual environment
- Internal governance with control of academic community on central academic life (student recruitment, curriculum, criteria for degree delivery, professoriate member recruitment and the basic of direction of institution work)
- Adequate facilities for academic work (laboratories, libraries, internet...)

- Adequate funding for research, teaching and other functions and the support should be consistent and long term.

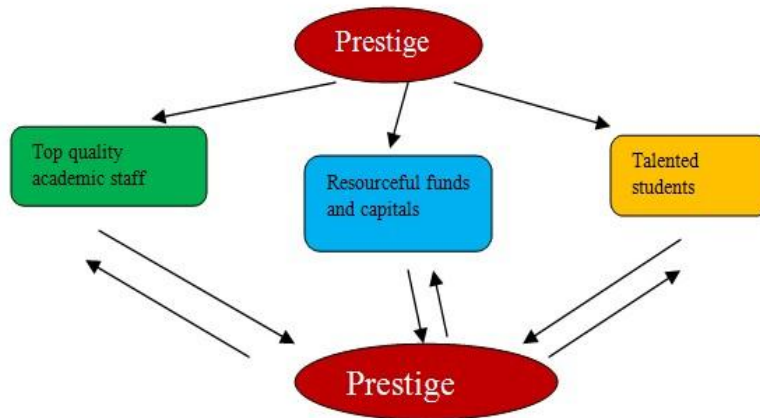
The elements sound very large and general and the possibility of building the work-class university is still doubtful. We think most importantly what we are going to do with it if we could offer the cost for having it. The world is impressed by the great performance of American universities in the rankings but is it the model for all universities?

Van Dyke (2005) noted that the common problem of most of the rankings is that it intends to evaluate the universities as a whole (quoted by Marginson & van der Wende 2007, p.319). We couldn't ignore the goals and missions of different institutions. Once again, HEIs are first and most embedded in the nations. If we follow the logic of ranking, universities should first obtain the national excellence in order to be one of the world-class universities. Therefore, the national positioning competition for HEIs is also inevitable.

Like the global rankings, the different stakeholders involved are the ones that concern and consult most the national rankings. The information diffused has improved the transparency of the higher education system. It provides some general ideas of university's performance for the government and private financiers, for the students and their families, for the employers to set their criteria for the qualifications of perspective graduates, for developing possible cooperation and collaboration with peer institutions and with other sectors.

“Higher education operates as a ‘positional good’ (Hirsch 1976, quoted in Marginson 2006) in which some student places offer better social status and lifetime opportunities than others. Marginson noted many research works have proved that positioning aspect is more important than the teaching quality of one institution and when it comes to make a choice between prestige and education quality of an institution, the prestige has become a natural decision, even if sometimes it sounds irrational. ‘What winners win, losers lose’ (Hirsch, 1976, p.52 quoted by Marginson, 2006, p.4), which explains concisely the importance of the positioning factor.

“Prestige ought to reflect quality, but far more is involved. As a function of consumer awareness, prestige is affected by the entire manner in which selective institutions market themselves and how they are treated in the media. Specifically, rankings advance their own definition of prestige, creating a ‘positional market’... The positional markers in this competition...are measures of selectivity, costs or rank” (Geiger 2004 quoted by Marginson 2006)



Edited by Bian (2014) based on Marginson's interpretation of positioning factors (2006)

As indicated clearly in this simple graph, the prestige of the universities evolves in an increasingly reproductive circle. These prestigious universities often attract the top-quality professors and academic staff and most talented students and equipped with very diverse funds and advanced facilities. The prestige is considered as valuable and invaluable richness which could be accumulated. Meanwhile, the value of prestige is always assured by some control mechanism, such as highly selective admission. Prestige of the institution functions as all other fields and it could also be devalued under certain circumstances, such as be more accessible for all levels of students. That explains why in each country the elite universities' number is always limited and the limitedness is a guarantee for the value of positional goods (Marginson 2006).

Positional markets in higher education are a matching game in which the hierarchy of students/families is synchronized with the hierarchy of universities; and the peak group in each hierarchy is steeped in the habits of sustaining the others. (Marginson, 2006, p.6)

The positional markets have resulted in unequal distribution of social opportunities (Teese, 2000; quoted by Marginson, 2006) and social resources and particularly in market-oriented nations, the allocation of the resources is highly performance-based.

"...the production of positional goods necessarily combines competition with oligopoly and market closure...regardless of whether the system is a high tuition high aid regime, or a free tuition regime, the positional hierarchy in higher education is remarkably stable over time compared to market leadership in other industries..."(Marginson, 2006, p.6)

The hierarchy of institutions exists and manifests in different forms in all regimes. Marginson (2006) divided the Australian national higher education system into three segments: "elite research universities, aspirant research universities and teaching-focused (university or other)" (p. 8) and elaborated the competition between these universities and the benefits/costs

they got from the positioning goods. Unlike Australia, France doesn't have a unitary higher education but the 'positional goods' theory seems to fit very well its binary system of *grandes écoles* and universities. The creation of AERES and ANR in France was considered as the official importing of quality assurance system. The introduction of the evaluation system and the re-allocation of investment cause the competition between institutions, which means in order to attract more investment, institutions have to outperform others. Benchmarking or peer comparison is more and more accepted by institutions and has become a tool for quality assurance.

Benchmarking is a self-improvement tool for organizations. It allows them to compare themselves with others, identify their comparative strengths and weaknesses, and learn how to improve. Benchmarking is also a way of finding and adopting good practices which go beyond the mere comparison of data, since it focuses on processes by which results are achieved. (De Wit, 2009, p.126)

On the basis of this definition, we can conclude that ranking system might create some doubts; however, benchmarking can function in a positive way to improve institutional capabilities. As nowadays institutions have been transformed from a reproductive system to an innovative or creative system, the awareness and the sensitivity to develop new competences seem to be more important.

At the national level, as the major financier of French HEIs (public), although French government only put a small percentage of funds to motivate the performance of the institutions, it's already considered as an evolutionary reforming step. There's no one national ranking for all the HEIs however, since 2010 the Ministry of Higher Education and Research launched a ranking based on the employment of university graduates. The mainly consulted rankings were issued on the major national newspapers for different study fields/subjects and different categories of HEIs. At the international level, the unsatisfactory ranking positions of French universities have drawn the attention of government to the conditions of teaching and research in these institutions.

The statistics related to the national expenditure on R&D in France is divided into two categories: DIRD (*dépense intérieure de recherche et développement*), which includes all the R&D activities conducted in France and DNRD (*dépense nationale de recherche et développement*), which calculates all the national investment on R&D without consideration of the place where the activities are executed. In 2011, the DNRD increased 2.2%, compared to 2010 and reached to 46.4 billion euros. The increasing expense mainly resulted from the augmentation of business funds which accounts for 5% increase during 2010-2011.

Meanwhile, the DIRD is around 45 billion euros with an increase of 2.3% during the same period. The second table described the relationship between the DIRD and PIB (*produit intérieur brut*/GDP). In 2011, 2.2% GDP has invested in the DIRD with respective 1.4% increase from business enterprises and 0.8% from higher education, government and private not-for-profit institutions serving households (PNP) (RERS, 2013). These three tables describe a very important tendency in the R&D development. Among the four principal investors for the R&D activities, we could find increasing importance of funds from the business enterprises the foreign business investors and international organizations. However, it doesn't mean the national government and public sectors have been cutting down their part of investment. The evolution of the investment indicates the on-going transformation of the internal/external responsiveness to business sectors and connectedness to internationalization of the HEIs.

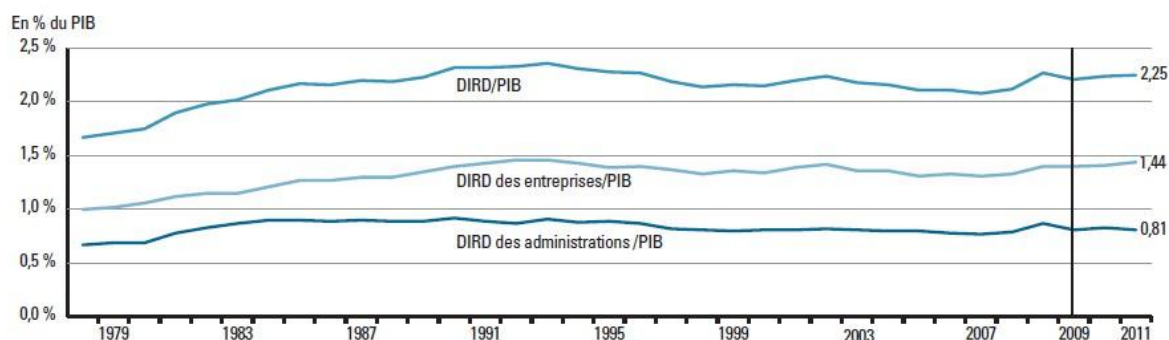
Graph 4 National expenditure on R&D in France

[1] Financement de la DNRD et exécution de la DIRD en France (en millions d'euros)

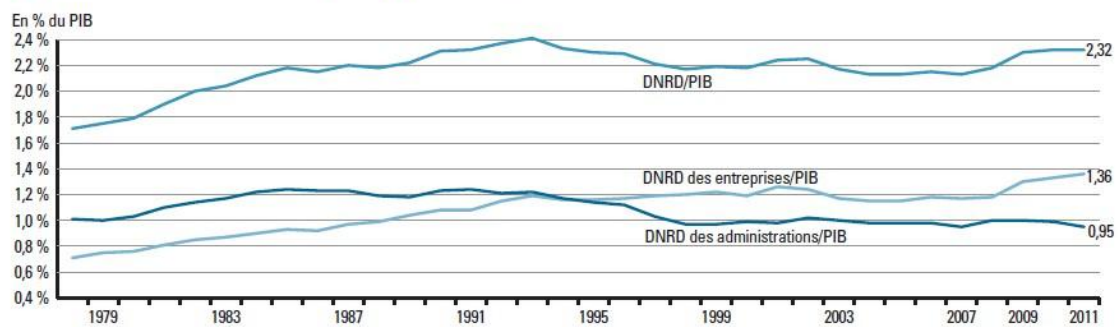
	1978	1999	2003	2006 (2)	2007	2008	2009 (3)	2010 (4)	2011 (5)	Évolution en % (6)
DNRD	5 897	29 885	34 395	38 738	40 106	42 190	43 411	44 841	46 422	2,2
DNRD par les administrations (1)	3 459	13 267	15 891	17 545	17 990	19 324	18 850	19 172	19 111	-1,6
DNRD par les entreprises	2 438	16 618	18 505	21 193	22 116	22 866	24 561	25 668	27 311	5,0
Part des entreprises dans la DNRD (%)	41,3	55,6	53,8	54,7	55,1	54,2	56,6	57,2	58,8	
DIRD	5 743	29 529	34 569	37 904	39 303	41 066	41 758	43 469	45 027	2,3
DIRD par les administrations (1)	2 313	10 873	12 923	13 994	14 550	15 305	15 332	16 014	16 262	0,3
DIRD par les entreprises	3 430	18 655	21 646	23 911	24 753	25 761	26 426	27 455	28 766	3,4
Part des entreprises dans la DIRD (%)	59,7	63,2	62,6	63,1	63,0	62,7	63,3	63,2	63,9	
Part de la DIRD dans le PIB (%)	1,67	2,16	2,18	2,11	2,08	2,12	2,21	2,24	2,25	

- (1) Administrations publiques et privées (État, enseignement supérieur et institutions sans but lucratif).
(2) Changement méthodologique. À partir de 2006, les entreprises ayant plus de 0,1 chercheur en ETP sont intégrées dans les résultats.
(3) Résultat 2009 recalculé de façon à être comparable à 2010.
(4) Changement méthodologique, résultats définitifs.
(5) Résultats semi-définitifs.
(6) Évolution entre 2010 et 2011 (en volume en %).

[2] Évolution de la DIRD par rapport au PIB



[3] Évolution du financement par rapport au PIB



In a word, it's clear that the national and international rankings are seriously correlated together and national prestige could eventually evolve to global level. The positioning market has provided great incentives for the HEIs to be the top producer in research in order to obtain the halo of 'world-class university'. However, it's not for everyone and it's even so beautiful to be true because we imagine that everyone has the right to draw the picture for his/her world-class university. Most importantly, we almost ignore the basic missions for our HEIs which are definitely evolving but its nature isn't changed. HEIs should first be responsive to the local and national interest and they have different responsibilities based on the roles in the fields of teaching and research.

2.1.3 Ni denial ni Anglo-American model

In the first subpart of this section, the institutional theories are presented in order to understand the complexity of the institution. The three pillars provide the basis structure for functioning an institution and different institutionalisms have shown us their understanding of institutions and the relationship between the institution/environment and institution/its actors' behavior. The second subpart focuses on the presentation of the external incentives: the influence of the changing environment that could have some effects on the HEIs. As previously noted, ranking is an inevitable product of internationalization, which has challenged different nations and institutions and made the different stakeholders in higher education reflect. Transformation is been demanding from HEIs in this global context: world-class university model? American market-oriented model? Another alternative for France?

The individual institution is currently facing multiple transformations and several factors marked the changing context: the emergence of the knowledge economy (Delanty, 2001; Arthur, 2006; Gornitzka et al., 2007; quoted in Dobbins et al., 2011), the demographic

development tendency, economic growth and increasing global competition (Dobbins et al., 2011). On the one hand, the international nature of the higher education institutions make it impossible for institution not to participate or confronting the international competition caused by the new technology production and transfer and human resource circulation. The rising of the new regionness intends to create the convergences in higher education system inside the region, such as the Bologna process. On the other hand, the institutions are embedded in country-specific regulatory and coordinative regimes shaped in a national historical and institutional development (Neave, 2003; quoted in Dobbins et al., 2011)

Three models of higher education governance were categorized according to the Clark's triangle (1983): a state-control model and a Humboldtian model of academic self-rule and an Anglo-American market-oriented (Neave, 2003; quoted in Dobbins et al., 2011). If we cross the three models of governance with Esping-Andersen's welfare regime models (1990), it remains very coherent between the welfare regimes' characteristics and the way of governance the nations adopted. In the state-control model, universities are subject to the control of the state which is considered as a coordinator for the institutions' internal governance and mediator for the development of the links between universities and private sectors. In the Humboldtian model, universities are under the collegial control by the professoriate (de Boer and Goedegebuure, 2003) based on a state-university partnership and the academic freedom is always taken as the key principle in this model. In the market-oriented model, universities are supposed to work more efficiently and offer better service to their student clients as if they could function as economic enterprise in the market (Marginson and Considine, 2000).

Other researchers have developed more precise studies on the basis of these models and the relationships between the nation state and the institutions have been staying in the center of their interest (Van Vught, 1995; Goedegeburre et al., 1993; de Boer et al., 2007).

Furthermore, with the development of new technology and economy globalization, some researchers started to include all the stakeholders involved in higher education and try to analyze the diversified governance patterns produced by different levels of interaction between these actors (Sporn, 1999; Braun, 2001; Clark, 1998). Here we would like also introduce three patterns of governance which we could find in different countries or in different institutions: corporate governance (Braun, 2001), entrepreneurial model (Clark, 1998) and new managerialism (Braun & Merrien, 1999) and these three patterns were clearly

interpreted by Dobbins et al. (2011). In the corporate governance, there's a strong academic participation in the decision-making bodies and universities are considered as entrepreneurial and capable of developing its own strategy plans. In the entrepreneurial model, the market role is highlighted and the entrepreneurship of universities is well represented by its capabilities of attract the invest capital from the market and transform the applied research into capital in the market. The new managerialism works from organization management perspectives on the internal decentralization and autonomy, cooperation with private sectors and incorporated evaluative principles (Dobbins et al., 2011).

If we use these three models to analyze the reforms of French higher education in the last several decades, we could easily identify the co-existence of some of the characteristics of these models. Therefore, is there a model that suits the development of French higher education reform?

From all the programs and procedures that have been implemented in HE system during the last two more decades, it's really hard to deny the influence of market-oriented development in French HE (Clark, 1998; Dobbins and Knill, 2009; quoted by Dobbins, 2012). Some evidence could be easily traced:

Firstly, the management and entrepreneurial spirits were introduced to the universities, particularly the leadership of the president and the collective contribution for the overall development of the universities. According to the LRU, French universities could operate freely their global budgets and enjoy a higher degree of personnel autonomy. (Jongbloed, 2003; quoted by Dobbins, 2012) We could imagine that the differentiation between the universities will certainly appear in several years.

Secondly, a new internal governance model was created with a nucleus group of representatives (*conseil d'administration*) and the participation of the external partner on the board. It intends to enforce the connectedness and accelerate the effectiveness of internal and external responsiveness as well.

Thirdly, the role of the state has been changed during these years' reform in HE system. The decentralization of its control on HEIs in terms of curriculum design and post-evaluation procedures has turned the state/HEIs relationship into less hierarchical one. Behind all these initiatives, we could observe the changing attitude of the nation which has prepared the fundamental framework for further reforms.

Finally, funding is always the most important guarantee and incentive for the development of the HEIs. The creation of the performance-based competitive funding largely indicated the influence of the American market-like model. This measure not only motivated the creativity of the HEI in terms of teaching and research but also helped HEIs approach closer to other public and private sectors, to societal demand in general.

The previous evidences of reforms have proved that the external influence of globalization and internationalization, the incentives from the market in particular, has produced more of a top-down process of change in the French higher education system. But how far are these influences on the HEIs? It's easy to point out the results of university's fighting for autonomy, the on-going merging of institutions and the closer collaboration in research and education between the HEIs and private sectors, as elaborated in the previous chapter. However, what's really happening inside the HEIs, in particular on the normative and cultural-cognitive pillars is more difficult to be evaluated. Therefore, could we conclude that the French higher education is a replication of Anglo-American market-oriented model? The answer is still no. We couldn't deny the impact of the market-driven theory on French higher education development; however, the question is impact on what aspect?

We would like to justify our negative answer with interpretations from another perspective. As we all agree, education and research are two principal missions and considering the relativity to our study, we'll not discuss much about the third mission: innovation. If we want to have an appropriate approach to interpreting the reforms, we have to differentiate the reforms on education part and the research part. Although we couldn't separate them completely, the message could transmit different meanings.

For the education part, the non-selective entrance to university and the free tuition fees (different from registration fees) still remains untouchable because charging fees will be against the equality of education access, central value for the Republic spirit. Even if it was mentioned in the LRU, the government by the end made the concession. The theory of welfare regimes by Esping-Andersen (1990) could be employed to understand the nature of the question. Three types of welfare regimes were identified: liberal welfare regimes (Canada, US, Australia, New Zealand and UK), conservative welfare regimes (Austria, France, Germany, Netherlands, Italy, Switzerland and Belgium) and social-democratic (universal) welfare regimes (Denmark, Norway, Sweden and Finland) on the basis of 'qualitatively different arrangements between state, market and family' (quoted by Penchar & Andres,

2011, p.24). In liberal welfare regimes, like US, ‘the state assumes responsibility only when the family and market fails; it seeks to limit its commitments to marginal and deserving groups.’ (quoted by Penchar & Andres, 2011, p.24) The market has a strong role to play in the liberal regimes where the unrestricted human capital creation was fostered and the individual achievement and responsibility and the meritocracy were highlighted. However, the conservative welfare regimes are characterized by ‘a strong corporatist legacy and a commitment to preserve social structures and hierarchies, and in particular the traditional family’ (Penchar & Andres, 2011, p.25). In these countries, education is still considered as an important mechanism for social reproduction and students from different social and educational backgrounds have different educational and professional trajectories. The public expenditure on higher education is supplemented by low tuition fees and the egalitarian value and a high trust in public administration were deeply rooted in the belief system. Moreover, all the reforms were initiated by the state, which indicated that the state-centeredness may have changed its role in the functioning organism but not in the origin and this top-down process of reform still needs more initiatives from the institutions and academy. This comment is also confirmed by the fact that the state is still the major donor for university budget.

However, the organization of research functions a bit differently. The leading and predominant role of the research academic community still remains and even performs stronger in this knowledge-based economy era. The research-based fund allocation and the construction of research excellence cluster etc. proved the employment of competitive model. The reforms in research organization and funding could be considered as a state-driven marketization under the influence of soft governance from EU and international pressure and the results of the reforms showed some convergence with the Anglo-American market model, in particular the terms employed as performance-based and competitiveness. (Dobbins 2012)

Therefore, the Anglo-American market model can’t be simply used to describe the French HE reforms or its further development. Even if the performance of US universities are quite appraisable, the American model is not the only exemplary for France to follow and the hegemony of the regimes doesn’t really exist (Pester, 2003) because we couldn’t ignore the fast increase of Nordic countries in research and innovation. In a word, the development of HE in the last two decades has been strongly influenced by the market theory and the universities have obtained more autonomy as elaborated previously.

2.2 Existence of the international higher education marketplace: from denial to reality

The first section of this chapter showed that how the institution functions inside and some important external incentives that have been pushing the transformation of the institution in the new context. The following section focused on the construction of the academic context at national and international level in which the international student recruitment activities were initiated and accomplished. In the first subsection, the rationales and definition of marketization in higher education were introduced to justify the choice of the analytical framework. The second subsection presented how the world-system theory and the international academic relationship theories could influence the strategies in HEIs for recruiting international students.

2.2.1 Quasi-market, higher education market, marketization in higher education

Clark's triangle of coordination (1983) explains how the higher education system is coordinated. The interaction between the state authority, the market and the academic oligarchy decides the governance mode of the system. As previously noted, the changing role of the state under the impact of the knowledge economy and global context is good example of the triangle theory. With the new demand from knowledge production and technological innovation, the networks between the government, HEIs and private sectors function as the main driver for economic and social payoffs production. The deregulation policies and competitive mechanism mentioned before in the French universities' reform reflect the government's intention to eliminate the barriers and empower the efficiency of the networks.

The term 'quasi-market' (Le Grand & Barrlett, 1993) is introduced to show the government attempts to introduce market principles in to public service sector.

[quasi-market] are 'markets' because they replace monopolistic state providers with competitive independent ones. They are 'quasi' because they differ from conventional markets in a number of key ways. The differences are on both the supply and the demand sides. On the supply side, as with conventional markets, there is competition between productive enterprises or service suppliers. Thus... there are independent institutions (schools, universities, hospitals, residential homes, housing associations, private landlords) competing for customers. However, in contrast to conventional markets, all these organizations are not necessarily out to maximize their profits, nor are they necessarily privately owned... On the demand side, consumer purchasing power is not expressed in money terms in quasi-market. Instead, it takes the form of an earmarked budget or 'voucher' confined to the purchase of a specific service allocated to users, or it is centralized in a single state purchasing agency. (Le Grand & Bartlett, 1993, p.10; quoted by Middleton, 2000, p. 538-539)

It's clearly expressed in this definition that the quasi-market in higher education shows some properties of the conventional market with the role changing of the government and the appearance of the individual service providers as competitors with the government on one hand. On the other hand, this quasi-market also reveals some differences from the conventional markets in terms of profits and transaction forms. Thus, how should we understand the popularity of the term marketization in higher education and what does it really mean?

Before introducing the definition of the marketization of higher education, we should start with the dilemma in higher education governance produced by: government failure (Wolf, 1988; quoted by Jongbloed, 2003) and market failure. Being traditionally the main financer and controller, the government intervened in many fields in higher education. However, despite these regulations, rules and funding, the government's governance competences couldn't satisfy the public including HEIs, students, parents and private sectors and the social demand of research and innovative performance of the HEIs. To get out of this failure, the introduction of marketization policies and market-type mechanism offers an option. On the other hand, market failures need the government intervention, free market failures more precisely. Four reasons were summarized by Begg et al., 1991, pp. 50-51; quoted by Jongbloed, 2003, p. 111) to explain the government intervention in order to avoid or lessens the harm of market failure in higher education governance: externalities, information-related problems, monopoly and market power, and income redistribution and the merit good argument. The externalities here mainly refer to the individuals' unawareness of the benefits that their investment in higher education brings to the other social partners involved in higher education or even the whole society. Information-related problems are considered as typical in the marketplace, which means it could be difficult or problematic for the demanders to get adequate or sufficient information in order to make a decision corresponding to their exact needs and the government intervention could improve the macro management of the suppliers and offer more reliable information to the demanders. Monopoly and market powers imply that if there are only few providers in the market, the competition mechanism loses its incentives and the government intervention could help with the performance effectiveness of the system. Last but not least, income distribution and the merit good argument refer to the question of taxes and subsidies mechanism that the government could use to ensure the social equity for individuals to access to higher education.

In most countries, marketization has been viewed as a ‘compromise between privatization, academic autonomy and state control’ (Young, 2002, p.79) as established leaders throughout the world called for ‘freedom from all the shackles of government regulation’. (Dill, 2003, p. 136; quoted by Hemsley-Brown & Oplatka, 2006, p.317)

Considering the failures in governance from the government and the market, the marketization is taken as mediation between the government steering and free market model. We think it corresponds to the profile description of the on-going French higher education reforms with regard to the particularities (as mentioned before as well):

- Comparatively late reforms that have been implanted in French universities: although the impact of the market has been clearly revealed, it’s still emerging and it’s a bit early to use the term ‘market-oriented’
- Strong defenders of the traditional value of higher education as public good: the inevitable conflicts have been aroused in almost all the reform propositions related to tuition fees, selection, etc. as mentioned before.
- Conservative welfare regime characteristics

For HEIs, the marketization policies could instill more energy, particularly with the competition and performance-related rewarding system, for the development and innovation both in education and research. Meanwhile it demands more attention from the HEIs or education providers to their students’ needs and to the teaching or research production quality. For the students, the marketization policies push the individuals to be more responsible and accountable for their decisions on the basis of the reliable resources of information.

With the increasing awareness of the importance of the competition mechanism for HEIs in both global and national scales, more literatures have been produced in the studies of higher education related topics by using the practices and concepts of marketing from other research fields, business and management in particular (Gibbs, 2002; quoted by Hemsley-Brown, 2006). Here in this study, we would like to employ the marketing concept in higher education developed by Kotler and Fox:

[...]the analysis, planning, implementation, and control of carefully formulated programs designed to bring about voluntary exchanges of values with target markets, to achieve institutional objectives. Marketing involves designing the institution’s offerings to meet the target market’s needs and desires, and using effective pricing, communication, and distribution to inform, motivate, and service the markets. (1985, p.7)

Several basic ideas are elaborated in this definition, marketing in higher education like in any other commercial sector, is considered as an interactive process between institutions and target markets, during which the institution recuperates the 'values' of its programs and service from the market. The principle marketing procedures are also implied in this definition: analysis, program plan, implementation, and process and result control. The particularity of higher education is also highlighted in this definition as a non-profit and service offering field and the word 'value' also implies the different kinds of profits induced from this exchange process.

2.2.2 World-system theory and International academic relationship theory

The previous subpart explained the necessity and the introduction of marketization in higher education. The market in higher education included multiple related parts: programs of tertiary education, research and labor market for academic professionals (Dill, 1997, p.168; Jongbloed, 2003). Here in this study, when speaking of market, we were referring to international student market with the combination of all relative parts.

When technology and innovation has become the major generator of the economic productivity and the marker of national strength, hunting for 'talents' is considered as a top mission for all nations and institutions. Individuals are considered as mobile resources and vital human capital that can produce knowledge and skills which nations are in pursuit of (Pan, 2011). Meanwhile, the individuals are also seeking the advanced skills and knowledge that institutions could provide to make themselves more valued in the global market. The global knowledge flow and technology transfer have prepared the basic context for talent flow; however, the talent flow is proved to be a very complex phenomenon greatly influenced by the global political, economic and cultural relationships between nations (McMahon, 1992).

This subpart starts with an introduction of world-system theory in order to understand the complicated relationship between countries in terms of politics, economics and culture and is followed by the transnational research and development framework.

The modern world-system is understood as a set of nested and overlapping interaction networks that link all units of social analysis- individuals, households, neighborhoods, firms, towns and cities, classes and regions, national states and societies, transactional actors, international regions, and global structures. The world-system is all of the economic, political, social, and

cultural relations among the people of the earth. Thus the world-system is not just 'international relations' or the 'world market'. It's the whole interactive system, where the whole is greater than the sum of the parts. All boundaries are socially structured and socially reproduced, as are the identities of individuals, ethnic groups, and nations (Chase-Dunn & Hall, 1993; Chase-Dunn & Grimes, 1995, p.389).

In the above interpretation, the world-system is taken as an interactive network and composed of economic, political, social and cultural relations among different social entities.

One of the most important structures of the current world-system is a power hierarchy between the core and periphery in which powerful and wealthy 'core' societies dominate and exploit weak and poor 'peripheral' societies. Within the current system, the so-called 'advanced' or 'developed' countries constitute the core, while the 'less developed' countries are in the periphery. The peripheral countries, rather than developing along the same paths taken by core countries in earlier periods, are instead structurally constrained to experience developmental processes that reproduce their subordinate status. Put simply, it is the whole system that develops, not simply the national societies that are its parts. (ibid, p.389)... one of the main structures of all state-based world-system is an intersocietal hierarchy composed of core, peripheral and semiperipheral societies(Chase-Dunn & Hall, 1993; Chase-Dunn & Grimes, 1995, p.396)

According to the world-system theory, the global structure of the current network is divided into three components basis on the power hierarchy of the societies: core, peripheral and semi-peripheral. The interactivity inside the network between different hierarchical societies indicates that there's no absolute power stability on the one side and on the other side, the previous findings also proves the impossibility for peripheral countries to enter to the core group; however, the transferability between the periphery and semiperiphery did exist, such as China, India, Brazil etc.

In this study, if we apply the world-system theory to the international student flow, it's easy to prove its theoretical coherence to its practice. The core countries which stay at the center of the whole power system, possess the advanced knowledge and innovation technology and attract more international students and academics. On the contrary, the peripheral countries have very limited educational capabilities, lacking of advanced skills and infrastructures with less international students and academics. Therefore, it's obvious that the most developed countries, such as the US, the UK, Canada, Germany, France always remain on the top of the list of international student and academic mobility choice. However, the developing countries, such as African countries are usually major international aid demander and sending countries of international students in the international education market. For some countries staying at the semiperipheral zone, such as China, for the moment is one of the biggest senders of international students to the core countries; nevertheless considering its economic growth and strong investment in its national higher education building, it might attract more and more

international students and academics in the future. The example of China proves the possible mobility of power hierarchy between the core and the semiperipheral zone. Meanwhile, Chen & Barnett (2000) noted that a new economic and political order has emerged which weakened the historical, cultural and linguistic relationships between the colonial and colonized countries in term of the student flow. However, we have some reserve on their observation, particularly related to the international students in France, which shows almost the opposite proof. As previously described in the research background, most of the top sending countries have kept a deep relationship with France in terms of history, language and culture.

The globalization has reinforced the networks of interdependence among countries, both in economic ties and other domains. To develop ‘smart’ international relation in this new information age, Nye (2005) coined the term ‘soft power’, which represents the ability to shape the preferences of others without coercion. He distinguished the hard power from soft power in terms of the nature of the behavior to achieve the objective and the tangibility of resources in the process of the realization. He also categorized three resources of soft power: culture, political values and foreign policies. (p.13, 2005) By clarifying the relationship between soft power and American higher education, he cited one phrase of the former Secretary of State Colin Powell in his speech in 2001: “I can think of no more valuable asset to our country than the friendship of future world leaders who have been educated here” (ibid, p.13-14). The soft power that can be transmitted by higher education is well expressed here. The truth is that every country wants to exercise this power through international student or academic mobility.

More examples could be identified in the history to show how soft powers had been exercised. As elaborated in the rationales of internationalization of higher education, during the Cold War, the two superpowers US and Soviet Union invested a lot in student exchange programs, teaching material subsidies, institution building and technic supports to the developing countries and intended to influence the intellectuals, academic leaders and policy-makers (Altbach, 2007). It’s considered as an ideological-political oriented move for dominating the people in the world. In the new era of knowledge economy, politics and ideology has been subordinated to profits and market-driven policies (Altbach, 2007). The dependence of donor – receiver relationship has been built in decades and the globalization reinforces the inequality in higher education development (Altbach, 2007, p.124). Some researchers consider the globalization could work against to some extent the higher education

development interest in some developing countries (Rodrik, 1997; Rodrik, 1999; Stiglitz, 2002, quoted by Altbach, 2007, p.124).

As indicated Altbach (2007), the globalization results in the manifestations of information technology in various fields, common language usage in scientific communication, massification of higher education responding to the society's demand for highly educated and qualified personnel, privatization of higher education in terms of funding resource (Altbach, 2007, p.124). The results of the globalization have created an inevitable vicious circle of inequality: winners always win, losers always lose. But how?

In this era of knowledge economy, information has become foremost valuable asset in the international competition in various fields and the “communication, storage and retrieval of knowledge” in the revolution of information technology has been transforming higher education (Castells, 2000; quoted by Altbach, 2007, p.134). In other words, the physical repository of resources in the institution are the fundamental elements for its competitiveness, such as its library and equipment for teaching and research and the virtual resources such as internet database for scientific production and diffusing research products or teaching courses. However, it's crystal clear that all of these resources need money. Besides the imbalanced possession of information technology, here comes the language domination. English is taken as the Latin in the 21st century (Altbach, 2007, p.126) and plays multiple roles in the higher education scene: the most studied second language worldwide, the medium of teaching in the most performant academic systems, the dominant language tool for access to the production and diffusion of academic knowledge. (Altbach, 2007) This domination of English language definitely creates huge constraints for academics in the non-English-speaking countries. These two factors have become the prerequisite condition for the third important element, the human capital flow. During the last decade, around 83% of the total number of foreign students conducted their study in G20 countries and 77% studied in OECD countries (OECD, 2013). Furthermore, with better offers of the working conditions including salaries, ambiance and academic freedom, more and more academic staff are attracted to these developed countries. The top quality of student and academic staff, the well-conditioned teaching and research environment and the possession of the advanced technology, consolidate the leading position of the powerful institutions. Meanwhile, all these resources also function as the ‘pull’ factors for attracting the investment from both public and private sectors.

One of the outputs in the human capital flow, 'brain drain'/'brain gain' is often discussed by the researchers, which concerns the international student and academic flow from the developing countries to developed countries or from lesser developed countries to more developed countries. The brain drain theory focuses more on the negative effects produced by this phenomenon which causes the loss of the human capital for the origin countries for developing their own science and economic needs (Adams, 1968; Grubel & Scott, 1977, quoted by Pan, 2011). With the economic development in some countries, the academic returnee phenomenon already appeared in recent years, particularly in some new emerging countries. The students and academic staff, who have already had experiences abroad, after their study or years of professional experience, came back to their home countries and tried to find new opportunities for work or research. Their contribution to their home countries is still under discussion. Some researchers think that most of the returnees back home couldn't contribute to the local development because of the relevance of their study or working experience abroad and the limitation of the domestic infrastructures or resources (Altbach, 2004a, 2004b, Namgung, 2008, quoted by Pan, 2011). Some research conducted in East Asia countries shows that sometimes the 'brain drain' might turn into 'brain gain' for the home countries. Pan (2011) used the developmental-state theory to analyze the Chinese 'brain gain' strategies to reinforce its human capital development and its national competitiveness. The developmental-state theory focuses on the state's relationships with the market and domestic institutions and how the three parties work together in the nation building process (Pan, 2011). However, this doesn't change the general pattern of the inequality produced by the human capital flow in the global context.

Moreover, the world center and periphery theory does work at the national level as well. The elite institutions and academic systems possess more resources allocated from the public authorities and have more advantages for attracting funds from private investment. These institutions are always considered as the incubators and centers for the production and distribution of advanced knowledge and technology. The institutions with few resources in teaching and research are the peripheries with less attractiveness for the investors.

The existence of the centers and peripheries both at international and national levels explains the student and academic flow tendency. The rapid increasing number of the students abroad during the last two decades has transformed the student mobility from elite to a mass move. The transnational research and development has played an indispensable role in this transformation. On the basis of my field experience in the master research, international

students are often categorized into program students and free-movers. Some of the program students are from exchange programs and others study in the host institution on national or institutional agreements. Building wide network for research and developing partnership seem to become more and more important for the institutional and local development, which is also considered as part of internationalization of the institution. The capability of mobilizing the external contacts is considered as a criterion to measure the power of a HEI.

Several decades ago, Hayhoe & Phillips (1989) evoked that with the increasing involvement of the Third-World universities, the international academic relations needed more adequate definitions (p.59). They pointed out that the international academic community formed by the universities in the First and Second worlds practiced different criteria in knowledge production and diffusion in their relationship with Third-World universities, which possibly reinforced the domination and subordination in terms of political economy. Moreover, the domination of the Western knowledge tradition should be related to the nature of different kinds of knowledge in order to identify the interactivity between the Western and non-Western academic relationship and the possible contribution from non-Western academic community. Therefore, they proposed that international academic relations as a special field of study in higher education needed a theoretical framework and the international relations theory and the distinction of natures of the knowledge should be helpful to have a better understanding of international academic relations. On the one hand, they considered that universities should act actively its cultural influence in all other spheres in the international relations and possibly changed the structurally-located inequalities.

Within world order model theory, international academic relations have the potential to either promote or to reduce cultural dependency, which in turn interacts with political, economic, and other spheres of dependency. University policy in international interaction could then contribute to the modification of dependency relationship towards mutually interactive ones. (Hayhoe & Phillips, 1989, p.62)

On the other hand, they adopted Habermas' approach of knowledge classification: scientific-technical knowledge and social science and considering the limited influence of the scientific rational knowledge to the social life, they brought up the idea that the non-Western academic tradition could contribute to the international academic community and the interrelationship should be valued. (Hayhoe & Phillips, 1989)

Their theory prepared very open vision for the role of non-Western academic tradition and contribution in the international relations. To further the understanding of the functioning system in the international relations, the concept of mutuality has to be mentioned (Galtung,

1980). It emerged during the Cold War period and four mechanisms in this concept were proposed: equity, autonomy, solidarity and participation, which were well interpreted by Hayhoe (1989) in analyzing the international cooperation in Chinese higher education in the 1980s (Leng & Pan, 2013).

Equity suggests aims and forms of organization that are reached through full mutual agreement. Autonomy suggests a respect for the theoretical perspectives rooted in periphery culture that would require center participants to gain a thorough knowledge of this culture. Solidarity suggests forms of organization that encourage maximum interaction among periphery participants and growing links between them and their fellow researchers. Participation intimates an approach to knowledge that does not stratify in a hierarchical way but assumes the possibility of a creative peripheral contribution from the very beginning. (p.134; quoted by Leng & Pan, 2013, p.4)

The concept of mutuality emphasized the importance of knowledge and respect for the peripheral culture and encouraged the contribution from peripheral academic community. The development of this concept challenged the idea of *dominant/dominée* relationship in the international academic relations.

The partnership model appeared in the 1990s and has become the dominant framework to transact international development assistance (OECD, 1996; quoted by Koehn & Obamba, 2012). It changed the former unidirectional financial and technical assistance from the North to the South (King, 2008; Koehn, 2011; quoted by Koehn & Obamba, 2012). The partnership in higher education was defined as “cooperative agreements between a higher education institution and another distinct organization to coordinate activities, share resources, and divide responsibilities related to a specific project or goal” (Kinser & Green, 2009, p.4; quoted by Koehn & Obamba, 2012, p.360). In this knowledge-driven era, international higher education partnership is considered as effective instrument for improving the institutional capacity building and reinforces its effective role in economic development. On the basis of the definition, we could identify several elements: participants, projects, objectives, resources, responsibility and accountability.

The participants in the partnership could be decisive for the orientation and functioning process in the collaboration and considering the host countries of the institutions or organization, the partnership could be generalized as North-North, South-South and North-South. The images of neutrality and mutual benefits created in the partnership discourses raised some doubt in the developing countries and some research consider that the ideal-type of partnership is impossible to be realized because of the power asymmetry created by inequality of the capital endowment (Koehn & Obamba, 2012). At institutional levels, the

participants could be individual faculty member or the whole institution in the international research partnership. With the increasing interconnectedness and mobility in the academic societies, some contemporary realities need to be confronted based on the international cooperation, such as environmental pollution, terrorism, health problems. The complexity of these problems demands more efforts from the international community and the resolution could only be found through integrated human capability building and multidisciplinary collaboration.

The partnership usually started from the individual initiation and the mutual agreement on the objectives prepared the first step for relationship building. Meanwhile, the objectives could be inconsistent for the bilateral or multi-lateral partners in different phases of collaboration. This process of relationship building demanded mutual trust and active participation from all parties, during which the responsibility and accountability represented the credibility of the partners. The sustainability of the partnerships depended both on the input and output of all the partners. As elaborated before, the asymmetry of the resource endowment could weaken the role of the poor partners in this relationship; however, it could also turn into a positive factor to push the disadvantaged partners to identify their advantages for negotiating a better position. The increasing investment on international academic relations from the international organizations (UNESCO, OECD, EU, etc.) has encouraged the transnational partnership building and how to enlarge the output of the partnership between HEIs to bring benefits to the local communities has also become an important question to consider.

In this study, international academic relation development is taken as important dimension for the internationalization of the HEIs, which facilitates the international student recruitment and hosting. The role of the faculty members and the level of participation of the institution in the international academic relations reveal the development of international awareness in the institution and the possible contribution from the international students to the host HEIs.

2.3 Introduction of branding theory to the French context: exploring the feasibility

The introduction of the properties of an institution and its theoretical functioning system prepared the basic knowledge of an institution as an organic object. The description of the external environment demarcates its living context. After the confirmation of the marketplace existence in higher education, the HEIs have to figure out how to act and make good use of

the market. The elaboration of the international academic relations theory reveals the complexity of the situations that institutions have to face in terms of politics, economics and culture in the global context. Running for the top-class universities and obtaining world-wide reputation have been always the dreams for HEIs, at least for the ambitious ones. International student recruitment opens an important door for HEIs to be recognized in the global market; however, to be known isn't an easy game. Therefore, after the presentation of the necessary elements, this section explains how institutions win recognition in the international student market. For some French HEIs, it could be a process of turning local heroes into global players and transforming their local prestige to a global one. For some, it could be a process of making strategic moves to gain distinctive place in the local and global markets. As noted before, the market could have multiple implications and in this study, it mainly concerns the international student market. The theory of branding is employed here to understand the strategies that institutions have developed in the global arena both for their academic image and reputation-building and student recruitment. The section ends with the presumed application framework of branding theory in the French HEIs, with consideration of the individualities of universities and *grandes écoles*.

2.3.1 Branding and branding in higher education

When we talk about brand, it's often related to products. To apply the branding theory to higher education, we should start with the classification of education as a marketable service (Mazzarol, 1998, p.164). Five characteristics are identified to describe education service by Lovelock (1983, quoted by Mazzarol, 1998, p.164):

- Nature of the service act: people-based education with intangible actions
- Relationship with the customer: a lengthy and formal relationship evolved with students in education and interactivity between the student membership and institutions' service
- Level of customization and judgment in service delivery: variability of service delivery to meet the needs of students
- Nature of demand relative to supply: narrow fluctuation of demand and limitations of availability of staff and places in courses

- Method of service delivery: traditional on-site overseas students, offshore campus program or by distance, etc.

Cross-examining these characteristics with the four indicators for service marketing: “intangibility, inseparability of production and consumption, heterogeneity and perishability” (Zeithaml et al., 1985; quoted by Mazzarol, 1998, p.164), we could find education fits the profile; therefore, in order to get over the problems produced by these indicators, critical success factors need to be defined in international education marketing (Mazzarol, 1998).

In the marketing field of study, a brand is defined as “a specific name, symbol or design – or, more usually, some combination of these – which is used to distinguish a particular seller’s product” (Doyle 2001, p.166 quoted by Temple, 2006, p.15). In order to create a success brand, three things are indispensable: an effective product, a distinctive identity, and added values (Doyle, 2001; Temple, 2006, p.16). However, it might not be necessary to have them all at the same time for making a successful story. “The brand must meet consumers’ psychological needs through the values which they come to believe the brand embodies” (Temple, 2006, p.15). The value of the brand isn’t actually made in the factory but in people’s minds (Balmer, 2006, p.38). By following this logic, brand researchers propose that brands should be considered as combinations of cultural, ideological and political objects and brand culture should function together with brand identity and image in the market by providing the necessary cultural, historical, and political grounds for understanding the brand in the context (Schroeder & Salzer-Mörling, 2006, p.1). The brand culture seems extremely useful for brand promotion in the global market.

We’re dealing with brands every day in our life but how is the brand made known? Branding is taken as an integral part of marketing strategy for creating a corporate identity and reputation (Pinar, Trapp, Girard & Boyt, 2010, p.725). As indicated by Temple (2006), branding emerged in the nineteenth century and started from the branded products which were intended to be able to charge more for the extra value that could be produced by its quality. After two centuries of development and practice, branding is categorized into product branding and corporate branding by brand researchers. The process of globalization expanded the circulation of the products and the changing scope of the market recalled the importance of the cultural and social context for brand management. Branding as a communication process helps to achieve recognition of the quality, utility and distinctiveness of the products on the one hand; on the other hand, taking account of the cultural and social background of

the market context helps to create meaning and value for the brand. With increasing competition in the market, the symbolism of the brand has become more important than the real quality of the products. Moreover, in a consumer culture, people are more interested in the symbolic meaning and identity that the brand could bring to them.

Could we practice the same theory of brand and branding in higher education? Why do HEIs need to do branding and how? What's the brand of an HEI, what are the products and who are the consumers?

Higher education and branding's involvement goes back a long time ago, particularly in the major English-speaking countries such as the US and the UK where the higher education institutions charge tuition fees and private institutions also play important roles in the national market. In the US, branding has been historically implemented in universities and colleges in the student recruitment market to target the prospective students and their parents on the one hand. On the other hand, they intended to attract more investment from different stakeholders including donors, enterprises, human resources and even political officials through branding (Joseph, Mullen & Spake, 2012, p.1). In recent years, with the internationalization of higher education, the focus on the international context has evolved and the branding in some institutions is more grounded in the international competition. In the UK, the increased competition in the education sector and the under-cutting of funds for universities highlighted the importance of branding for UK educational institutions. As noted before, international education, mainly international student recruitment has produced prominent income for the UK, and the government even supported a global re-branding exercise campaign for its universities in order to build clear and distinctive identities for attracting more international students (Hemsley-Brown & Goonawardana, 2007; quoted by Pinar, Trapp, Girard & Boyt, 2010, p.725).

The above two examples show that branding does apply to higher education, especially with the increasing importance of marketization of higher education. However, the appropriateness of the traditional approaches to branding is questioned because of the complexity of functioning systems in the universities. Whisman (2009) suggested that universities should take an inside-out approach to develop their brand by engaging internal constituents in the development process (quoted by Joseph, Mullen & Spake, 2012, p.1). His point of view is echoed by Temple (2006) who also considers that building a brand for HEIs demands that the academic and administrative staff work together with good leadership (p.18). However, he

thinks that most of the research done on branding in higher education could only be considered as reputation management or even public relations (ibid, p.18). Therefore, he distinguished the branding in higher education from branding work (Temple, 2011) and interpreted branding as diffusing messages from the inside of the results that have been created by staffs and students over the years and are difficult to change in a short time; while, branding work concerns an outside job which usually has a marginal impact on things that matter (p.116).

An enterprise could create a brand for its products or service in a short time and use a branding strategy to make the products' identity known by its consumers. The popularity of its products would be tested in the market and its branding strategies would be quite adaptive to the consumers' feedbacks. Thus, what product or service needs to be branded in HEIs? Branding in HEIs should take into account the double role of students and the complexity of the market context. On the one hand, students are the consumers and institution branding should focus on attracting students' interest in order to be selected. In this case, branding strategies will focus on institutional service and physical facilities, teaching and research programs, academic strength and employment rate, etc. The institutional identity and image should be differentiated from other institutions as regards the sameness of their service. On the other hand, students are products embodied with intangible values after years of education in the institution and the employers are the potential consumers of these products. Then the branding focus will be diverted into the three important characteristics of the products: its graduates' academic strengths, professionalized competences and special added value produced only in this institution. The double role of students is inseparable in making branding strategies. Meanwhile, considering the diversity of the student population and employers' profiles, institutions need to have a clear target of the market and competitors in order to adjust to different conditions.

It's evident that most of the HEIs, either they think branding is not a necessary mission to be accomplished; or their lack of competence makes it an impossible mission. HEIs are now living the dilemma of being successful in their traditional missions (knowledge production and transmission) and selling their products or service in the market (Barnett, 2000; quoted by Temple, 2006). As it is an impossible mission, why are so many HEIs determined to do it? The answer is simple: benefits and multiple benefits that have been pointed out in various studies: the number and quality of the students, academic staff, retention rates, funds for teaching and research, media attention (Sevier, 2007; LipmanHearne, 2011; Moore, 2010;

Lockwood and Hadd, 2007, quoted in Joseph, Mullen & Spake, p.3). In a well-branded university, we could find more and better quality students, top quality academic staff, high retention and graduate rates, more funds from diverse resources and more media attention (Joseph, Mullen & Spake, 2012, p.2).

2.3.2 International branding and international student recruitment

Branding in the global context to attract international students needs extra attention from the institutions on the impact of cross-cultural values. On the basis of the degree of standardization and adaptation of the product offering, Medina & Duffy (1998) proposed a four-level classification of international branding strategies: (quoted by Gray, Fam & Llanes, 2003, p.108)

- Standardized brand (core and augmented components tailored to domestic market, but have global appeal)
- Adapted brand (core components standardized, but augmented components adapted to local legal and market conditions)
- Customized brand (core and augmented components tailored to international target markets)
- Globalized brand (compromise brand incorporating attributes of previous varieties, with standardized core and attributes added on to meet unique country or regional requirements and expectations)

These four models could be applied in different target markets by institutions. For those who intend to attract international students in their home market, the standardized and the adapted brand are often used. Those who have offshore campuses or long-distance programs, prefer the adapted and the globalized brand. The customized brand is considered rarely used because of the doubt resulting from its inconsistent brand positioning in different markets (Gray, Fam & Llanes, 2003, p.108)

Before making branding strategies for international student recruitment, HEIs need to identify students' needs and expectations. A study of educational institutions in Australia, New Zealand, Canada and the UK, Mazzarol (1998) identified two important indicators in their marketing success:

- image and resources: this factor variable measured the level of market profile or recognition, strength of financial resources, reputation for quality, size and influence of alumni and range of courses and programs

- coalition and forward integration: this factor variable measured possession of international strategic alliances and offshore teaching programs (p.172)

Later, another qualitative study conducted by Gray et al. (2003) found that a university's learning environment, reputation, graduate career prospects, destination and cultural integration are the main brand positioning dimensions for HEIs. Moreover, some researchers also worked on promotion and image building in institutional branding, such as logos, promotion materials, advertising, media, language, etc. Ng and Forbes (2008) also highlighted the importance of the university experience for branding based on the creation of the learning experience by all the stakeholders inside the institution and the quality of service. (Pinar, Trapp, Girard, Boyt, 2011) Ng and Forbes (2008) propose five expectation-perception gaps that must be monitored and managed in order to provide a satisfying university experience: (quoted by Pinar, Trapp, Girard & Boyt, 2011, p.728):

- knowledge gap (the difference between what a student expects and what the institution thinks the student expects;
- standard gap (the difference between the institution's understanding of students' expectations and the development of the service designs and standards
- delivery gap (the difference between the development of the service designs and standards and the actual delivery of the service);
- communication gap (the difference between the delivery of the service and the institution's external communications)
- ideological gap (the difference between designing the service towards fulfilling students' expectations and designing the service towards what the institution believes the students should experience)

These five expectation-perception gaps inspired us in this study in how to select the participants' profiles and analyze the research questions from multiple perspectives. The gaps in the university experience help us to cross-examine international students' experience and the official discourses in the study and the results will theoretically alert the institution and engender possible amelioration in the future.

2.3.3 Theoretical path-building for French HEIs in branding with a hypothetical and comparative approach

From brand to branding, from enterprises and products to HEIs and education, we observed how this marketing theory has influenced the HEIs' practices in international education; in particular, in HEIs from the US, the UK and Australia. Could we apply the theory of branding in the French context? The answer is positive. Several important elements were elaborated with regard to the institution's internal functioning system and its relation with the external environment. Globalization has enforced the interconnectedness between countries and the competition for human capital, and physical and virtual resources has been decisive for a nation's development. In the French national context, the government reforms on governance and funding have forced the HEIs to modify their traditional manner of functioning. In the institutional context, international academic collaboration and the development of international education programs and academic mobility have challenged the individual's awareness of the internationalization and its practices inside the institution. The change of internal and external factors has created the possibility for institutions to be transformed. This process of change required the equipment of both mechanism and people's mentality. There was an old Chinese saying, "good wine needs no bush", which means no advertisement is needed for something of good quality as people will always discover its merits. However, with social and economic development, the opposite of the saying is proving to be more credible nowadays. Good quality needs to be recognized first in order to benefit larger groups of people and it attracts more investment in order to succeed in being better. The popularity of the logic of competition and cooperation has made people rethink of the old tradition. The French higher education system has been experiencing some important reforms under the influence of internationalization and Europeanization. Besides the accomplishment of its traditional missions, the institution has to find ways to exercise its strength for the sake of further development.

Considering the academic reserve and the early stage of the marketization of higher education in France, in this study we reduced the branding strategies to three questions in order to examine the practices of international student recruitment in the *grandes écoles* and universities.

- Who am I? What I want to be? (positioning/differentiating)
- Who am I selling to and what do I sell? (targeting)

- How do I sell? (operating)

This part is intended to construct the framework of branding in *grandes écoles* and universities for recruiting international students by exploring the way they respond to these questions.

Positioning

In the process of marketing, positioning is the first step for institutions to take and finding a proper position helps to avoid some unexpected results, to some extent.

Endowed with a good reputation in the nation, the *grandes écoles* have experienced centuries of development, which was accomplished with generations of academics and students' great efforts. The prestige of these institutions and their privileged status resulted from societal consensus on the quality of their students and their contributions to the whole society; in other words, the quality of their products and the utility have been confirmed by the market and the market's recognition has prepared better conditions for their further development. The *grandes écoles* produced generations and generations of, what might be described as high-end luxury merchandise with undoubted quality assurance and specified market consumption. Each *grande école* distinguishes its graduates with a label, which is not only a guarantee for their professional career but also a representation of product style. Unlike material goods, the individuals are dynamic in their activities and interactive relationships are built in their social network. In other words, the good reputation of the *grandes écoles* opens a door for the career of their graduates and in return, the graduates create more opportunities for their alumni to have access to their professional network. The system works like a win-win circle. The better reputation the *grande école* has, the more easily its graduates get a better job. The more privileged recruitment the graduates get, better reputation their *grande école* acquires. However, this kind of win-win effect has remained at a national level and works within quite limited circles, if there are none in an international context.

The properties of these institutions were considered as exemplary for the current reform in the universities: elite education, highly selectivity in admission, professionalized programs, close interconnection with the private sector, high rate for graduates' employment, etc. Moreover, the era of knowledge economy and globalization have also created some great opportunities for the *grandes écoles*. Firstly, being positioned and positioning themselves as elite formation providers, the *grandes écoles* are recognized as institutions for a small group of elites, and

this could work the same way with international students. Secondly, enjoying certain degrees of autonomy frees these institutions from the centralized control of the government in terms of administration, academic recruitment and financial resources. Generally speaking, *grandes écoles* are always considered richer, more efficient and effective at work, pro-active in admission with more convivial institutional ambiance compared to the universities. The funding resources for these institutions come partly from students' tuition fees, the investment from the funding organisms, donations, non-formal education income, and private service and research contract benefits. The diversity of funding resources allows them to have a well-equipped infrastructure, offer students better services, recruit more international researchers and organize more events to improve their international visibility. Finally, the good employment opportunities for the graduates, which result from their highly professionally-oriented courses, close relationships with the private sector and their alumni network could definitely ameliorate their international attractiveness. However, research and innovation weren't seriously written into their institutional philosophy until recently. According to Veltz (2007), the *grandes écoles* system is confronted with a profound reform due to social, ethical and efficiency reasons. The highly restricted social categories and system of producing homogenous social elites put French higher education institutions in danger. Therefore, for *grandes écoles*, the task of how to rebuild their national image, enlarge their diversity in terms of recruitment and how to internationalize their national prestige by making good use of their advantages are three major challenges to be faced.

In spite of all the privileges and advantages possessed by the *grandes écoles*, the universities in France recruit the majority of students and shoulder the main responsibility of cultural transmission and research.

French universities have been experiencing great changes since the creation of the Paris University, from the Imperial University, the Republic Period of Faculties and the massification of higher education (Musselin, 2001). Universities are controlled and publicly funded by the Ministry of Education, which means almost a free ride for every baccalaureate. Higher education in these institutions is quasi-free and considered as a public service given the symbolic level of the registration fee. The centralized public control assures the students the right to access to higher education; however, it also restrains the development of these institutions in terms of autonomy in governance, finance, recruitment and pedagogy, etc.

As previously elaborated, the immense growth of student enrollment in universities has created serious problems in the last several decades. The lack of physical infrastructure, inadequate student housing conditions, insufficient quality assurance of teaching, learning and research, etc., have all resulted in a bad image for French universities at the national level. However, should this bad image represent the French universities in the international student market?

As previously mentioned, a series of reforms for the universities have been implemented since 1998 and the adoption of LRU in 2007. In the positioning phase, it's very important for the universities to insist on their advantages and show the international students their on-going efforts to adapt to the challenge.

Targeting

Do the institutions have a specific target country or population? Or do they want to fix targets and how? On the basis of the geographic locations of Campus France and *Alliances françaises*, we might assume they probably don't. With regard to the development of the international student population, we were informed that there's a great increase of Asian students in France. Does this mean that in the last decade France specifically targeted Asia? It's hard to tell. Therefore, we could deduce that in the international student market, on one hand, the sources for students are unpredictable based on the impact of many external factors, such as the political relationship between the sending and host countries and the economic and educational situations in the sending countries; on the other hand, the profiles of the students could be predictable because the institutions have already predefined them with their own criteria.

If we compare the *grandes écoles* to the stores with high quality products, universities could be considered as supermarkets where we can get all kinds of products of varying qualities and prices. The quantity of products in the stores is always limited and the product price is usually higher than that in the supermarket. The clients of stores are willing to pay more for the better quality, which also represents their personal exigency and financial situations. By contrast, in the supermarkets, we have far more products and wide varieties of prices and every client can find appropriate prices for the products he or she needs. In other words, the small-scaled *grandes écoles* provide smaller groups of elites for society in the fields of economy, politics, sciences and technology. Most of these elites occupy more privileged positions endowed with more social responsibilities. However, University education is more like mass education

which tries to democratize its admission and is open to all students who pass the exam of the *BAC*. Nowadays, almost two of three students in France study in universities and this population is expected to contribute to the social development in various positions in different fields. So will the international students in these institutions show the same characteristics: academic elites with higher social status in the *grandes écoles* and students with less attractive academic records in the universities?

In this targeting step, another important question to consider is the service. Quality assurance is the fundamental element to win potential candidates in the competition. For institutions, to better understand the students' needs and desires and relate them to their own educational programs and service, will be an important move for recruitment. Is it also a process of figuring out how to differentiate themselves from others?

Grandes écoles were not created for everyone and the highly selective nature of their enrollment was predetermined at their creation. For the domestic students, following the *BAC* at the end of high school, only the top students were recruited to the preparatory classes whose objective was to help prepare students for the entrance tests to these *grandes écoles* during two or three years' study. The winners of the stiff competition would study for two or three years in these institutions before getting a high-level job. Nowadays, some of the *écoles* have changed their program from three to five years, which means that after the *BAC*, candidates could attend the selection exam directly. Those who succeed would be expected to stay in these institutions for the following five years to gain a diploma equivalent to a Master's degree. The selection procedure limits, to a large degree, the sources of international candidates to those who have studied in a French secondary school or international school in their country and have taken a French *BAC* before getting the qualification to participate in the selection exam in these institutions. However, some reforms have been conducted in some *écoles*, such as establishing an international selection exam for international candidates to attend in France with a certain quota distributed. Furthermore, with the standardization of educational programs and diplomas in Europe, some parallel courses have been created between *grandes écoles* and universities which provide more students, domestic and international, with more opportunities to get enrolled in the *grandes écoles*. The selection results are based on the quality of their application documents and an academic interview. On the basis of some recruitment information published on the website of some *grandes écoles*, the competition is quite brutal. However, more and more candidates want to have a try and this paradoxical phenomenon also reflects the value of these institutions. With regard to the

parallel-enrolled students, the enrollment ratio could be very slight. The more brutal the competition is, the more candidates want these institutions. What's the attraction? The keywords for the answer could be better service and employment opportunities.

From a quantitative perspective, thanks to their small size and better resources, they could devote more of the budgets to human resources and technical support for students. The small teaching group offers students more interaction opportunities with professors in class and the small number of students makes it possible for the professors to establish a more intimate professional relationship with them. This could be definitely considered as a benefit for international students. Considering the educational program development history in the *grandes écoles*, we could find their model of education has been to train highly skilled professionals, which indicates not only a profession-oriented course design but also students' personal and professional competencies' development. The comparatively better students recruited after a rigorous selection at the entrance and the professionalized education program create a good atmosphere for students' academic and personal development. In recent years, in order to meet the international demand and being challenged by the internationalization, more foreign language courses were developed, particularly English-teaching courses, which was initiated both for attracting international students and improving domestic students' foreign language skills. Meanwhile, internships abroad and an international year abroad were also implemented in most *grandes écoles*. All these measures have been not only accelerating the process of internationalization in the institutions but also preparing a more welcoming and well-equipped environment for international students. Last but not least, the development history of *grandes écoles* tells us that they were created to meet the social and economic development and were pioneers of developing cooperation with the private sector. After generations of successors' efforts, they have achieved their social recognition and formed enormous networks of partners and alumni. These kinds of asset continue to benefit their future students in their employment. With more and more international students conducting their study in *grandes écoles* and working in international enterprises or organizations, the reputation could be expanded internationally and facilitates the recruitment of future international students.

As for the universities, besides the nominal tuition, comparatively easier access could be one of the selling points in international student recruitment; however, easy access doesn't mean easy graduation. Unlike diversified modes of admission in the *grandes écoles* for international candidates, the selection in universities is mainly based on the application documents, and the

demand for academic excellence is comparatively lower. With the massification of higher education worldwide, we could notice its impact on international student mobility and small elite groups of exchange students have turned into mass forms of mobility. This modification of the international student profile resulted in mixed groups of international students with different academic and personal competencies, which complicated the service and support from institutional faculties and working staff. In the analysis of research data from my master's thesis (Bian 2011), most of the international interviewees mentioned that trying for a second chance was their main motivation in applying for French universities. Their academic scores were usually at middle level and not good enough to go further in their own country because of the highly competitive selection there. My interviewees' situations might be partially representative for international student groups but we can't ignore that there are some students with excellent study records in the universities.

This mixture could be considered as a constraint, which could possibly lower the academic quality of the whole student population. It could also be an advantage in that universities could have more potential candidates, and with more good academic record holders in the application, this population could improve the level of the overall student body in universities from a long-term perspective. Meanwhile, for some international students who really value this second chance, their academic success could encourage future candidates. For those who don't work seriously, their experience could be a good warning for their successors.

As previously explained in the positioning part, universities have two primary missions: education and research. From the education program point of view, considering the particularity of the discipline in different countries, the teaching courses and contents could be nuanced. The not-so-professionally-oriented program design provides more opportunities to explore for those international students who have no clear idea of discipline preferences. Furthermore, in most French universities, master program candidates could have versatile educational backgrounds, with no requirement for a perfect match between the discipline applied for and their previous discipline. For those international students who have had some work experience and want to re-start their formal education at the university, it's a great opportunity to enjoy this new set of possibilities for their re-institutionalization, which wouldn't be possible in their home education system, and to have the freedom to choose a new discipline. Even though French universities don't have a good position in world-class university ranking as presented at the very beginning of this article, we can't deny their academic and research strength. France has been already awarded 57 Nobel Prizes out of a

total of 829 since the creation of this prize, and ranks the 4th in the world, just after the US, the UK and Germany. Among the 52 awarded medal fields, 11 were awarded to French scientists which made France the second most-credited in the world (Campus France, 2011). All this scientific productivity should make universities more attractive, particularly for doctoral level international students, which is substantiated by the statistics (18.6% international postgraduates and 41.3% international PhDs).

To conclude, the targeting process requires the institutions to find their own niche which could differentiate them from others. Even if the sources of international student population couldn't be set easily, the institutions could use their own criteria to pre-select their target population. Lacking quantitative evidence, we cannot generalize that there's a difference in social class background between domestic and international students in the *grandes écoles*, but nevertheless, their academic excellence maintains a consistency with domestic peers. Compared with the *grandes écoles*, universities have more diversified sources of international students, due to easy access and research-oriented programs, and they do not particularly target students of high academic level.

Operating

After identifying one's strength, weakness and potential candidate resources, the focus turns to the operation. International student recruitment is a very complex mission with many influential factors involved. On one hand, it depends on the institution's awareness of the internationalization of the campus and its elaboration of its institutional mission statement and plan (Davis, 2009). We find it's quite often the case that non-communication between the academic departments and the international office could cause some problems in international student enrolment. Meanwhile the attitude of the academic staff, working personnel and domestic students also determines, to some extent how much effort they would like to put into recruiting international students. On the other hand, the partnership built within the institutions, between institutions and the local and national government, between institutions and corporations and between institutions and international organizations also affects the process of enrollment.

Some practices in American universities showed us some paths to be explored in the French context. A blended approach of internal cohesion and external collaboration was proposed by Davis based on the successful practice in Pennsylvania State University (2009). According to Davis, this integrated approach facilitates communication, transparency and cross-training to

market the institution locally and internationally with the contribution of blended expertise and views from staffs, faculties and students. (2009, p.79)

Moreover, Kallur (2009) mentioned three basic components which should be considered before starting international student recruitment: self-study of the institution and its existing resources; inviting an outsider from successful programs to evaluate the existing practice and make recommendations; and review from the administration and decision-makers. He also presented four types of recruitment: armchair recruitment, travel recruitment, recruitment within the country and network recruitment. According to his theory, armchair recruitment is more suited to institutions with small budgets, offering few programs with limited support services. These institutions should target the countries that send the largest number of students to them and take advantage of the alumni network as invaluable resource for advertisement. Meanwhile, their faculty and current international students could also help the promotion during their own experience abroad via their social or international network. Compared with the armchair recruitment, travel recruitment demands more money and energy from the recruiters of the institutions, however it works more efficiently. The recruiters could travel to every country of interest for a face-to-face contact with foreign institutions, potential candidates and their families, during which they could have the opportunity to better understand their educational and economic situations and make a good match. Recruiting within the country is definitely the less expensive method; however, it works more effectively with graduate recruitment by targeting the undergraduates. Last but not least, the network recruitment approach encourages participation in big national or international conference to improve visibility, meet international peers or representatives of different educational programs and establish some working contacts.

All of these theories are based on the particularity of international student recruitment in United States. Could these approaches be used in the French context? What's really happening in the French HEIs for international student recruitment? The curiosity of finding the answers brought us to the research fields, and considering the particularities of the individual institutions, we chose four local institutions to be studied with an explorative attitude.

The process of conceptual framework building is a transition from the review of previous research and a recreation of possible theories for exploring and analyzing the new problems. In this chapter, our framework design followed the order from internal to external, from

global to local and from general to concrete. Since the HEIs are the major agents studied in this study, we started with the theory of institution which explained the fundamental elements in the institution, the manner they function together inside the institution and the way they interact with external factors. The internationalization of higher education has modified the national context of HEIs and the impact of this change worked through the HEIs and produced their transformation. The decentralization of government control over HEIs in the French context and the increasing impact of the market have pushed the French HEIs to find their way out. Their path finding could be full of conflict with regard to the challenge to their institutional culture and norms during this process. By tracing all the on-going reforms, we showed no unique model was pertinent to describe the transformation of French HEIs. The more important question raised here was how the French HEIs face and react to all these external incentives, in particular, in the field of international student recruitment. The knowledge economy made knowledge and technology and innovation more valuable and globalization prepared even larger markets for talent-hunting. The world-system theory showed us how power and hierarchy functions in the global system, which explained the flow of the talents. International student recruitment as part of the international education conducted in the HEIs couldn't be considered as a separate institutional action. The soft power theory and international academic relations theory together both enforced and clarified the importance of nation power and institutional strength in international education development. The macro-global analysis of the contexts for international student recruitment prepared the basic knowledge for the French HEIs to design or modify their moves. This chapter ended with the introduction of the theory of branding in the French context. Coming from a position as a natural term in marketing and management to higher education, branding could be very disputable and unacceptable for certain researchers although it's widely practiced in the UK, the US and Australia in particular. In this study, we defined three important steps for French HEIs' branding with reference to existing studies from the major exercising countries of the theory. A hypothetical and comparative approach was applied in how the institutions should position themselves, target and operate in international student recruitment. However, does the branding theory really work and how are other theories above reflected in the real institutional context? These questions could only be answered by field research, and considering the particularity of the institutions, we are aware of the representativeness of the findings. The following chapter presents the methodology adopted in this study, the details of the field research process and our reflection.

Chapter 3 Methodological Approach

The central question in this study is the international student recruitment in the *grandes écoles* and universities in France under the impact of the internationalization of higher education. As noted Malet (2011), in comparative education, the study of an education phenomenon has to be related to its own social, political and economic context and to examine the continuity or the variation of this phenomenon in different cultural contexts. The description of the contexts was well elaborated at levels of global, regional, national and institutional and the interactivity among different levels of context as well in the review of the previous research. However, the concrete question of international student recruitment hasn't really been studied, in particular with a comparative perspective in the French HEIs. Moreover, the recruitment of the international students in this study is considered more than the activities of recruitment but a process during which we have to identify the answers to the following questions: who recruit, who are recruited, why and how recruited. The introduction of the branding theory in the whole recruitment process in this study also showed some novelties to be explored and meanwhile, lack of research on this question and the particularity of the recruiters made this study a qualitative inquiry.

This chapter has four sections. In the first section, I present the qualitative research method and the rationales for this choice for this study. In the second section, the research sources are elaborated, including research sites, participants and data collection. In the third section, I introduce the inductive and comparative study approach as the main data analysis methods and the ways to use them in this research. The final section concerns a description of researcher's reflection on the process of conducting this study, including the researcher's role, way to access to participants and rapport-building with participants in the interviewing process.

3.1 Overall approach and rationale

Creswell (2012) defined several important moments in conducting qualitative research, and by apply his theories in this study, we could easily justify our choice of qualitative inquiry. As previously elaborated, we intended to explore the international student recruitment process in the *grandes écoles* and universities in France for that the existing studies couldn't explain this complex question. More importantly, we would like to understand more about the institutional

context which has played a decisive role in this process of recruitment. However, in order to make sure our choice is pertinent, we have to clarify the definition of qualitative research. The application of qualitative inquiry has been increasingly valued in social sciences research, such as in education (Marshall & Rossman, 2011); however, considering the traditional, quantitative dominated research methods, some researchers still have some doubts about how far qualitative research can be viewed as scientific. Qualitative research is defined by Marshall & Rossman (2011) as “pragmatic, interpretive, and grounded in the lived experiences of people (p.2)”. They also summarized the characteristics of qualitative research (p.3):

Qualitative Research

- Takes place in the natural world
- Uses multiple methods that are interactive and humanistic
- Focuses on context
- is emergent rather than tightly prefigured
- is fundamentally interpretive

The choice of qualitative research indicated the researchers’ beliefs which shape the way we formulate our questions and the way we look for their answers (Huff 2009, quoted in Creswell 2012). These beliefs were considered as paradigms (Lincoln, Lynham, & Guba, 2011; Mertens, 2010) and research methodologies (Neuman, 2000) and reveal the researchers’ ideas about “ontology (the nature of reality), epistemology (what counts as knowledge and how knowledge claims as justified), axiology (the role of values in research) and methodology (the process of research)” (Creswell 2012, p.18). According to Creswell’s elaboration of these four aspects, in a qualitative research, the researchers believe in the existence of the multiple realities. They intend to approach closer to the participants being studied and develop some knowledge based on people’s subjective experience. Moreover, in a qualitative research, researchers admit the fact that the studies are not value free, which implies the impact of researchers’ proper values and also that of the participants during the data collection; and make a clear elaboration through their writing. Last but not least, the inductive approach is always applied in a qualitative research.

In this study, we adopted a social constructivist view (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011; Mertens, 2010; Creswell, 2012) and tried to reveal the diverse realities related to the international student recruitment process in the two groups of HEIs, *grandes écoles* and universities which were created and developed in the same national context and are facing the challenges from the global context; and to examine their actions by taking into account of the historical and cultural factors.

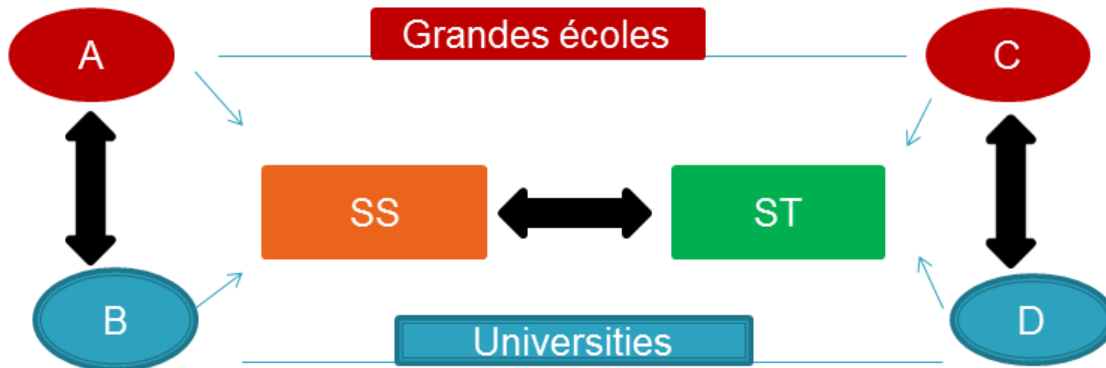
Internationalization of higher education is still an on-going process in the French context and its impact on the French HEIs still needs more attention and remains undefined. International student recruitment process as one of the important issues for internationalizing education in the HEIs is mainly interested in the study, including two phases: to recruit and to host. The current-ness and the highly contextualizedness of these questions corresponded perfectly the characteristics of qualitative research. Meanwhile, as there's no previous research on this precise topic, we kept an open and explorative attitude towards the answers of questions from the research fields and tried to understand and interpret the reasons behind.

On one hand, the in-depth interview was adopted as the principal research method to collect the data from research sites. Considering the difficulty in access to the contacts of the targeted population and their responsiveness, we gave up the idea of using the survey method. In order to enrich our perspectives towards the research questions, we decided to interview different groups of stakeholders involved in the whole recruitment process. On the other hand, in this study, we also took the official institutional documents as complementary data, such as the general information about international student recruitment, international education programs and institutional international collaboration and partnerships.

3.2 Research sites, participants & data collection

Research sites

Chart 3 Research sites



SS: social sciences

ST: sciences and technologies

Four institutions have been selected as research sites for this study, among which A and C are *grandes écoles*; B and D are universities. The choice is made based on the differentiation and the similarity of the study fields. In order to verify whether there are some differences concerning institutional strategies for the recruiting and hosting of international students in different disciplines, we selected A and B in social sciences and C and D in sciences and technologies and in the following part, we used SSGEA, SSUB, STGEC and STUD to describe the four research sites. Given the factors of geographical convenience, research funds, access and time limit, we chose city W, where I live as the general research field. City W is a port city situated in southwestern France and the major wine industry capital.

Thus, we would like to mention that the research results could be influenced by the choice of city; for example, there would have been some obvious differences if the research sites had been situated in Paris instead of in city W. In other words, some factors have to be taken into account such as the international reputation of education in the city, geographical and social environment of the city, living cost level, levels of internationalization of the city and social security for international students, etc..

The development of the *grandes écoles* has been elaborated in the literature review and with regards to their funding resource, administration and levels of prestige, in the group of

grandes écoles , we could find the ‘*grandes grandes écoles* ’ like ENS, Ecole Polytechnique, HEC; aspirant *grandes écoles* (public) in the national ranking based on fields of study and some *écoles*. In this study, the two *grandes écoles* (A&C) are considered as positioning in the second group.

SSGEA was a public institute, created in 1948 and legally affiliated to a university but maintaining highly autonomy in its governance. It specialized in political sciences and social sciences with around 1300 students. The selection for the entrance is very rigorous and the whole study duration lasts for five years, the first three years as undergraduate studies and the fourth and fifth years for graduate studies. For those who successfully complete all five years of study, they obtain an institutional diploma, equivalent to a Master’s degree but more prestigious and valued by the society or the market and its three master programs also deliver university Master’s degree. It has more than 200 exchange-agreements with universities worldwide and also has several integrated programs targeting to the delivery of European double degree diploma and some double degree programs at graduate studies levels.

SSUB is a public university, transformed from the former Law and Economics Faculty (dated back to 15th century) and now it’s composed of the 2 faculties, 1 institute of business administration, 2 university institute of Technology and 1 teachers’ training institute with total number of students around 18700. According to its official statement, it has 3 doctoral schools, 63 Master’s degree programs and 12 research centers with government accreditation and some of the research centers are affiliated to the CNRS and the national foundation of political science.

STGEC is an engineering school created in 1920 and after several decades’ reform on its administrative status and structural reform and now it specializes in electronics, informatics, mathematics and mechanics. Like institution A, the admission selection is very serious and it offers a three- year program of study by the end of which the graduates will obtain a diploma of engineer, equivalent to a Master’s level, which implies that high school graduates are not recruited in this institution directly after their baccalaureate and they have to receive two years or even more post-secondary formation before integrating in the first year program in this institution. More than 1200 students are enrolled with 124 full-time teachers or teacher-researchers and 350 part-time teachers in which 110 come directly from the industrial sectors.

STUD is a public university, composed of 5 faculties: mathematics, physics, chemistry, biology and earth & environmental sciences, and one university institute of technology. It

holds around 9500 students including 1458 international students, 1122 teachers& teachers-researchers, 27 research centers with national accreditation. The institution offers bachelor degrees in 9 fiends of study, 56 Master programs and doctorate programs in 5 doctoral schools.

The similitude of the study fields in the two groups of institutions and the resemblance of their size prepare the premise for the study. An interesting event needs to be pointed out. At the moment of conducting this research, a big regional merging of universities is going on and the official merging will be accomplished in January 2014. As elaborated by Salmi (2011), in order to build so-called “world-class university”, governments invest additional funding to promote their national elite universities and in some cases, the government encourages its top universities to merge in order to achieve economies of scale and reach a better position on the international rankings. Given the special scales of French higher education institutions and non-ranking officially practiced, the on-going merging movement might produce some positive facts, besides the point evoked by Salmi (2011). This study started in the middle of the merging planning and is envisaged to be completed after the official inauguration of a new university which had expected to group all the universities, institutes and *grandes écoles* in the region. However, the merging turns out to be an incomplete reform considering the absence of one university and several *grandes écoles*. Two of the universities sites (SSUB&STUD in this study) have been merged into two colleges in the new university; while SSGEA decided to be affiliated the new university and STGEC has become member of INP (Instituts nationaux polytechniques) which regroups only the engineering schools. Therefore, the field investigation happens at a very special moment and witnessed the whole structural reform. The new strategies are being discussed, negotiated and even created for the new university. This special moment also makes this study more interesting for the institutional policy makers and practitioners.

Considering the study focuses on the international student recruitment, the institution international relationship is considered as very important indicators. The following four tables provide the basis information in the four institutions.

Table 5 international relationship development in the four institutions

SSGEA:

Total number: around 250 international partners

SSUB:

Continent	Countries	Institutions
Africa	Egypt, Madagascar, Mauritius, Morocco, Niger, Senegal, Tunisia	8
Asia	China, India, Iran, Japan, South Korea, Lebanon, Vietnam	16
Central America	Cuba, Republic of Dominica, Haiti, Mexico	7
Europe	31	148
North America	US & Canada	33
South America	Argentina, Brazil, Colombia & Peru	18
Oceania	Australia	1
Total		231

STGEC:

Continent	Countries	Institutions
Africa	Egypt, Madagascar, Mauritius, Morocco, Niger, Senegal, Tunisia	8
Asia	China, India, Iran, Japan, South Korea, Lebanon, Vietnam	16
Central America	Cuba, Republic of Dominica, Haiti, Mexico	7
Europe	31	148
North America	US & Canada	33
South America	Argentina, Brazil, Colombia & Peru	18
Oceania	Australia	1
Total		231

STUD:

Continent	Countries	Institutions
Africa	Egypt, Madagascar, Mauritius, Morocco, Niger, Senegal, Tunisia	8
Asia	China, India, Iran, Japan, South Korea, Lebanon, Vietnam	16
Central America	Cuba, Republic of Dominica, Haiti, Mexico	7
Europe	31	148
North America	US & Canada	33
South America	Argentina, Brazil, Colombia & Peru	18
Oceania	Australia	1
Total		231

Criteria for Participants

The study mainly concerns the situation of international student mobility in the institutions and is conducted principally from the institution's standpoint. Three groups of stakeholders have been defined for data collection:

- Group 1 is comprised of international office directors and administration practitioners on international relationship affairs (O)
- Group 2 concerns researchers and academic staff who have direct contacts with international students (R)
- Group 3 includes international exchange students and free-movers (students on individual mobility) with no preference as to nationalities (S)

The international office acts as the main practitioner of internationalizing activities in the institution; thus, with the information collecting from group 1(O), we intended to find the international policies on student mobility and research collaboration, the practical procedures relating to these activities, their service provision and the frequent problems they meet in their daily work and their suggestion for the future practice. As it is quite clear that education and research can't be totally separated, researchers are both teachers and international collaboration developers. With the help of group 2 (R), we aimed at seeing how teachers manage the presence of international students in their class, the influence of their presence in teaching and research and their suggestions for the future development. The very interesting feature of the participants in group 2 is that some of the academic staff didn't only have teaching missions but also worked as international coordinators for some institutional collaborative programs. Last but not the least, even though the research was conducted from the institution's perspective; the study focus still laid on international students. The profiles of international students in group 3 (S) mainly concerned postgraduates either from exchange programs or on individual mobility. The reason why we targeted at the postgraduate level comes from different study durations in some *grandes écoles* comparing to universities and this composition of participants made the comparative analysis comparatively easier for the rest of the study. For example, in STGEC, the first year of enrollment equals to the third year in universities, for students recruited in this institution have to take two years' preparatory classes before taking the entrance exam and officially entering this institution.

Ethical considerations

Ethical approval is an official procedure for the doctoral students in the University of Toronto to get before they start the data collection involving human subject research. Dr. Hayhoe sent me the ethics review protocol submission form for reference and I prepared an information letter for interview participants (cf. Appendix A) outlining the general information of my research, my personal contact, the confidentiality, participants' anonymity and the possible time commitment for the interview. In the letter, the participants were assured their liberty to withdraw their participation at any time and their interview data would only be used for research purpose and destroyed after the accomplishment of this project.

In this study, in order to protect the participants' identity, I removed all the possible elements which could identify them. For a direct quotation of the respondents' discourse in the data analysis, I used the institution's title, the group's symbol and the abbreviation of their names' initials to identify them. In case the participants got the same initials, the numeration was applied for the distinction. The data transcript was sent to all the interviewees before officially being used in the analysis.

Data collection

As elaborated at the previous part, the official institutional documents were employed in the analysis including international student statistics, international programs and partners' information and institutional service provision for international students. These sources of information were very helpful to build a general idea of the prescribed international activities in the institution. In order to understand more about the objectives, the procedures and the real practices, the method of interviewing seemed to be necessary. A working definition of semi-structured interview was introduced by Brinkmann (2013), which also explained the compatibility of the method in this study:

Such interviews are structured by the interviewer's purpose of obtaining knowledge; they revolve around description provided by the interviewees; such descriptions are commonly about life world phenomena as experienced; and understanding the meaning of the description involved some kind of interpretation. (Brinkmann, 2013, p.25)

In this study, the data collection was mainly accomplished by semi-structured interviews with the three groups of participants. After having fixed the research sites and defined the profiles of participants, the data collection process started with the preparation of the interview guide

(cf. Appendix B) and gaining access to participants and institutions. We prepared letter of information for interview participants (cf. Appendix A) and three sets of interview questions for three groups of participants and given their different profiles of participants, the focus of questions differed a little. The first set of interview questions were designed around three main themes for international office personnel and aiming at enquiring about the policies that have been and would be implemented concerning internationalization of higher education and international student recruitment, the procedures of developing international collaboration programs, the service provisions that they offered to international students and the possible amelioration, their point of views on the influence of the dual system on international student recruitment in their institution. The second set of questions was for academic staff, the most active actor in the internationalization of higher education in their institutions. On one hand, as researchers, they were the most internationalized group of people thanks to their research, and in most cases, they acted also as the initiators of international collaborative programs. On the other hand, they were the practitioners of internationalizing their teaching and directly influenced by the presence of international students in their classes. We employed the same themes of questions for this group of participants but we were more interested in their practices in contact with international students. The last set of questions was designed for international students to understand the motivation, admission, study experience, feedbacks and suggestions for institutional service provision based on their own experience. The whole design of the interview questions came from a cyclic logic of thinking and each set of questions could be cross-examined and illustrated the main picture of research by pieces of information from different sides.

Approaching to the interview participants often began with browsing institutions' websites and finding the potential people of interest. Writing emails was the principal method of contacting and given that the emails published on the websites are mostly their professional contacts, the responsiveness from the contacts was not quite satisfactory. Sometimes, after having sent more than 50 emails, I got no response and it's also time-consuming. At the very beginning, I chose to go directly to their office to present our research and make the appointment, however, it wasn't appreciated and the usual response was "write me an email and we'll make an appointment." Later, we realized the only rapid way to get another new participant was to ask the interviewees directly to introduce some potential candidates by the end of each interview. I normally got some new candidates from the professors and the international students that I previously interviewed and the directors or the administration

staff rarely gave me any information. Nevertheless, this might partially influence the diversity of profiles of the candidates. For example, the students proposed by the professors are generally so-called ‘good students’ with better institutional integration situation and reliability; the students proposed by the student interviewed were mostly their compatriots or classmates. In order to avoid the repetition of the nationalities or similar experience, we did some selection at the moment of launching the contact with them.

The data collection has been processing since early November 2012 and two breaks have been taken during these months. The first break happened in early January after 12 interviews were completed. I went back to literature reading and meanwhile analyzed the first three transcribed interviews in order to concretize the research questions. Thus, the first group of interviews lasted comparatively longer than the rest and the interview questions seemed more general. The latest interview was conducted late May and the whole process was terminated before the summer vacation.

The total number of interviews reached to 38 (37 cases indicated in the table with one special case excluded).

Table 6 numbers of interviews with different groups in the institutions

Institution Participants	SSGEA	SSUB	STGEC	STUD
International office staff (O)	1	2	3	2
Academic staff (R)	4	2	3	1
International students (S)	5	5	5	4

Among these 38 interviews, two cases were a bit particular. During our searching for interview candidates, one of the professors in STUD, coordinator of an international program as well, he proposed that I could contact one of his French students in this program, who was at the moment in Spain. His proposition sounded interesting to our research because in spite

of his nationality, for his hosting institution in Spain, he was still considered as an international student. His interview could play double roles: to tell us his actual experience of study in Spain on the one hand; on the other hand, share with us some information about this international program of which the first semester was hosted in STUD where he studied with some international students in France. Another special interview was conducted with the international office director in a *grande école* of agriculture. Like any other *grandes écoles*, this agriculture *école* had very rigorous selection in the admission and even charged more registration fees than the two institutions selected in this research. The reason why we thought it's useful for doing this interview resulted from professional curiosity. In the context of internationalization, some *grandes écoles* were fighting for international reputation by developing international dimension in their activities, programs and resources. However, for some very small-sized *grandes écoles*, well-protected by public authorizes and very responsive to the local or national needs, did they need to do the same thing? What's their vision for internationalization? The importance of internationalization and the constraints from the study fields and traditional institutional mission were well-elaborated.

“How many interviews should be conducted in a qualitative research” was a typical question for the researchers. I followed the rules “interview as many subjects as necessary to find out what you need to know”. (Brinkmann, 2013, p.58) Even if this remark was a little bit subjective, it's reasonable because the aim of a qualitative research was not for statistical representativeness. The subject of the study concerned neither extreme case study nor maximum variation study, thus, after finding the frequent patterns responding to the research questions, we closed the data collection process.

Table 7 numbers, types and languages of the interviews

Interview media	Face-to-face interviews	Telephone interviews	Skype interviews
Numbers	35	1	2

Interview language	French	English	Chinese
Numbers	26	9	3

Among these 38 semi-structured interviews, 35 were conducted face-to-face, 1 by telephone and 2 by Skype and French, English and Chinese were employed given the interviewees' comfortableness with languages. The average time of an interview lasted for about one hour and the specific duration depended on the process of interactive discussion between two partners. The productiveness of the interview relied on partners' willingness to engage in a deep discussion about the topics of interview. Meanwhile, the place also had an impact on the process and result of the interviews. The interviews with international office personnel and academic staff mostly happened in their offices. In most cases, at the moment of interview, the office was left to the participant and the researcher. However, sometimes, we were not "alone" in the room and the interview could be interrupted by some "intruders" or audited by interviewees' colleagues who shared the same office; which to some extent could influence the interviewees' way of answering research questions. The interview places with international students were comparative diversified, on campus, cafeteria, classroom, university hall, park, restaurant and their rooms. These places were chosen according to participants' preferences. As they volunteered for doing the interview, sometimes, we offered them some small snacks or a meal which definitely facilitated the communication and trust building.

The interviews were mostly conducted in a receptive style, which "empowers informants and enables them to have a "large measure of control in the way in which they answer the relatively few and relatively open questions they are asked." (Wengraf, 2001, p.155 quoted by Brinkmann, 2013, p.31) The variation of questioning the interviewees, being active and responsive remained the key question during the interview. Given the fact that as a Chinese, I'm neither a native speaker in French nor in English, the 35 interviews accomplished could be considered as cross-cultural interviewing, which is quite difficult and extreme interesting (Brinkmann, 2013) and the impact of the researcher's role and skills were further discussed in the following section.

As interviewing was the main method in this study, transcribing the interviews became a critically important task. As argued Marshall & Rossman (2011), the transcribing process wasn't only a technical task and the translated or transcribed data could engender the judgment and interpretation (p.164). The process of transposing the spoken words from a tape recording into a text of transcription or transposing the spoken words in one language from a tape recording to another language of translation and then into a text of transcription couldn't be considered only as a technical problem. The whole process took a lot of time and energy.

Given that international student participants in this study possessed different levels of French skills, even some of them were from English-teaching programs, three language options were offered to them. However, for those who didn't master any of these three languages, a mixed language-usage was also possible during the interviews. For transcribing these interviews, we double worked on the transcription. The first draft was transcribed by me and I respected strictly the word-to-word transcribing rules. Later the draft was sent to a French native speaker to verify the legibility of the content. Considering the fact that this was not a linguistic discourse study, after getting her feedback and modification of the text in terms of grammar and we used a reconstructive way in transcription by polishing some spoken words and putting order into some slightly incoherent utterances. Nevertheless all the interviews' transcription respected the factual raw materials from the tape recording and keeps the complete version of the entire recorded conversation. As three interviews were conducted in Chinese, the recording conversation is firstly transcribed in Chinese and then translated in English by myself and verified by one Chinese friend with advanced English level and one native English-speaker to make sure of the pertinence of the transcription and the translation was well-respected. As noted Esposito (2001), translation was "the transfer of meaning from a source language...to a target language" and the translator was "actually an interpreter who... processes the vocabulary and grammatical structure of the words while considering the individual situation and the overall structural context". (p.570, quoted by Marshall & Rossman, 2011, p.163) Therefore, the translation process respected the authenticity of original material from tape recording and demanded extremely important attention and carefulness. In order to keep the validity of the data, the interview transcriptions were sent to the participants before being used in the analysis phase.

One particular point needs to be mentioned here concerned the direct quote in the data analysis. As mentioned in the previous paragraph, the translated texts in English were used in the parentheses for the three interviews in Chinese. The direct quote for other 35 interviews respected the original language without any translation, which meant the interviews in French were used as direct quote without English translation. This decision resulted from the written language of this thesis and the compatibility to the university where I conducted this study.

The reliability of this study was assured by the triangulation and peer debriefing (Marshall & Rossman 2011, Creswell 2012). As noted before, besides the semi-structured interviews, some official institutional documents were also considered as secondary source for this research. Meanwhile, during the first two years of doctoral study, two important review

sessions were arranged to ensure the feasibility and advancement of this research project, with one review board in the middle of the data collection and one session with peers in the research team after the termination of data transcription. The exchange with the reviewers or peers cross-examined the arguments in the study and enriched the possible analysis perspectives.

3.3 Data analysis

The analysis actually began during the interview, for example, when the interviewer attempted to understand and interpret what the interviewees were trying to say and the process continued in transcribing the recorded conversation. While, the more focused analysis was carried out after the transcription. (Brinkmann, 2013) In this study, two main approaches were adopted for analyzing the research data collected by interviewing: inductive approach and comparative approach.

Inductive approach

As the most widespread approach to analysis adopted by qualitative researchers, induction, also called “analytic induction” is defined as “the systematic examination of similarities within and across cases to develop concepts, ideas or theories.” (Pascale, 2011, p. 53; quoted by Brinkmann, 2013, p.82) Coding is considered as the major component of this analytic process during which the researchers can identify patterns and formulate potential explanations of these patterns and it could be concept-driven or data-driven. (Brinkmann, 2013) In this study, the concept-driven code will be used as the preliminary step to analyze the interview discourses; more precisely, thematic coding. Thanks to the interview guide, the main themes of interview have already been defined and the analysis will follow the participants’ answers to the questions, such as programs of internationalizing higher education, motivation for international student recruitment and admission, institutional service provisions, present problems and future amelioration, etc. As previously elaborated, different questions have been asked during the interviews with three groups of participants. Thus, the analysis could be to find the similarities of answers on the same questions from three groups of participants or cross-examine the pertinence of their answers from three different views.

Comparative approach

After the preliminary phase of inductive analysis, the coded data is re-analyzed in a comparative way, which was also the principal approach in this study. The comparison is conducted between the data of the two groups of institutions, *grandes écoles* (SSGEA & STGEC) and universities (SSUB & STUD). Meanwhile, a possible sub-comparison between two major disciplines was also envisaged: social sciences and sciences & technologies.

As previously evoked at the beginning of this thesis, international student mobility is a research question that has been worked in different scientific fields, sociology, political sciences, economic studies and education sciences and this study is specifically affiliated to comparative education research field.

As Lê Thành Khôi (1981) declared, comparative education wasn't an independent discipline but a study field for understanding and explaining questions of education by integrating all the disciplines. According to Bray (2007), in the field of scientific research, three main groups of stakeholders were interested in comparative education, policy makers, international organizations and researchers and their objectives and perspectives of comparison distinguished one from the other.

Comparing can be served for different objectives on the basis of the stakeholders' profiles. If we follow Bray's categorizations of groups of interest in comparative education, we could find that for the policy makers, to compare is to control (Sartori, 1991). In other words, to compare is to justify the decisions they made. For international organizations, to compare is to evaluate. The results of macro comparisons conducted by these organizations are often considered as driving forces for reforms or consultations for policy makers. Last but not least, for the researchers, they are more interested in the process of comparison by contextualizing the subjects and developing new theories in the field. In conclusion, the generality of comparing in comparative education is to differentiate and ameliorate. In this study, we examined the facts related to the recruitment process in the *grandes écoles* and universities and through comparing the facts, we expected to identify the reasons for the production of the facts and the findings could be useful for ameliorating the future practices in the two groups of institutions.

The researchers in comparative education intend to make the practitioners think about their practice and the research theories could be referred by policy-makers for a long-term development. Here in this study, we're exploring the possible answers for the question of how

institutions develop their international student inbound mobility by comparing the strategies implemented in *grandes écoles* and universities.

International student mobility is not a new phenomenon, but has been well explained in the literature review and the presence of international students both in *grandes écoles* and universities is a fact. As declared Novoa and Yariv-Marshall (2003),

The focus of comparative education should not be on the ‘facts’ or the ‘realities’, but on problems. By definition, the facts (events, countries, systems, etc.) are incomparable. It is possible to highlight differences and similarities, but it is hard to go further. Only problems can constitute the basis for complex comparison: problems that are anchored in the present, but that possess a history and anticipate different possible futures; problems that are located and relocated in places and times, through processes of transfer, circulation and appropriation; problems that can only be elucidated through the adoption of new zones of looking that are inscribed in a space delimited by frontiers of meaning, and not only by physical boundaries... (p.437)

Therefore, in this study, we presented the “facts” first in order to show the difference and similarities between these two groups of institutions: international student population, programs for recruiting international students, institutional hosting service provisions and international students’ experience in these institutions. However, in order to go further, a developmental perspective had to be used in the comparison. With the demand of the increasing role of higher education in the knowledge economy era and the globalization trend, new dimensions have been brought in to viewing international student mobility, which has evolved from ‘fact’ to ‘problem’. Contextualizing this problem in the institutional level and putting the institutions in a global context could be the basis to construct the comparative plan.

Things are comparable with respect to certain properties that they share and non-comparable with respect to certain properties that they don’t share (Sartori 1991). Therefore, the question is comparable with respect to which properties or characteristics and incomparable with respect to which other properties or characteristics. To compare is to assimilate and to differentiate to a point. In this study, the comparative method was envisaged to analyze the causes, compare the systems and logics of function and study the expected solutions.

The whole data analysis went through several phases and the ‘go back and forth’ situations appeared repetitively. After the first intensive period of collection, we started the preliminary analysis on the basis of the interview guideline and tried to find the general clusters. Meanwhile, some interview questions were modified according to the previous experience with participants in order to well prepare for the second phase of data collection. We

considered the transition between these two phases a period of transformation for me to relate the conceptualization of the study and the literature review to the real field and it was both exciting and frustrating as well. On the one hand, after having read so many references, the moment finally came to verify and explore more. On the other hand, the feedback from the fields could sometimes be far away from our expectation. The second phase of analysis mainly followed the general clusters formed in the first phase and the outliers in terms of comparison have been slowly identified. In the third phase of data analysis, we went back to the individual case analysis and classified all the detailed information into categories. Then the individual cases were regrouped based on the three groups of participants to find the general thematic indicators. In the last phase of data analysis, also the key period, we cross-examined the identified themes for different groups and by relating them to the literature review and conceptual framework that have been constructed before, we finally fixed the general indicators with different variables to achieve a comparative study. Dealing with voluminous data was both time and energy-consuming but the exploration process was exciting. More importantly, the data analysis wasn't an isolated process and its interactivity with the literature review and conceptual framework building pushed me to pursue more profound understanding about the subject in this research.

3.4 Researcher's reflection

“In qualitative studies, the researcher is the instrument and her presence in the lives of the participants invited to be part of the study is fundamental to the methodology”. (Marshall & Rossman, 2011, p.112; Creswell, 2012) In this subpart, we would like to present my reflection on the whole data collecting process:

- How to situate myself in the research and negotiate my access to the field;
- How to establish a helpful rapport with participants during the interview

A successful data collection process demands versatile capabilities from a researcher to deal with different situations and some strategies needs to be implemented. Meanwhile, the researcher's personal biography definitely has an impact on the process of data collecting.

“Me” and this study

Knowing “me”, the instrument of the research is the key to understand my perspective in viewing the study subject, my performance in data collection and my choice of methods in data analysis.

In China, there’s an evident hierarchy of higher education institutions, which is indicated by their external governance, financial resources and social recognition of their graduates’ competences in employment market. The Chinese higher education system structure is greatly influenced by both the US and the UK, especially the US system. Similar to the US system, Chinese academic system is also composed of associate degrees awarded by two-or three-year colleges, Bachelor’s by four-year colleges or universities, Master’s and PhD offered by universities and research institutions with accreditation by the State Council. Being educated in this system, to understand the functioning way of French HEIs for me means no easy task to accomplish.

Being cultivated by Confucian ethical rules, I was taught to respect people who have more experience and knowledge than me, to listen carefully to what the others say and not to interrupt while they’re talking. These habits were clearly expressed in the interviewing process. My attentiveness and politeness could either make the interviewees feel comfortable to talk or they might consider my attitude as submissive and their message wasn’t well received. The misunderstanding between the interviewer and the respondents could influence the interview process and some participants’ enthusiasm in this interaction during the interviews.

Among all the interviews completed, French is the main language of interview. The choice of 9 interviews in English mainly comes from the fact that either the respondents were from English-speaking countries or from English-teaching programs with no acquisition of French or insufficient level of French. My previous educational background and professional experience, which includes seven-year major study in English and three-year working as English teacher in the university, and four-year French learning, assured my sufficient language levels in conducting the study in the two languages. However, we can’t ignore the fact when I’m interviewing the participants in their native language, the nuance could be produced by the usage of languages. Moreover, when I’m interviewing the participants with “my” questions which are often considered as “facts” by “them”, some unexpected moments

of awkwardness are inevitable. Therefore, the linguistic and cultural aspects should be taken into account by the readers.

Entry

With reference to Pattern's theory on researcher's role in conducting a qualitative research, four important factors have been mentioned to consider: researcher's degree of participantness, the revealedness of research project, researcher's role in terms of intensiveness and extensiveness, the concreteness of research subject. (Marshall & Rossman, 2013)

In this study, I spent months on searching for participants corresponding to our criteria of targeted population and thus negotiating entry has become the touchstone for the whole data collection process. As explained previously, emails were the principal way of contact and sometimes, a direct face-to-face visit was also employed. Therefore, how to present our research project to the potential candidates for interviews and to what extent I should reveal the content of the project have become key issues at this phase. I didn't realize this difficulty until my first direct visit to the international office director of SSGEA. I remember clearly his reaction after having heard the title of our research and he pointed out directly to me that it's a very sensitive research subject and I should be careful with it. Even though he had some reserve about it, he still accepted my interview invitation. I reported this first experience to my thesis adviser and I was advised to be careful about the level of exposing the exact nature of our work to participants. As mentioned Marshall & Rossman (2013, p.113), "revealing exact purpose tends to cue people to behave in an unnatural ways, undermining qualitative purposes and principles." Therefore, like many qualitative research, I decided to follow the rule of 'truthful but vague'. (Taylor & Bogdan, 1984, p.25, quoted in Marshall & Rossman, 2013, p.113)

Besides the question of degree of openness about the research subject, I encountered an unexpected experience in contacting the international office of STGEC. After having got the professional emails of the coordinators for international collaborative programs, I sent them the entry letter to present our research and interview invitations. Several days later, I got a warning letter from the international office, the gatekeeper of all these emails that I sent to their international coordinators, telling me not to do that again.

In short, negotiating the entry and finally receiving the approval for research interview have been a long and complicated process and how to attract more participants' interest to our research without offending them needed more strategies.

Rapport with participants

Three groups of participants were selected for interviews in this study, which also indicates different rapport was constructed between the interviewees and me. As the moment of interview was usually my first acquaintance with participants, the first several minutes could be very crucial for the whole data collecting process. How to build the trust immediately with different profiles of interviewees seems very important but difficult. Therefore, I usually began the interview with a self-introduction and a general presentation of my research project, and answered their questions if there's any. Then, I presented the consent letter to them for their signature, which ensures that they were informed about the research project and their anonymity and the confidentiality of the research were protected.

The process of interviewing was to some extent unpredictable. On one hand, it depended on the researcher's interpersonal skills, capability of controlling the interview rhythm and probing what the researcher expected. The whole process was a serious test for researcher's personal and professional charm. On the other hand, it depended on how interviewees responded to the interview questions. Everyone has his comfort zone concerning the way to be questioned and degree of willingness to share the information. In this study, I found that the interviews with international office personnel often went on very well and they were very talkative about institutional policies and services for internationalizing their education. However, their answers more or less followed the book, in other words, what's written in the official documents. They were very careful about their words and critical about how I framed the questions. Therefore, my rapport with them was more like student and politician; sometimes it's not easy to get the truthful information and trying to understand the unsaid has become an important way to analyzing data.

Furthermore, being an international student myself helped me build the trust bond easier. As I've been staying much longer in France than the international student interviewees in this study, they often asked me some questions about my own experience before the interview, which was a good way to ease the tension. However, when I asked them some questions

which demanded long narratives or vocabularies to express themselves, the results were not satisfactory because of their familiarity with French. In some cases, more time had been required for the interviews for the misunderstandings or misinterpretation created by interviewer/interviewee's accent and usages of words. All these various elements, the hierarchy in the rapport with interviewees, linguistic and cultural limitations might influence the interview derailment.

Unexpected experience

As previously noted, the interviewees was required to read carefully the letter of consent (cf. Appendix A) on which indicated clearly their privacy, anonymity and right to participate or drop out would be protected for the interview and they had to sign it before officially launching the interview. After having finished all the transcriptions and verified several times, I sent to all the interviewees and here came the unexpected moment. According to the letter of consent, the transcriptions could be used for data analysis after the verification from the interviewees. I received three kinds of reaction: no reaction, positive and negative. 50% of the participants showed no response, which I considered as positive reaction. 50% of them replied to my message, among which the majority were satisfied with the transcription and agreed for its usage in the analysis. However, 4 participants pointed out the inappropriateness in the way that I transcribed their interviews. 2 of them helped me with the 'modification' and gave me the permission for the usage of the revised version. 2 manifested their strong satisfaction without further move. On the basis of the reasons that they explained for their dissatisfaction, I summed up as inappropriateness of the content & unclearness of expression. They insisted that some of their discourses should not be transcribed publically but to keep it 'between us'. During the modification phase, 'we' deleted some sensitive information such as money or personal 'overt' opinions. In order to restore the authenticity of the material, I kept both the original and the modified version of transcription; and considering its limited number, the analysis results weren't compromised. Nevertheless, I personally considered that this interesting episode reminded us the importance of the ethnic rules in the research on the one hand, on the other hand, as a researcher, how to manage this kind of situation remained discussible.

This chapter described the methods that we employed in the exploration of the international student recruitment process in the two groups of HEIs. In the first section, the qualitative

method was presented and justified as the most appropriate approach in this study. Then the four research sites were generally described with the information of three groups of participants. The ethical considerations and the data collection process were also elaborated as well. The third section mainly explained the application of inductive and comparative approach in the data analysis. In the last section, I highlighted some of my reflection in the process of the data collection and some experience was also shared by taking into consideration of the possible advantages and constraints along with it. In the next chapter, the commonalities of the participants' responses were presented in thematic analysis.

Chapter 4 Efficiency and challenges of internationalization in convergence: norms, forms and practices in the local institutions

In this chapter, we summarized all the convergent themes in the comparative analysis of the data collected in the four research sites (SSGEA, SSUB, STGEC and STUD). The first section concerned the operationalization of internationalization in the four institutions and focused on the analysis of the interpretations of internationalization from different groups of interview respondents in identifying the similar modalities of implementation in these institutions. The second section put extra attention on the role of the English language in this internationalizing process in the institutions and pointed out the common challenges faced by the academic staff and students in the application of English in education and research. The last section was mainly related to the analysis of the functions of international student presence from the perspectives of the researchers and institutions.

4.1 Implementation of internationalization in the institutions: norm & form

Internationalization, the key term in the whole research naturally became the opening question in each interview. This term started to be widely used in the higher education sector in the 1980s by mainly referring to the international studies promotion, education exchange and technical assistance (Klasek, 1992, quoted by Knight, 2012). During the interviews, I got the impression that participants' responses were directly related to their institutional roles. As regards the group of international office staffs (O), particularly the directors, their responses to the internationalization of higher education were like a repetition of the institutional external communication documents, and their discourse remained very coherent between one and another. With regard to the group of researchers-teachers (R), they seemed surprised because they considered that the international dimension was the fundamental element for research, and their research was always internationalized from the very beginning of their careers. When the international students were asked this question, their answers focused more on student mobility, study abroad experience and educational programs. The comparatively limited individual vision of internationalization made the cross-examination of participants' discourses interesting and provided us with the essential elements at different levels.

4.1.1 Rationales of being internationalized: a norm to be followed

As elaborated in the literature review, the rationales for internationalization of higher education were summed up from political, social-cultural, academic and economic perspectives (Knight & de Wit, 1995). With its expanded scales and the emerging complexity of this phenomenon, we should distinguish the nuances of motives and rationales for involved stakeholders, among which the institutional and national rationales were highlighted to be predominant in the process of internationalization. Knight (2008, 2012) identified five major factors at the institutional level: international branding and profile, income generation, student and staff development, strategic alliances, and knowledge production for understanding the HEIs' motivation on the one hand. On the other hand, she also considered human resource development, strategic alliances, commercial trade, nation building and social-cultural development as the principal rationales for internationalization at the national level. Some of these elements were well confirmed by the participants in the interviews with little nuance of emphasis.

Le brassage, le mélange des cultures, c'est comme ça que l'on avance. La façon de faire progresser l'enseignement, la façon de définir de nouvelles priorités, de nouvelles modalités... Il y a beaucoup de choses qui sont très variables selon les pays, selon les cultures. Il y a aujourd'hui, avec la circulation des gens, la circulation des idées, une façon de se mettre en accord pour trouver des choses beaucoup plus adaptées, en particulier au monde du travail, parce que notre objectif, entre autres, c'est de former des étudiants qui puissent trouver un travail. (STUDOS)

According to STUDOLS, international office director as well as researcher-teacher in the STUD, the internationalization of higher education has facilitated brain circulation in the global context and the frequent exchange of ideas among different cultures and societies. New modalities of knowledge production have been created and the institution's competence-building has also been enforced in this process. More importantly, students' skill packages have been better defined by the institution and well- adapted to the demand from both national and international society, the demand from the future labor market in particular.

Tout simplement du fait de la globalisation, de la mondialisation. Il y a les entreprises, qui sont de plus en plus dépendantes de tout ce qui est en rapport avec l'international, on le voit tous les jours, au quotidien, il y a la mobilité des travailleurs, beaucoup travaillent à l'étranger, il faut bien connaître les différentes opportunités offertes à l'étranger. Il y a aussi notamment et cela a un aspect plus important, le rôle et l'implication des politiques économiques au niveau international pour ne citer que l'Europe.... Tout cet environnement, ce que l'on appelle la mondialisation atteint aussi notre vie quotidienne, et dans notre vie quotidienne, la formation. Et les universités aujourd'hui se retrouvent avec cette obligation de former les étudiants, pas

uniquement dans des conditions locales, nationales ou encore régionales mais internationales. (SSUBRA)

SSUBRA, a researcher-teacher in the SSUB, echoed the fact that globalization has reinforced the interdependence between enterprises and different political economic contexts. Universities today have the responsibility to educate their students not only for responding to local or regional demands but also to international needs.

C'est dans un esprit d'ouverture, de diversité. On essaye de mieux s'adapter à la façon dont marche la recherche internationale. On n'a pas forcément toutes les compétences dans un pays et c'est une chose sur laquelle on ne s'interroge pas, parce que l'on collabore naturellement avec beaucoup de gens à l'étranger. (STUDRS)

As a researcher-teacher and program coordinator, STUDRS pointed out that in the global context, researchers' cross-border collaboration has become a better choice for countries to work together on problems which could not be solved on their own. Researchers should be more open-minded with more awareness of cultural diversity and adapt to the international research environment.

Cela permet une ouverture, ça donne des opportunités de penser totalement différemment, aussi bien les rapports aux disciplines que les rapports d'avis. Donc, par rapport à nos étudiants de SP, ça permet de sortir nos étudiants d'une conception totalement fermée du monde qui est totalement française. Ça les oblige à aller voir le monde autrement. (SSGEARD)

SSGEARD, a researcher-teacher, also insisted on the importance of internationalization in raising people's awareness of other cultures and ways of thinking. Moreover, he thought more opportunities have been created for students to study abroad and enlarge their visions towards the world.

All the above interviewees had strong international backgrounds in their education and professional experience. Besides their responsibilities in teaching and research, they were all in charge of certain international programs. They either have had teaching and research experience in several countries before or they used to possess foreign nationalities. The internationalized level of the academic staff has definitely an impact on their views towards internationalization, and being the former beneficiaries, they were deeply aware of the necessity and the benefits that internationalization could bring to an individual's personal and professional world. At the teaching level, internationalization pushes the institution to be

more open towards different cultures and knowledge, and to be more adaptive and creative in responding to the external contexts. New modalities of teaching or knowledge production were initiated and benefited the students' formation in this process. At the research level, internationalization is nothing new and international research collaboration is considered more and more important for working on some global questions. Moreover, students' future employment was considered as priority by some researchers as a rationale for internationalization. We could find the ideological orientation in this process of internationalization from the institutional level in their discourses; however, only a few of them talked about any direct benefits that they could get as researchers or administration staff.

...there's European research funding that you can go for... There are lots of conferences you can attend... all research contracts these days encourage us to go and work in other countries; work on other countries, sometimes work in other countries. There are exchange programs through Tempus or Erasmus, all those things you know... (SSGEARS)

Le fait de pouvoir échanger sur d'autres pratiques chaque fois, c'est vraiment ce qui m'a marquée. En ce qui concerne le Québec, par exemple, c'est se confronter au système nord-américain, différent du nôtre. (STUDOL)

Obtaining funds is a long-term mission for researchers to continue their engagement in their research or develop new research projects. With the increasing level of internationalization in higher education, particularly during the process of Europeanization, more actions and grants have been implemented to facilitate the mobility of researchers and academic staff. For researchers, the access to different contexts in their fields of research could both facilitate academic exchange with their foreign peers and enrich their studies. Although administration staff mobility is more under-developed compared to student and academic mobility due to various reasons (such as the nature of their responsibilities, working contracts, language and working competencies in a foreign HEI system etc.), some short-time visit missions are helpful for them to become familiar with other systems and working cultures in general, which prepares a necessary basis for future research or teaching collaboration between these institutions.

Almost all international student respondents mentioned that they had more opportunities to study abroad nowadays both for short-term and long-term mobility, and more resources for funds were accessible, which were considered as very positive results of the internationalization of higher education. Although they thought the internationalization was

more related to their study and living experience abroad, they still appreciated the possible benefits they could get in their future careers.

It could be helpful because I have first-time experience with EU and this is a union of gigantic states with practically nothing in common. But they make it work and they have their difficulties lately “euro crisis” but they make it work. Knowing how it works, knowing where it came from and knowing be potential else, it can help me think what the Caribbean can do to come together. So it gives me a different perspective instead of being in the situation, being in the Caribbean, seeing the situation from the outside...I get to create links, having friends all over the world helps. Maybe I’ll have a friend who will be working in the EU or being somewhere, who knows? xxx in Italy could have diplomatic arrangement sometime soon. Creating links has being definitely an important part. In terms of other benefits, seeing how other systems work in terms of government, of state itself, that is interesting because in Caribbean, a lot of our states are operated in the same way, as the vast majority of them are common law states still. It’s cool to see how the republics work for example. It also helps me to see the things happening in the world, for example, election here. (SSGEASS)

SSGEASS, a student majoring in the studies of international relations, was recruited for a five-year-long *‘filière intégrée’* France-Caribbean program in the SSGEA. From the above response, we could tell this study experience helped her develop an outsider’s perspective of examining the problems in her own country and it was also a good opportunity to create an international network for her future career. She also expressed in the interview that as a French government scholarship holder, even though her family wasn’t an affluent one, she could still live well in this experience and being a member of the first groups of students recruited in this program, she would definitely have more advantages in job-seeking later.

In this sub-section, the necessity and importance of the internationalization was elaborated by three groups of participants in four institutions from their own experience and perspectives.

4.1.2 Forms of internationalization

Compared to the brief explanation of rationales for internationalization, we found that the interviewees felt more comfortable presenting their interpretations of internationalization and its implementation in their institutions. By analyzing their discourse, we identified strong similarities in the forms of the implementation in the four institutions for internationalizing their research, teaching and international collaboration development. Moreover, some respondents also pointed out that even if difficulties for institutionalizing the institutions did exist, the current implementation of activities, programs, etc. was satisfactory.

Our analysis started with the creation of the international relationship office. In the four institutions, the office personnel counts from 3 to less than 10, not including the directors of the offices. There were generally two directors in the office: the administrative director in charge of the daily administration issues relative to international relationships and the director in general more engaged in the development of the strategies. The administrative director of the STUD expressed well in the interview concerning her role, missions and relationship with staff at different levels of leaderships.

Mon niveau d'intervention se situe, si j'ose dire, au troisième niveau, c'est-à-dire, que la politique est faite par le président de l'université, évidemment il est conseillé par le vice-président des relations internationales... Mon rôle est de mettre en musique la politique de l'établissement... Ma mission exacte est de réaliser la mise en œuvre et le suivi des actions et procédures relatives à la coopération européenne et internationale en relation avec le vice-président délégué aux relations internationales, chargé de définir la politique des relations internationales de l'établissement. Mon rôle consiste à impulser, rendre opérationnelle cette politique, de façon administrative parce que je n'ai pas de rôle politique, seulement un rôle administratif, ce qui signifie : transmettre l'information, par exemple, de la façon la plus optimum possible pour que tous les acteurs de la communauté universitaire : les enseignants chercheurs, les personnels administratifs, les étudiants, puissent savoir des informations sur notre politique relations internationales, sur les programmes, sur les dispositifs qui sont mis en place pour les aider à faire des mobilités. (STUDOL)

She used the metaphor of 'orchestra' to describe the whole functioning group and considered herself as a conductor to harmonize the relationships between different hierarchal levels and assure the achievement of missions. For the directors in general, they needed to have a more strategic and wider vision towards the development of international relationships in the whole institution.

...d'un côté la recherche : programmes de recherche, essentiellement des programmes qui vont être programmés et financés par des crédits européens internationaux. Ensuite, la mobilité, essentiellement des mobilités Erasmus mais aussi des mobilités sous contrats de relations internationales en dehors de l'Europe ou bien avec des pays qui ne participent pas aux programmes Erasmus. Mais il y en a très peu maintenant. Le troisième volet, c'est le volet de formation, c'est-à-dire que nous nous occupons de rédiger et aider à la rédaction de conventions avec des établissements étrangers pour délocaliser certaines de nos formations...(SSUBOV)

Several important missions were mentioned in this discourse: research collaboration at European and international levels; student, academic and administration staff mobility and the internationalization abroad programs, such as the exportation of teaching programs or creation of offshore campuses. Besides the directors, the other staff had different responsibilities, mainly related to the incoming and outgoing mobility service in the office. The size of the

institution is a decisive factor for the human resource distribution; and in this study, only 3 people worked in the international office in the SSGEA and 2 people for STGEC.

je dirige un service dans lequel nous sommes quatre personnes : un directeur, une administratrice des out-goings (des étudiants qui partent faire des séjours de mobilité à l'étranger), une administratrice des in-comings (des étudiants qui viennent faire un séjour de mobilité à SSGEA) ; et puis il y a aussi une chargée de mission qui travaille sur un projet européen que SP amène avec la Corée, en particulier, et qui, également, participe aux différentes tâches du service de relations internationales. Voilà, nous sommes quatre en relations internationales. (SSGEAOR)

C'est un petit service qui est composé, comme vous avez pu vous en rendre compte d'un directeur des relations internationales, comme vous l'avez déjà rencontré, l'ancien et le nouveau ; ensuite, il y a ma collègue qui j'encadre. En termes de service administratif ça ne concerne que deux personnes. Moi, j'encadre ma collègue qui a pour a mission de s'occuper des flux sortant des élèves qui partent à l'international. En revanche, moi, je m'occupe plutôt de ceux qui rentrent dans l'École, des étrangers, et plus de la gestion des conventions de nos partenariats. (STGECOV)

The international office acts as the hub of the policy diffusion and support provision both at internal and external level in the institution. One element necessary to point out here is that the research laboratories enjoy a high-level of autonomy in terms of administration and funds, which is also a product of the dual research system in France. The research laboratories could engage in the international activities with their own funds and networking, such as the short-term visiting researcher/scholar system. However, according to the office director of the SSGEA, everything concerned with teaching activities has to be approved or passed through the international office because it's the office that drafts the agreements for different collaborative programs (which was elaborated in detail in the chapter of international academic relations).

During the interviews, I also asked a question about the cooperation between the international office of the institution and the personnel in charge of some related issues in the departments. For the two *grandes écoles*, SSGEA and STGEC, the communication between their staffs is very frequent and easily accomplished and some of the problems could be solved 'in the corridor' during a very small convivial conversation. In the STGEC, the geographic coordinators exist in each department to facilitate the international relations development and they are often researchers-teachers who voluntarily take this responsibility. They're both external communicators and internal liaison between the international office and their department. However, the coordination between the institution international office and the departments didn't work very effectively in the two universities, the SSUB and the STUD.

On a à priori un seul bureau des relations internationales, et il peut y avoir des aspects de correspondance dans les UFRs... (la communication) ça existe mais on n'a pas la solution... C'est parce que les UFRs ne sont pas très ouverts à l'international, ils ne sont pas forcément conscients de toutes les difficultés parce que tout change beaucoup à l'international. Les problèmes changent beaucoup, parfois, vous n'avez pas d'étudiants, d'autres fois il y a cinq étudiants qui débarquent. Ils ne sont pas forcément au courant et ce n'est pas simple. Donc, je ne sais pas quelle structure il faut avoir parce qu'il ne faut pas que ce soit très décentralisé, c'est-à-dire : trop de moyens dans les UFRs parce que pour tout ce qui est visa, c'est bien qu'il y ait un bureau où toute l'information s'est réunie dans le même endroit. Si chacun a ses contacts, ce n'est pas très bien pour chaque UFR, s'il y a de vrais problèmes, on n'a pas tous les gens sous la main. C'est bien qu'il y ait une culture internationale qui soit dans le centre des relations internationales, bien identifiée, bien organisée. Il peut y avoir des correspondants dont le travail est plus d'accueillir l'étudiant et voir avec lui quel est le meilleur programme qu'il peut suivre pour valider ses cours. (STUDOS)

The office director in general in the STUD admitted the existence of communication but criticized the lack of awareness of the importance of internationalization and cooperative spirit at the departmental level. He also highlighted the importance of centralization for more effective human resource allocation, information sharing and better hosting service in the institution. Meanwhile, the office director in the SSUB also emphasized the importance of departmental participation in the international relations development.

...s'il y a plus de demandes de mobilité qu'il n'y a de contrats de mobilité, il faut un arbitrage. Jusqu'à maintenant, c'est nous qui le faisons et puis j'ai demandé à ce que cet arbitrage se fasse dans chaque UFR pour ne pas avoir la responsabilité de cela. Je pense que les directeurs de UFR doivent savoir quels sont les priorités de leur UFR et donc, choisir quels sont les enseignants qui vont prioritairement bénéficier de ces mobilités. Ils sont mieux placés pour décider donc, je fais ça cette année. (SSUBOV)

The hierarchical relationship between the central bureau and the departmental one was indicated in their discourse and this revealed the question of administration efficiency: top-down or bottom up? The international office director of the SSGEA elaborated in the interview that international relations development needed the initiatives from different stakeholders inside the institution and it would be impossible for the center to decide everything. In his opinion, the creativity and vivacity always came directly from the bottom. However, he also mentioned that the small size of the SSGEA facilitated the bottom-up internal collaboration and it might be difficult to for its implementation in some larger-sized universities.

C'est impossible de savoir, penser qu'il y a un centre qui décide ou qui impulse parce que dans un établissement universitaire, la RI vient de partout, elle est liée aux différents centres de

recherche, à différents enseignants. Moi, je sais que mes collègues qui sont responsables du service de RI des universités, ils râlent parce qu'ils ne sont pas au courant, il y a des choses qui se font mais ils ne sont pas informés. Donc, ils veulent une centralisation. Ce qui les rassure, c'est le fait que ce soit centralisé parce qu'ils pensent qu'ils vont tout connaître. Moi, je ne suis pas dans cette logique-là parce que je vois, en fait, l'impulsion, la vivacité, elle ne doit pas venir du centre, c'est chimérique, à mon sens, ce n'est pas comme ça que ça fonctionne. Elle vient des initiatives individuelles, des initiatives de certains collègues, donc à SP, ça peut être les internationalistes, parlementaristes, ou les sociologues. Bon, c'est vrai que cela crée une sorte de caractère informel, ce qui est important, c'est la transparence. Ce n'est pas qu'au centre, il y ait quelqu'un qui dit « tu fais ci, tu fais ça ». Ce qui est important, c'est qu'il y ait une initiative, ils informent le centre de ce qu'ils font. (SSGEAOR)

Although we didn't intend to evaluate the administrative efficiency in each institution, the international office directors' points of views were still very important in understanding how the office functioned and moreover, their leadership had an important impact on the institutional strategies' development.

After a general introduction of the international office, including its composition, missions, functioning system, the analysis continued with the forms of internationalization in these institutions. From the written institutional mission statement to the practice, we identified the convergent practices in the four institutions, which were also proved to be coherent with the findings in the previous studies at global level. With the development of the conceptualization of internationalization, it has been classified as two categories: internationalization at home or campus-based internationalization and cross-border education (Knight, 2012, p.33). Following her frameworks for both categories (Knight, 2012, p.35 & p.37), we summarized the practice of the internationalization in these institutions by relating the interviewees' discourses to the official documents.

Chart 4 Two pillars of internationalization: At home and Cross-border (Knight 2012)



Source: Knight (2012) Two pillars of internationalization: At home and Cross-border

Table 8 Internationalization in the four institutions: campus-based and cross-border

SSGEA

Campus-based	Cross-border
Curriculum and programs: Foreign language study/teaching programs, Area & regional studies, Joint and double degrees	People mobility: Student year abroad, Professors/scholars research work
	Programs: Joint/double award degrees/programs
Intercultural dimension in teaching and learning process	Academic projects: International research projects
Research and scholarly activity: joint research projects, international conferences and seminars, published articles and papers, international research programs, partners in academic sector, integration of visiting researchers and scholars into academic activities on campus)	Policies: Academic mobility

Extracurricular activities: student clubs and associations, international and intercultural campus events, tutorship and peer support groups	
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SSUB

Campus-based	Cross-border
Curriculum and programs: Foreign language study/teaching programs, Area & regional studies, Joint and double degrees	People mobility: voluntary Erasmus or exchange program credit mobility
	Programs: Joint/double award degrees/programs, franchised degrees/programs, offshore campus
Intercultural dimension in teaching and learning process	Academic projects: International research projects
Research and scholarly activity: joint research projects, international conferences and seminars, published articles and papers, international research programs, partners in academic sector, integration of visiting researchers and scholars into academic activities on campus)	Policies: Academic mobility
Extracurricular activities: student clubs and associations, international and intercultural campus events, tutorship and peer support groups	

STGEC

Campus-based	Cross-border
Curriculum and programs: Foreign language study/teaching programs, Area & regional studies, Joint and double degrees	People mobility: Student year abroad, Professors/scholars research work
	Programs: Joint/double award degrees/programs
Intercultural dimension in teaching and learning process	Academic projects: International research projects and educational service for short-term engineer training
Research and scholarly activity: joint research projects, international conferences and seminars, published articles and papers, international research programs, partners in academic sector, integration of visiting researchers and scholars into academic	Policies: Academic mobility

activities on campus)	
Extracurricular activities: student clubs and associations, international and intercultural campus events, tutorship and peer support groups	

STUD

Campus-based	Cross-border
Curriculum and programs: Foreign language study/teaching programs, Area & regional studies, Joint and double degrees	People mobility: voluntary Erasmus or exchange program credit mobility
	Programs: Joint/double award degrees/programs, franchised degrees/programs, offshore campus
Intercultural dimension in teaching and learning process	Academic projects: International research projects
Research and scholarly activity: joint research projects, international conferences and seminars, published articles and papers, international research programs, partners in academic sector, integration of visiting researchers and scholars into academic activities on campus)	Policies: Academic mobility
Extracurricular activities: student clubs and associations, international and intercultural campus events, tutorship and peer support groups	

Knight (2012) listed the six categories for framing the campus-based internationalization: curriculum and programs, teaching/learning process, research and scholarly activity, co-curricular activities, extracurricular activities, liaison with local community based cultural/ethnic groups (p.35). From the summary of the implementation of internationalization in these institutions, we could find that most categories have been practiced and not many differences were identified on the basis of the interviewees' responses with the institutional official statement. However, some divergences appeared when we looked at their cross-border education, which was categorized as people, programs, providers, projects and policies in a vertical development dimension. The orientation of the cross-border education has been developed from developmental aid to commercial trade. In the two universities, SSUB and the STUD, we found the existence of the franchised degrees/programs and offshore campus and

more voluntary student mobility service. In the two *grandes écoles*, SSGEA and STGEC, we perceived their researchers were provided with more freedom and funds to do field research in foreign countries and the mobility abroad was an obligation for their students either for obtaining credits or accomplishing an internship.

...il n'y en a pas pour nous. On peut faire des choses, on peut, mais la vérité c'est qu'il y a très peu de contrôle des autorités françaises qui ne font pas leur travail. Ils ne vérifient pas ce que l'on donne... Après, c'est contreproductif de commencer à donner les diplômes ainsi, ce n'est pas possible. (SSGEAOR)

The discourse implied two elements related to the franchised programs and offshore campus: accountability and prestige of the institution diploma. As noted in the previous chapters, with the expanded scale of cross-border education, more institutions are interested in delivering their programs and degrees to students in their home country. However, the teaching quality and accountability has been doubted, in particular with some commercially oriented institutions or education providers. A lack of evaluation control of these transnational programs or more complex problems in some offshore campuses could create a bad image of the institution in the international context. Meanwhile, the institution diplomas of these two *grandes écoles*, SSGEA and STGEC, were highly valued and the delivery of the diploma was highly selective, which is elaborated in the following chapter. One last point needing to be clarified here is related to the extracurricular activities. We found the implementation of similar service provisions in the institutions' official documents; however, the practice process and results were not exactly the same in the *grandes écoles* and the universities. The confrontation between students' discourses with the official talks was presented in the student service chapter.

From the theoretical perspective, the respondents of the same group in different institution shared coherence in their responses and their discourses were confirmed by the institutions' official documents published on their websites. We found increasing awareness of the necessity of internationalization in the institutions and the evolved efforts that different stakeholders inside the institutions have put into internationalizing the teaching and research, which could be identified by the enlarged and diversified institutional practices. However, considering that the institutions were at different phases of maturity, exploration or expansion in the process of internationalization, the problems and difficulties that they confronted were differentiated in the concrete institutional context.

4.2 English: language of a ‘must’ implemented in research and teaching

The role of English has been largely discussed in the previous chapters and its functionality and popularity worldwide has had a deep impact on international education development. From a language tool for communication and teaching to a key indicator for measuring the research production of academic staff, the domination of English is insurmountable in higher education. On the one hand, English, as the most widely studied foreign language in the world, in fact really facilitates the communications between different countries and cultures where people use different languages, and it proves its necessity in the current world when more and more problems demand more cross-border collaboration. On the other hand, the domination of one language worldwide is always more than a political issue and it's undeniable that in learning a foreign language we open our mind consciously or unconsciously towards a culture or an ideology. Thus, it could be considered as a form of soft power exercised by major English-speaking countries. In the internationalization of higher education, English has become a ‘consensual’ (voluntarily or involuntarily) language for teaching and research. In this part, we would like to see the responses from the four institutions towards this international ‘consensus’ and the challenges and opportunities in their decision-making process.

4.2.1 Protectionism of French language

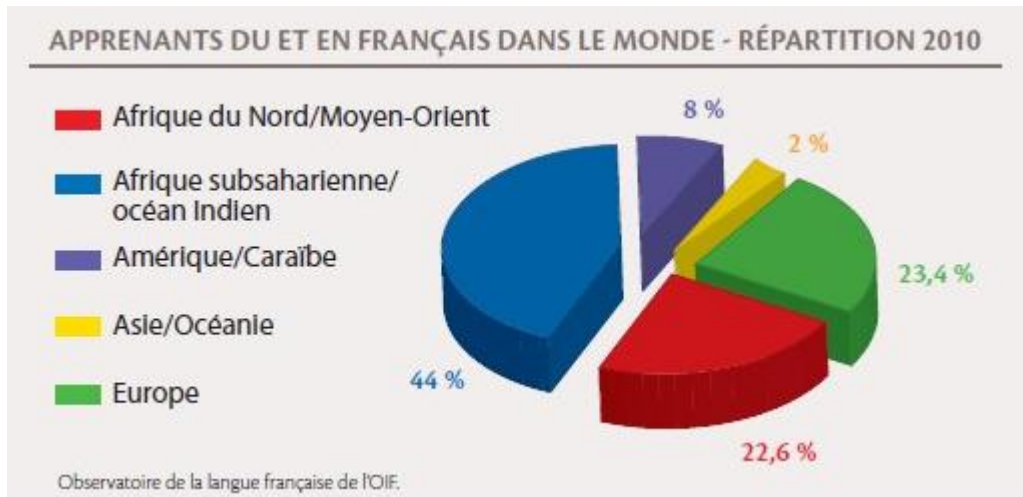
Some facts and statistics of the French language policies and powerful influences were presented in the following paragraphs in order to depict the geopolitical background for the challenge of English entry to France. We started with the Toubon Law (1994) in which the use of French language was mandated by the government in all the official government publications, in all government-financed schools, in all advertisements, in all workplaces, in commercial contracts and in some other contexts. The law intended to defend the French language and enrich the language application. In one of my interviews, when I mentioned that my thesis was written in English, the respondent, a researcher-teacher in the SSGEA considered it ‘impossible, because it's against the Toubon law’.

On commence l'appel des thèses en anglais parce que c'était interdit. Des écrits en anglais, c'était interdit... par la loi française, la loi Toubon mais la loi a été changée l'année dernière. Jusqu'à l'année dernière, c'était interdit. Et moi, j'en ai fait soutenir deux en anglais auparavant,

et il a fallu avoir une dérogation. Ça veut dire qu'il a fallu avoir une autorisation spéciale pour la soutenance parce que c'était pour un étudiant éthiopien qui écrit en anglais et qui parle un peu français, donc, il a écrit en anglais et on a réussi à obtenir une dérogation. C'est le président de l'université qui a autorisé expressément une dérogation. (SSGEARD)

From his description, we could understand the Toubon law's power shrunk recently however, the protectionism of French language still left very deep marks in higher education system. With regard to the French language power in the Europe, according to the Eurobaromètre special report 386 (Les Européens et leurs langues, 2012), the top five spoken foreign languages were English (38%), French (12%), German (11%), Spanish (7%) and Russian (5%) and at national level, English was the most spoken foreign language in the 19 EU member countries where English was not its official language (which means the UK and the Ireland are excluded). The top five useful foreign languages for the Europeans were English (67%), German (17%), French (16%), Spanish (14%) and Chinese (6%). From this survey, we could tell both the super popularity of English and the strength of French language in the multilingualistic Europe. Besides the national and regional scale, as indicated in the introduction, Campus France and Alliance Française were the two main agents for the international promotion of French language learning and French culture in the global context. The following three graph statistics were collected and published by the French Language Observatory of the Francophone International Organization (OIF) in 2010. The first graph showed us the repartition of French learning and speakers in the world. Almost 67% of these people came from different parts of Africa and 2% from Asia (most in Cambodia, Vietnam and Thailand). The second graph showed the estimated evolution of the population in the countries where French was an official language and the member countries of OIF. We could see the very optimistic expectation for the tendency 2025-2050. The last graph illustrated the distribution of this population in continents and the coherence did exist between the first and last graph. The increasing number of French-speakers and learners was well envisaged in Africa. If we examine the reasons behind this popularity of French language in these countries, it's crystal clear that the historical and political factors still played key roles. The French colonization in these countries left a big fortune of French linguistic and cultural legacy which sustained its influence and bondage between France and these African countries. This observation was confirmed by the top representativeness of African students in France during the last decades.

Chart 5 Apprenants du et en français dans le monde-répartition 2010



Source : L'Observatoire de la langue française de l'Organisation internationale de la Francophonie 2010

Chart 6 population (en millions) des pays où le français est langue officielle et des pays membres de l'OIF

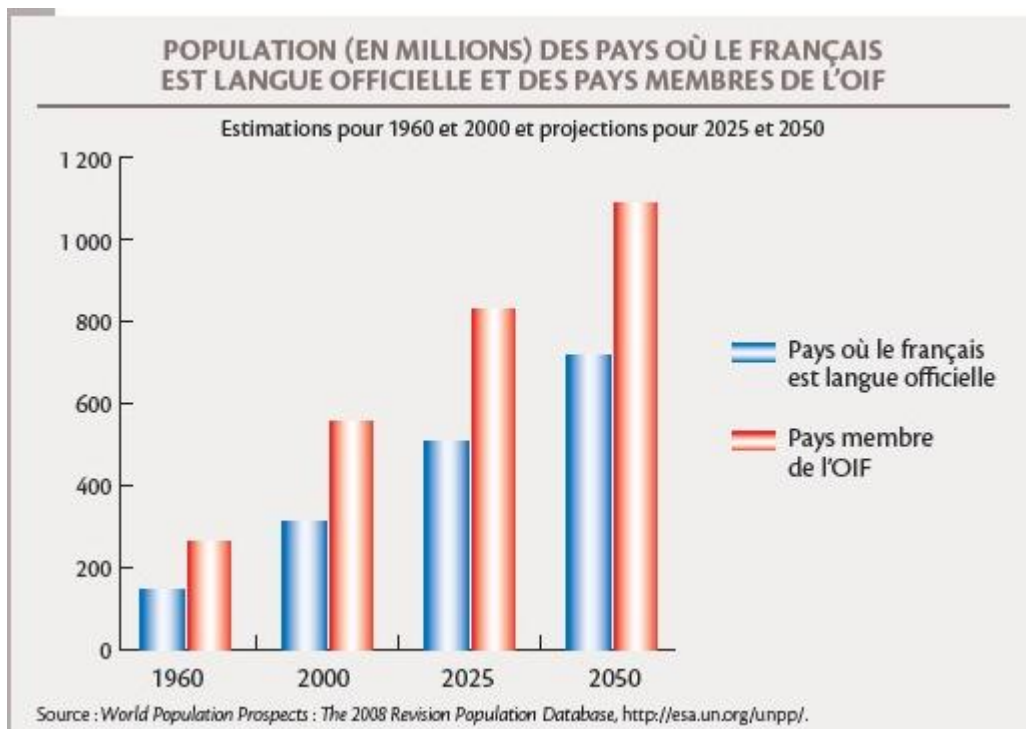
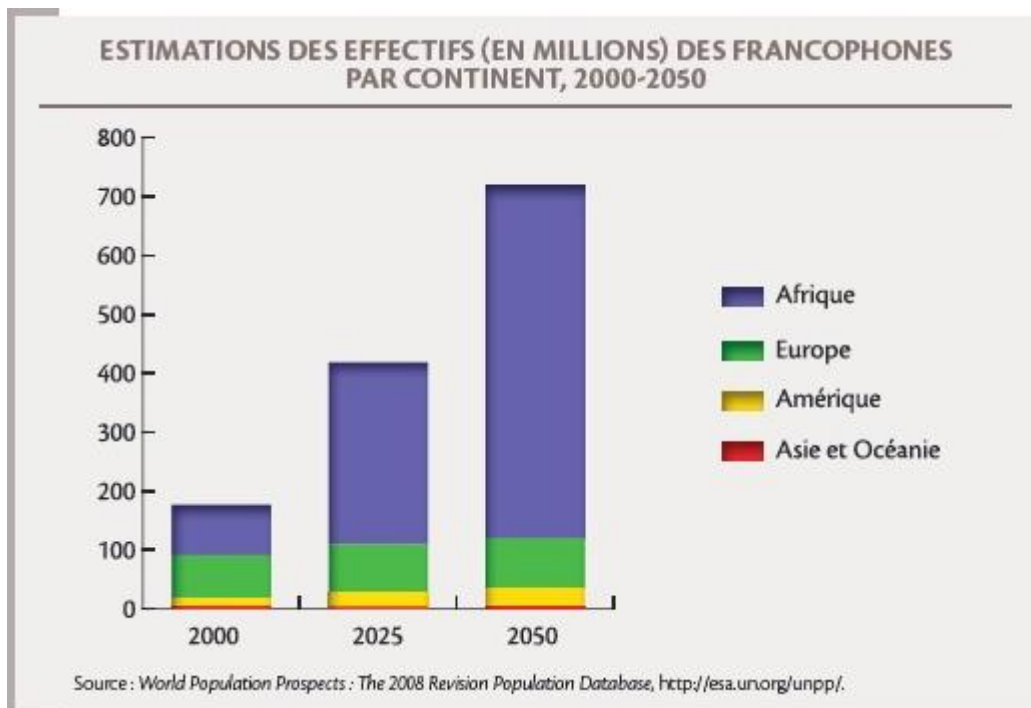


Chart 7 estimations des effectifs (en millions) des francophones par continent, 2000-2050



Source : L'Observatoire de la langue française de l'Organisation internationale de la Francophonie 2010

If we related these statistics to the fact that France is still one of the top hosts for international students, we could understand it would not be easy for the French intellectuals to give up the French-centeredness to the English cliché. The first indicator that reflected this resistance could be the website language and as we might all agree, almost all of the firsthand information we get nowadays is from websites. Thus, the first image of internationalization is reflected on website construction, and as previously described in the table that we created based on the information published on the Ministry of Higher Education and Research website, 58% of all the French universities had their websites in English or partial English, in particular the international relations column (Introduction, p.15). Among the four institutions in this study, 2 out of four had a very short English version for their websites and one had no translation version. Institution SSGEA and Institution SSUB had one English page of institutional history introduction; Institution STGEC had a very well-developed English version of the majority of information on their website and Institution STUD had only a French version. As host institutions, they might assume that all international students should have a sufficient French level before getting enrolled. But the reality might not be as they

expected or even far from their expectation. In the interviews, some respondents said that although they were fully aware of the importance of a multi-linguistic version of their institutional website or at least an English version, the lack of human resources and funds made it a difficult mission to accomplish.

Prenez l'exemple du site internet de STUD : il n'est pas traduit en anglais... sans doute, il n'y pas suffisamment de moyens financiers ou humains donnés à la communication. On se heurte très vite, en France, au manque de moyens en ressources humaines dans les universités. Je crois que les équipes ont envie de faire des choses et les idées pour les mettre en œuvre mais les dotations budgétaires de l'État vont en diminuant et la conjoncture économique actuelle ne va pas dans le sens de la hausse... Nous essayons, sur notre site « relations internationales », de mettre les pages relatives à la mobilité dite entrante, c'est-à-dire destinée aux étudiants étrangers souhaitant venir effectuer leurs études à XX, en anglais. (STUDOL)

As demanded by the Toubon law, we could see that the official teaching language in universities and public *grandes écoles* is still French. Being the direct beneficiaries of this system, some international student participants showed their own opinion relative to the French language in their study in France.

It seems to completely divide in French culture between massive desire to protect French language and reject any kind of potentially invasion of foreign language. On the other hand, I accept the realization that you need broaden out and respect what the market wants. If there's a market for it, then go for it. It's not like people are not going to speak French and the truth is they are coming here in France and part of the joy is to speak French and try to learn this language. It's certainly quite true for me, for the majority people who come here. It's not the case that French language is under attack. I think it's more to do with offering something different to bring people over and give them the chance to experience the country. Once they're here, they have to speak French at some point. The course might be in English but the French life here isn't in English. (SSUBSO)

This excerpt above was directly quoted from my interview with an Erasmus student from England. From his discourse, we confirmed that the marketization of higher education was well embedded in his mind, and he had a strong awareness of the clientele relationship between higher education institutions and international students. His reaction was closely related to his cultural identity. Meanwhile, we found the second part of his expression was very reasonable. He emphasized the importance of the cultural and linguistic immersion in international students' life abroad. As indicated in many researchers' works, study abroad for students was to live the experience and broaden their vision towards the world. Developing courses in English would not be harmful for the French language which the students have to use in their daily life whether they want to or not. Two other students majoring in social

science also talked about the teaching program design in their interviews. They criticized the French-centered teaching programs and they thought the presence of an international student population and the diversity of their cultures and knowledge should be reflected in the professors' teaching plans. They admitted that the institution has been making an effort to ameliorate this situation, but keeping the balance between the national and international level could be a long-term call, just as indicated in the following discourse.

...but a problem I do have is that sometimes there are too much focus on France, especially when you have people from all over the world to study here, but you don't take into consideration of their cultures and their history. I don't think they have created the balance yet. It needs time but the effort is there.(SSGEASS)

4.2.2 Transformation & Challenges for researchers, students and institutions

Both higher education institutions and research are inseparable from the international dimension. The key question is to whom and to what are they open? From resistance to being aware of the necessity, it takes time for French researchers and institutions to accept the prominent phenomenon created by the English language. An English researcher in the SSGEA said in the interview that in the early period of his teaching and research in this institution, the curriculum was France-centered and it was impossible to teach the courses in English for the simple reason that students' English level was not good enough for them to understand or express themselves. However, during the last two decades, he felt that students' English level has improved little by little and more importantly the students were more curious and willing to know what's happening in the world.

I began in the early 90s in political science where French political science, a lot of it was very, well... everybody published in French and published very little in English. People rarely read for a very long time publications in other languages particularly in English. But in the last 20 years, this has become much more widespread...In terms of teaching, for example, it would be, it would be impossible in the early 90s to use a text in English for students, even master students. You could use it but your chances could not much be read and discussed as one should do at that level and we were very thin. And over the years their level of English has constantly become confident as well, not just about language skill, per se but their confidence. (SSGEARS)

However, we needed to know that the students mentioned in his discourse were from the SSGEA, a Grande École. The students in this institution had to successfully pass an English level test before being recruited, which indicated that their English was comparatively better

than those from the universities. Moreover, the difficulties in the application of English language in teaching and research could also be differentiated in the different disciplines.

...parallèlement en droit, on a aussi ouvert une Licence droit et langues mais dans la Licence droit et langues, il y a deux langues : le français et il y a quelques cours en anglais, mais quand même 50% des cours restent en français. Le problème est qu'il est extrêmement difficile d'enseigner le droit dans une langue étrangère parce que le droit est spécifique au pays et le droit passe par un vocabulaire spécifique que l'on ne retrouve pas dans une langue étrangère. (SSUBOV)

SSUBOV, the international office director and researcher in English language studies in the SSUB, explained the difficulties in his teaching practice with law students. Law is one of the oldest fields of study in French universities and considering of the diversity of the national laws, it's natural that some of the terms couldn't be translated into another language. As the English Erasmus student majoring in comparative law hosted in this institution elaborated, law studies would only interest the students intending to conduct comparative studies on international laws. Most of the Erasmus students enrolled in this program had a very limited level of French knowledge, and for some of them, the possibility of using the French language in their future professions would be very slight or non-existent. In social sciences, another field is closely related to English: economy and management.

Il se trouve qu'en économie, la langue majoritaire est l'anglais, plus que le français au niveau mondial, ensuite, dans nos diplômes, quand on met des modules en langue étrangère ou quand on fait venir des collègues qui nous donnent des cours spécialisés, ces choses-là se font en anglais parce qu'il y a une demande des étudiants aussi pour que ce soit en anglais parce que si les étudiants ont choisi l'économie, ils s'orientent vers des disciplines, des métiers où l'anglais va jouer un rôle important. On a le français parce qu'on est en France et puis assez naturellement, la langue qui vient ensuite c'est l'anglais... (SSUBRY)

The relatedness and responsiveness of the discipline to the international labor market and academic world could be decisive for enforcing the application of English. As a researcher in economy, a former foreign student in France in the SSUB, SSUBRY evoked the demand from local students for the application of English in their programs, because more and more students have developed a vision towards the international labor market and they were well aware of the significance of English in their future career. Moreover, from the research perspective, the economy field was fully dominated by English, the only language tool for researchers' to become informed, to conduct research or to communicate with foreign peers. Similar characteristics were also identified in the domain of science and technology.

Par rapport à l'internationalisation, c'est que l'on va appartenir à une autre norme : une norme mondiale, c'est-à-dire que l'on va échanger, il faut une norme pour échanger, se comprendre, la norme c'est tout est en anglais, le langage international est l'anglais. Pour moi, l'internationalisation, c'est ça, c'est l'anglais, comme on a fait le système LMD en Europe pour qu'il y ait cette possibilité d'échanges... (STGECRR)

STGECRR, an international program coordinator in the STGEC, considered English an international norm for understanding, communication and exchange of ideas and also compared this norm to the harmonization of the LMD system in Europe. He was one of the few researchers who had extremely positive ideas about internationalization, and he was also an active proponent for enforcing the collaboration between France and English-speaking countries. At the moment of our interview, he was a visiting scholar in a famous Australian university.

Dans le sens où pour nous qui sommes scientifiques, notre littérature est essentiellement anglaise donc tout ce qui est en lien avec l'apprentissage de l'anglais est très positif pour nous. La France a un rapport à la langue, et c'est sa position dans le monde aussi, et on a du mal à sacrifier notre place dans le monde en sacrifiant notre langue. Mais pour des scientifiques, moi, je suis très littéraire même en tant que scientifique j'aime la langue et j'aime rédiger en français mais je sais que pour un ingénieur, même dans les entreprises française, les documents s'écrivent en anglais pour pouvoir les envoyer à l'international et ça améliore aussi la qualité de nos étudiants, les étudiants qui viennent. (STGECRE)

Another researcher in the STGEC also confirmed English as the international norm for scientific publication, but we could still feel the involuntary willingness of 'sacrificing' French for English in his discourse. From the education perspective, teaching in English also played an important role in student future career development, and as the direct beneficiaries, the students' competencies were more privileged in the employment market. It's not always easier to practice something that people are fully aware of, because from awareness to practice, the process is still long and difficult.

Et en France, on le voit, on s'ouvre à l'anglais mais il y a encore beaucoup de personnes qui ne parlent pas anglais, c'est un pays qui est satisfait de lui-même et donc qui va peu regarder ce qui se fait à côté. (AGRO)

Faire cours en anglais, ce n'est pas donner à tout le monde, il y a des gens qui ne veulent pas faire cours en anglais, il y a des gens pour qui c'est difficile et il y a des gens que ça ne dérange pas. (STGECO)

Et les anciens collègues ou ceux qui ne parlent pas anglais s'y refusent mais moi, tout ce que j'écris est en anglais, ainsi ça me permet déjà de revendre mon cours à l'étranger. Et quand je viens enseigner quelques heures ici, je le fais en anglais et c'est très simple parce que le support

existe déjà, après, il suffit de le parler et ça facilite les échanges, comme on fait en recherche, je n'écris plus rien en français au niveau des recherches, tous mes cours sont écrits en anglais donc je suis partisan de tous les supports écrits en anglais et la plupart des collègues savent parler anglais, donc après, en cours, il faut juste switcher le langage, faire cours en anglais, aucun souci mais je pense que les collègues n'aimeraient pas trop... C'est très bien, je suis partisan de ça, nous sommes dans une École internationale, on devrait faire ça... (STGECRR)

The three excerpts above made clear the levels of difficulties being confronted by different generations of researchers-teachers. Although the necessity of 'looking at what the others do' was clearly mentioned, the fact for some academics was they just didn't speak English. We think this reality is closely related to the whole academic profession system in France, if we don't consider it as a result. The '*titulaire*' system guarantees stability for researchers' academic careers in the HEIs and this stability could create a pleasant ambiance for researchers' scientific production on the one hand; on the other hand, it might play a negative influence on their motivation and creativity in their research.

Et puis l'on parle de titulaire, qu'est-ce que ça veut dire titulaire ? Cela empêche la mobilité, il faudrait un peu pousser les enseignants-chercheurs à aller ailleurs et avoir plus d'expérience. Et quand on a un cours avec des enseignants-chercheurs qui ont cette expérience internationale, on peut faire la comparaison avec d'autres enseignants qui restent toujours ici. La vision des choses, les modalités, la logique, c'est différent... Il y a une injonction paradoxale, on nous dit qu'il faut bouger, mais ici, on a un enseignement qui est basé sur une année, avec des contraintes d'examens. Je connais des enseignants qui sont en mobilité mais on leur dit qu'il faut revenir aux examens, on leur fait comprendre que s'ils s'en vont, ils doivent revenir pour les examens, donc c'est mal vu de ne pas être là pour participer. On a l'impression que cette mobilité, elle marche très bien pour les étudiants surtout, mais pour les enseignants, c'est difficile, et je le regrette vraiment, je trouve ça dommage. (SSGEARDF)

Academic mobility is considered a necessity in order for researchers to have more international experience which could benefit both their research career and teaching practice. As regards the '*titulaire*' system, academic status could create some limits as confirmed by SSGEARDF, a researcher-teacher in the SSGEA. Based on the information published on the website of the Ministry of Higher Education and Research and confirmed by the interviewees, the '*maître de conférence*' has to assume 192 hours of teaching courses for a university year, during which he/she has to spend the same amount of hours or more on their research. However, considering that the evaluation system of the research products is not fully developed, one researcher respondent mentioned that there was no clear differentiation between a comparatively productive researcher and a less productive one. A lack of tangible incentives in this '*titulaire = fonctionnaire*' system could comfort those who are looking for a

stable career but discourage certain ambitious researchers. Except for researchers' ideological passion for research, the benchmarking system seems to be sometimes necessary to motivate people; however, it's difficult to implement.

...on practical, we need support for the correction of English, the text is not print on line because the English is bad, it can happen rather than just translating everything. (SSGEARS)

SSGEARS, a researcher respondent in the SSGEA mentioned another practical problem of writing in English for non-English-speaking researchers in the interview. As most researchers accepted the necessity of producing articles in English, they actually followed the rules. However, in practice, they normally first wrote in French and then translated it into English. Sometimes, the unintelligibility of the translated version could be the cause for not being published. In spite of all the problems mentioned above, we could still see the progress confirmed by the respondents in the four institutions.

...il y avait au début des collègues avec une certaine appréhension de faire cours en Anglais.... Ils sont maintenant plus à l'aise pour parler en Anglais devant les étudiants.... C'est en Anglais, tous les cours du Master sont Anglais, c'est un atout aussi, les étudiants le veulent... Pour le marché du travail, c'est un atout, en recherche aussi, on recrute.... Parce que toutes les publications dans les journaux qui sont reconnus internationalement sont rédigées en Anglais. Quelqu'un qui a la facilité de l'Anglais comprendra plus facilement les publications en lien avec son travail....L'Anglais est la langue standard internationale et si avec la même formation, la même personnalité, tout pareil, on a le choix entre un non Anglophone et un Anglophone, on prend celui qui maîtrise l'Anglais en plus... ceux qui sont impliqués dans le programme doivent faire des cours en Anglais. Il n'y a pas un cours qui ne soit pas en Anglais dans ce Master et les étudiants font leurs rapports en Anglais. Ils font leurs examens en Anglais, leur présentation orale à la fin du Master également. Ceci est un autre moyen de les promouvoir. (STUDRS)

On a même fait un sondage auprès des enseignants pour savoir si demain ils devaient donner des cours en anglais. A 90%, ils étaient d'accord pour le faire... (STGECRK)

These two excerpts of interviews conducted with two researcher-teachers in the STUD and the STGEC showed the evolvement in English application from researchers' willingness to its real implementation in the programs. Teaching in a foreign language required courage and confidence, which could only be obtained in practice. It also explained why the implementation could be a way to promote teaching in English programs. STUDRS also mentioned the importance of English in professional recruitment. Considering the rise in focus on internationalization and English usage, it's quite understandable that the candidate

with more international experience and scientific production in English and more language skills would be the winner. However, as STUDOS, the office director in the STUD elaborated, the promotion of courses in English was never meant to replace or abandon the French language. It's expected to be more of a win-win logic for those who really understood the nature of developing teaching programs in English.

...je n'ai pas dit qu'il fallait tout mettre en anglais pour abandonner le français. Mais il doit y avoir une possibilité de faire des cours en anglais, que ce soit plus simple aujourd'hui. Tous les congrès sont en anglais. On parle l'anglais partout pour faire des business, c'est comme le Latin...(STUDOS)

4.2.3 English: a necessary tool to push and pull student mobility

English was considered as a communication tool, a criterion for benchmarking and an indicator to measure the internationalized level of the institution. Although the challenges were still there for the academic staff in HEI for applying English in their teaching and research, more and more efforts have been put into this process of adaptation. In this subpart, the common arguments mentioned by most respondents were that English was a pull-push force for student mobility. On the one hand, it played as 'pull' for attracting the international students, in particular from non-French speaking countries.

L'internationalisation, comme je vous dis c'est le fait que beaucoup d'étudiants peuvent venir à xx pour étudier, je pense que même si les collègues se heurtent contre cela, cela passe par une offre d'enseignement en anglais. (STUDOS)

... les cours en anglais qui devraient être plus nombreux dans les établissements français. Je pense que nous perdons en attractivité vis-à-vis de nos partenaires internationaux car nos cursus ne comprennent pas suffisamment de cours dispensés en anglais. (STUDOL)

Mais l'internationalisation peut être aussi la volonté d'attirer plus d'étudiants étrangers en leur offrant les conditions nécessaires pour les attirer, c'est-à-dire, essentiellement en offrant une formation en langue étrangère. C'est une grosse tendance actuellement, notamment dans les universités privées ou les écoles de commerce qui ont besoin d'augmenter leur clientèle, donc on fait de la formation en anglais pour attirer plus de monde. (SSUBOV)

je pense que si l'on veut attirer les étudiants étrangers, il faut faire des cours en anglais.... si on veut attirer plus d'étudiants étrangers, soit on les attire dans les laboratoires de recherche, pour faire des stages, et ce n'est pas la formation classique, c'est la formation par l'apprentissage, par le stage. Soit, on attire les étudiants sur des cours et là on est obligés, nous, de faire un effort pour attirer le maximum d'étudiants et la langue universelle c'est l'anglais, ce n'est pas le français. (STGECOA)

One of the things we should do is to move to lectures in English, we should offer more programs in English....I think that's important... If we don't do it, the other schools will do it. (STGECOG)

On le fait parfois par exemple, là depuis deux ans, on a mis en place un English Track: un parcours tout en anglais qui permet de faire venir des étudiants qui vont étudier à SP pendant un an en validant soixante ECTS en anglais. Là on a relancé, on a regardé l'université britannique. Il y a des universités britanniques que l'on ne contactait plus parce que l'on pensait que dans la mesure où l'on n'avait pas un programme tout en anglais, ils ne viendraient pas. Donc, on a regardé les universités britanniques, on a refait des partenariats, par exemple, avec l'université College of London, on a refait un partenariat parce que maintenant, ils voient que leurs étudiants peuvent venir faire un semestre ou un an à SP, faire un programme tout en anglais, donc, ça les intéresse. (SSGEAOR)

The above discourses were expressed by the academic staff in the institutions and the main ideas could be summed up at two levels. Developing courses in English was a more practical way to attract and host more international students since English was considered a universal language; meanwhile, considering that more and more private universities and business schools have been developing courses in English, they could also put some effort into it in order to improve their attractiveness. This was also a plus in the national and international competition for international student recruitment. These intentions could be transformed into real programs in the four institutions little by little. The institutions were willing to show their effort in developing courses in English and being capable of hosting international students, in particular those from non-French-speaking countries. However, it required more than effort but also a price. The cheap registration fee in French universities was renowned worldwide and was one of the biggest advantages compared to the major English-speaking countries in the competition for international student recruitment. A tuition fee has been introduced to these programs of courses in English, and it could be differentiated based on the fields of study and the availability of funds for the programs.

Certaines formations sont autorisées à appliquer des droits d'inscription plus élevés lorsqu'elles justifient des prestations supplémentaires dans l'organisation des enseignements (cours en anglais, par exemple) ou dans l'encadrement des étudiants.(STUDOL)

In the STUD, the administration- director of the international office explained that the extra fees could be charged for courses in English because they required more investment in human resource and other related services. Meanwhile, in the interview with STUDRS, the European master program coordinator said that the researcher-teachers prepared their lessons both in English and in French, including the French version for their local students and the English version for the international program. The university itself in fact paid for this double work, rather than using students' tuition fees.

...on donne en Anglais le même enseignement qu'on fait en Français pour le Master d'Oxxxie. Le semestre où les étudiants xxx sont là, on met tous les cours en double en Anglais. Cela a été un investissement une fois mais c'est l'université qui l'a payé, ce ne sont pas les étudiants qui le payent avec les frais d'inscription... (STUDRS)

Nevertheless, one of the student respondents in this program helped us to understand the price gap:

Parce qu'ils peuvent accueillir n'importe quel étudiant de n'importe quelle nationalité en fait. La sélection est beaucoup plus facile pour les étudiants européens parce que bon, le Master coûte 3000€ l'année quand même pour les étudiants européens. Et pour les étudiants non européens, ça va jusqu'à 8000€ l'année, donc ce n'est pas du tout la même chose. L'organisation internationale est en anglais, les cours sont anglais... C'est très cher, j'essaie de trouver une justification à ce prix mais dans le semestre à STUD, il n'y en a aucune au niveau des matières. A STUD, il y a un Master d'oxxie qui est l'équivalent de ce que l'on a dû payer dans le Master européen, eux ont payé 400€ et ils ont fait la même chose que nous, mais après les profs vous diront qu'il n'y a qu'en France que les frais d'inscription sont aussi peu chers. Il y aura toujours des prix beaucoup plus grands et après, ils nous disent que les profs doivent faire des doubles cours en anglais, il y a les heures supplémentaires qu'il faut payer mais quand ils veulent récolter de l'argent, ils savent quoi dire... (STUDSG)

This European master program recruited students both from inside Europe and outside. From the information given, we identified two gaps: different tuitions for students enrolled in this program, 3000 euros for European students and 8000 euros for non-European students on the one hand; on the other hand, for the same courses in this institution, French-teaching program for 400 euros and English-teaching for either 3000 or 8000 euros. In the SSUB, we found the same situation exist for one English-teaching management program.

Le Master 1 et 2 en français est équivalent aux frais d'inscription de l'université, le Master 2 en anglais et le MBA sont payants : 4200€ à l'année, et le nouveau DU European administration business qui équivaut au Master 1 et permet d'entrer ici à l'IAE, il était à 2600€ cette année et ça devrait être la même chose l'année prochaine...par exemple pour le Master 2 en anglais ou le MBA, ils sont un peu plus chers parce que les professeurs sont payés le double parce qu'ils enseignent en anglais, et souvent on fait appel à des professeurs invités donc là, il faut leur payer le déplacement, parfois ils viennent des États-Unis ou d'Asie, il faut payer l'hôtel, voilà, ça a un coût plus important quand on a des professeurs invités... Donc, d'une part, on rembourse tous nos frais, nos salaires aussi, une partie de nos salaires, on ne peut pas tout faire, même si ce sont des sommes importantes, une partie des frais de fonctionnement, je pense quand même que l'on arrive bien à rembourser les déplacements des professeurs, mais pas tous leurs salaires mais ça je ne sais pas en détails...(SSUBOA)

The French teaching program only charged the registration fee (around 400 euros) while the English-teaching program demanded 2600 euros for the first year study and 4200 euros for

the second year. The explanation for this gap was the expense on refunding the invited international professors' trips, accommodations etc... In spite of huge gap in the fees, the international students recruited in this program were still very satisfied with the price.

...comparatively speaking, it's quite low price for any type of education. I think it's worth it because professors are from different countries and different cultures. (SSUBSK1)

Compared to Canada, UK and US, the tuition here is much less expensive. (SSUBSK2, translated quote from Chinese)

... I considered it but you know they have different prices. But part of reason, is because this program is in a national university...I had expected to study in US. An American professor did a presentation in my university and I was accepted by a nice university very close to Miami. It was a MBA program and everything was great except for the shocking price... more than ten times than here, I didn't want to take so large amount of money from my parents. (SSUBSK3)

These three student respondents were in the same management program of courses in English but from different countries. Some interesting information was clearly transmitted through their discourse. France was actually not their first choice for study and they came here mainly because of the cheaper price offered by the French universities and the courses in English. This corresponded exactly to my master's research results on student choice of French universities. France was often considered as a transfer station for some students from non-French speaking countries and for these students, the tuition fee was the key to their decision. Meanwhile, the discourse also referenced their families' situations at their home countries. During the interviews, I asked whether they were willing to tell me something about their parents' professions and not all of them responded to this question directly. On the basis of information provided, most of them were from middle level income families. They were aware of the existence of business schools where they could have the same major studies as in France; however, the tuition fees of these schools became an obvious barrier. Moreover, these students valued the national diploma that they would get from the French universities and they had no knowledge of the *grandes écoles*. The responses from the international student interviewees confirmed the usefulness of the creation of programs in English in the French HEIs on the one hand; and on the other hand, the price advantage should remain, otherwise the institution lost its charm.

On the other hand, English also acted as a 'push' force for the local students to have an experience abroad. Internationalization was never unidirectional but bilateral, and that explained why we had inbound and outbound student mobility.

Par ailleurs, nos étudiants cherchent souvent des universités anglophones pour pouvoir pratiquer la langue anglaise ailleurs. (STUDOL)

The globalized labor market required added values from diploma holders and having more tools in one's package has become an influential indicator in job recruitment. According to STUDOL, the administration director of international office in the STUD, more and more French students wanted to study in the universities in some major English-speaking countries in order to practice their English. For those who couldn't go abroad, they were motivated to enrich their knowledge of English through courses taught in English held in their home institution.

Nous avons maintenant une Licence en sciences économiques niveau L3, M1 qui est à 80% soit en anglais, soit en Espagnol, soit en allemand, c'est fait pour attirer les étudiants français et bien les former pour partir ensuite à l'étranger dans des universités étrangères. Mais c'est aussi fait pour attirer des étudiants, notamment des étudiants anglophones provenant des pays anglo-saxons, parce que nous avons des difficultés à développer des échanges avec ces pays-là. D'une part parce qu'il y a beaucoup de demandes ici qui sont saturées et aussi parce que l'on n'apprend plus le français dans les universités anglo-saxonnes. (SSUBOV)

SSUBOV, the international office director in the SSUB, summarized well the rationales for developing programs of courses in English in his institution. They could equip the local students with an adequate linguistic package for study or working abroad and attract those students from English-speaking countries where French wasn't actually learned any more. Furthermore, as regards local demand for outbound mobility into major English-speaking countries, institutions had to establish a link with the universities in those countries. The reciprocity was highly prioritized in French HEIs for international collaboration. Thus, from this perspective, the application of courses in English in the institution was a way to fulfill the outgoing students' demand and keep the balance between the incoming and outgoing exchange. Having a program in English or in French in fact wasn't the real problem today for the institutions because the nature of the question lay in whether the institution had a clear idea of the profiles it was looking for and the expectation it had with these programs.

4.3 International students: infinite resources for host institutions, academics and local students

As noted before, when students chose host institutions, they had certain criteria to consider before finally making a decision, which means they had certain expectations from the institution. The same logic could apply to the institutions: when they recruited international students, they also expected something from them and what they want was closely related to the roles that they attributed to international students. In this section, the analysis focused on what kind of resource international students were in the institutions, for researchers and for their local peers.

4.3.1 Brain power

As noted in the conceptual framework, brain drain and brain gain are two well-known terms to describe the benefits and the limits of internationalization related to talent flow. The circulation of science and technology and human capital in the global context has resulted directly from the transnational interconnectedness in the economic and educational sectors. Nevertheless the imbalanced development and allocation of the resources in manpower and materials worldwide have benefited those who possess attractiveness both in software (advanced science and technology, high-quality professionals, pleasant living and working environment, etc.) and hardware (equipment, social infrastructure, etc.). The increasing student mobility during the last two decades and the diversity of their profiles have produced some nuances in the brain drain/gain effects and meanwhile, we can't deny the impact of economic and political events on this phenomenon in the global context.

In the interviews with student respondents, their future professional plans were questioned and based on their responses, we categorized them into three groups: traditionalists, strategists and internationalists. The traditionalists preferred to go back to their home countries directly after their study abroad.

First of all, I want to go back to Vietnam because of my family and my girlfriend. Secondly, the mathematics, as a discipline in Vietnam is very weak, particularly in the south. If my friend, other Vietnam students abroad and I could go back, we'll work together as a group... we could work together and make the situation better and better.(STUDSH)

Majoring in mathematics and Erasmus Mundus scholarship holder, STUDSH was the only one who showed the strongest determination for his plan to return to his home country. We felt his strong attachment to the family and also his patriotism for improving the academic situation in the field of mathematics in his home country. In the interview, he also showed some concern about his lack of competence of finding a job in France or even in Europe because of his language barrier. Two more traditionalists also conveyed their worry about the inadaptability to the cultural and linguistic environment in France.

The strategists, they had their strategic visions about their future career and they all were aware of the importance of study and working experience abroad which could make them more competitive and bring them more richness in human capital accumulation. They preferred to stay abroad several years before finally going back to their home country.

Après le stage, si tout se passe bien et que je valide et que j'ai mon diplôme, je vais travailler ici en France, que ce soit ici à B ou ailleurs en France, ça m'est égal. Après, il y aura peut-être aussi la possibilité d'aller à l'étranger et en fin de parcours, je rentrerai au pays parce qu'il y a aussi d'autres projets pour le pays, qu'on envisage pour le pays, parce que je n'espère pas mourir ici... (STUDSB)

Including the Cantonese, I speak four languages now and it'll be very easy for me to get a job in international companies. In fact, I'd like to work in the French branch companies in China... I like brand companies like Oréal or some international magazines. If I could get some working experience here, I'll be more competitive when I'm back to China. (SSUBSK2, translated quote from Chinese)

I wanted to be a translator at some point. I wanted to be a diplomat as well, which I'm still thinking about. The UN is a little bit further one. Being a diplomat for Barbados will be cool, but generally evolved in working with foreign services for Barbados. (SSGEASS)

The strategists often intended to make good use of their study experience in France as a stake to bet for the first professional experience either in France or as added value in their home country, which could enrich their profiles in the labor market.

The last group is called internationalists and based on their description, we considered that some of them were voluntary internationalists who designed their international career closely related to their passion; some were involuntary internationalists who chose to stay abroad for some objective reasons. In this group, four of them mentioned that the bad political and economic situations in their home countries left them no choice but to find another country to start their career.

In Iran we have the military service... But we can postpone the service period from university till doctorate... after I finished my bachelor study, I got admission directly from here. So I talked with the military service and they said ok... I don't (want to serve in the army) and that's the problem. I told myself I had two choices, staying in France, waiting for going to USA in several months because I got admission there and never going back to Iran.(STUDSM)

I don't have a great option for example, even if I go home... my parents believe that if I go abroad, I should stay somewhere to find myself somewhere because in Ukraine it's getting worse and worse. They believe that I'll succeed in finding a job here for example. But it's difficult. There are the problems. I just realized even if my friend who is brilliant here with perfect French bilingual and everything, he finished his master 2 and he found a job; anyway still needs to get enrolled for some classes just in the university to get his visa... maybe it's important to note the strategies for students to arrive here. I'm not sure that I'm going to stay here and work here for the next five years because we heard a lot about the crisis and stuff like this. My parents are afraid of this and they said to me "maybe it's ok with France, try to go to USA or Canada and find something else.(SSUBSK1)

When it's bad time in Ukraine, I have to figure out how to survive somehow in another country, another system and another field. (SSUBSK3)

Après, je suis sûre de ne pas rester en Grèce, parce que maintenant, c'est la crise aussi, les salaires ont beaucoup diminué et c'est très difficile de trouver un travail, alors je vais aller à l'étranger, je pense aller en Angleterre... (STGECSA)

Ce n'est pas toujours le cas... Même avec un diplôme d'ingénieur, tu peux galérer pour trouver un travail et puis il faut postuler, passer des entretiens... En France, c'est mieux, au niveau du confort de vie, le salaire, la formation (STGECSH)

All of the student respondents talked about certain kinds of crisis in the economy or social system. Four of them were from non-French speaking countries and their English level was better than their French; two among them enrolled in the programs of courses in English.

I couldn't go back. I learned everything here in French and I never read any textbooks in Chinese. I couldn't recognize the terms in Chinese and I'll not get a job like this if I go back China.(STGECSW, translated quote from Chinese)

STGECSW, an involuntary internationalist also mentioned that after years of study in France, her academic knowledge and competences have become a constraint in finding a job in her home country. Nevertheless, in this group of internationalists, we had some international students who either were passionate about their fields of study and wanted to develop international experience, or preferred to work for international organizations.

je préfère avoir des bases plus solides en allemand avant de partir en Allemagne. Après, puisque ce n'est pas possible, déjà moi, il me faut un visa pour aller en Angleterre, du coup j'ai laissé tomber, je me suis dit que j'allais rester en France et faire mon stage en France. Et peut-être que l'année prochaine, je pourrai faire un stage aux États-Unis ou aux Émirats, c'est pas mal là-bas,

il y a plein de nouvelles choses. Mais je ne suis pas sûre, si je m'améliore en allemand, je pourrai essayer en Allemagne. (STGECSD)

Pour moi, c'est très important de beaucoup voyager, c'est mon autre passion, ce sera bien si j'ai un business qui se situe dans différents pays parce que c'est très important pour moi, c'est mon style de vie principal de beaucoup voyager...(SSGEASN)

I would like to stay here, work as a researcher and stay here for 10 years : for example, going to the field and study communities, study with the people, stay more in contact with (inaudible), I would like to do something to travel to Latin America, make research there, I have contacts in Argentina and Colombia so many they join... Finish here the Master and make the doctorate in another place, in Brazil or Argentina... (SSGEASC)

Après le Master, je compte voyager, j'en ai besoin et après, j'aimerais bien travailler pour des ONG, l'aide au développement peut-être, j'aimerais bien essayer de travailler en Amérique du Sud...(SSGEASJ)

The different groups that international students belonged to, affected the impacts they could produce for their home or host countries, and the institutions' roles also were changed corresponding to the international students' choices. The effect of international student mobility couldn't be considered directly as brain drain for the home country or brain gain for the host country but as a developmental process, which was affected by both the social, political, and economic national situations and the development of the global vision formed by the young generation on mobility.

The desire for talents from host countries and institutions was even more openly manifested nowadays when knowledge has become the most powerful driving force for the economic development of society. Thus, attracting the most talented international students to study and stay in the host countries has been one of the key strategies for developing research and innovative technology. As mentioned previously, according to the statistics published in 2012, international students represent 15.2% of the registered students, among which 41.3% were in PhD studies. The numbers implied that institutions mainly aimed to recruit high academic level international students and to form excellent researchers for innovation and new knowledge production which could not only accelerate societal development but also improve their international academic image.

Et ensuite, il y a une deuxième dimension qui est plus dramatique à mes yeux : le brain drain : les étudiants des pays développés ne voulant plus se donner la peine de faire de la recherche, ils veulent une professionnalisation rapidement pour gagner de l'argent rapidement. On essaie donc d'attirer les étudiants chinois et autres, pour faire de la recherche... Je vais citer un argument : pour les universités américaines et anglaises, on veut former des chercheurs, les étudiants d'ici, ça ne les intéresse pas beaucoup pour la grande majorité, moi je suis partant pour avoir des étudiant(e)s chinois(e)s brillant(e)s, des étudiant(e)s turc(que)s brillant(e)s, de tous les pays...

Mon plaisir c'est de travailler avec des gens brillants et communiquer, essayer d'éduquer les gens brillants avec mes moyens, parfois ils seront plus brillants que moi donc, ils seront en général meilleurs que moi, tant mieux, ce sera mieux, j'aurai réussi ma mission de transmission, de transmetteur, et s'ils sont africains, chinois, etc., je m'en moque, ce que je vois ce sont des êtres humains avec qui communiquer, travailler, avancer ensemble, qui peuvent venir enrichir l'université française aussi. (SSUBRY)

SSUBRY, a researcher-teacher in the SSUB expressed frankly in the interview that he considered the brain drain as a horrible result of international student mobility worldwide. Further, he expressed that the great interest of researchers from developed countries in the international talented students resulted from the fact that more and more local students had lost interest in long-term education oriented toward developing a research career and preferred to start their professional life early. Compared with the American or British universities, he thought French universities recruited international talents mostly based on research needs; and for his research, he really liked to work with intelligent and hardworking people and international talented students could be invaluable assets. As elaborated in the world system theory before, the center countries possessed the richest resources, which attracted the most talented people around the world. Some of the researchers said that they had enough funds and/or equipment to do their research projects; nevertheless, they didn't have the right manpower to accomplish the job. They expressed their longing for international students with talents and attitudes to work with them.

Ce qui est important pour moi, c'est d'avoir les moyens de faire de la recherche. Moi, c'est une recherche qui est très collaborative, je travaille sur des projets européens, je travaille sur des partenariats au niveau français et donc, j'ai des budgets pour développer ma recherche... Moi, les budgets, je n'ai pas trop de problèmes pour en trouver et du coup, je peux travailler avec du matériel, tranquillement. Ce qui est peut-être plus compliqué c'est de trouver de bons étudiants... (STGECRK)

Some international students' passion towards academic careers has responded well to the researchers' expectations for talents. During the interviews, we found that students of certain nationalities showed more preferences for doctoral study or research, and we assumed that besides the family background influence and personal ambition, the cultural context and social system definitely had some impact on that.

4.3.2 Media for internationalization at home

Internationalization at home (IaH) is a term rediscovered by Bengt Nilsson in the 1990s, based on which he conducted a series of reforms in University of Malmö. This rediscovery of IaH resulted from two facts in this university: the majority of immobile students and the present of large international student population who has different cultural origins. Therefore, the IaH has developed from two pillars, “a mature concept of internationalization and an adaptation of intercultural studies to higher education”. (Wächter, 2003, p.10) In spite of the increasing number of student mobility worldwide, we admit that the majority of students are considered as immobile and they can't realize their study abroad for various reasons: personal, financial, political, etc.. How to maximize the benefits for these immobile students at host countries? The international students hosted in the HEIs have played a very important role; however, the question of whether their role is recognized and positively responded in the local institutional context is still under discussion. Ngobia (2010) conducted a doctoral thesis on exploration of the interaction between local at-home students and the international university students in three campus of University of Toronto and her results showed positive impacts of the international students on local students even though some negative and neutral effects still existed. In this study, the positive impact of international students was confirmed by the researchers and international students themselves.

En tant qu'enseignants, on est encore inspirés par ce qu'était la pensée du modèle français, de la reconstruction. Tout l'intérêt c'est de montrer aux étudiants qu'ils sont porteurs de cette logique.
(SSGEAOR)

SSGEAOR, international office director in the SSGEA considered the student as individual thinker and the exchange between the researchers and students or inside the student groups could be creative and productive. In the classroom, the international students could serve as vivid case presenters for the local students and the researchers and the impact could be very positive because their presence created a strong intercultural ambiance and the exchange could strengthen the understanding between different cultures and enrich students' visions; as elaborated SSGEARD, researcher-teacher in the SSGEA.

Ça dépend des cours. Quand ce sont des cours en petite groupe, c'est une influence très positive... Ils vont apporter de manière à percevoir des enjeux différents, et puis des compétences, des méthodes de travail différentes, qu'ils vont mettre en œuvre avec des étudiants de SP qui viennent de la Licence, avec la méthode de SP, cela va modifier leur méthode de travail. En même temps, ils vont acquérir la méthode de SP, donc, là on a une

grosse fédéralisation. Ça c'est très positif... Après, au niveau Master où là, on les sélectionne, ils sont en général de bonne qualité ; ils amènent vraiment un regard différent ; ils ont des savoirs différents ; ils rentrent en interaction avec nos étudiants et ils se créent une vraie internationalisation du petit groupe d'étudiants. (SSGEARD)

STGECRR, researcher-teacher in the STGEC also mentioned the presence of certain group of international students broke down the stereotype that has been developed by the local students towards certain countries and it's an effective way to make students realize the diversity of people in the global world.

Culturelle, pour les autres élèves français... Les autres élèves apprennent à découvrir le Brésil par exemple. C'est toujours le Brésil qui marche le plus... Pour un Brésilien, on a beaucoup de stéréotypes, en France, on a beaucoup de stéréotypes et le fait de côtoyer des élèves étrangers, ça casse les stéréotypes. (STGECRR)

The majority of the interviewees expressed their appreciation for the influence of the international students on local students' intercultural capacity building process. Some researchers considered that the institutions should host more international students nowadays and with the circulation of human resource and materials, international students were taken as media for information diffusing to local students, enriching the at-home students' experience, and enforcing the awareness of global citizenship.

C'est une richesse considérable pour nos étudiants à nous, on vit dans un monde globalisé où tout le monde va partout et je crois qu'il faut absolument ouvrir le plus possible aux étudiants étrangers. C'est une richesse, une richesse d'expérience, une ouverture sur le monde, une ouverture culturelle, linguistique et ça accroît aussi je pense l'attractivité. Je crois que la mondialisation académique est une réalité vraiment aujourd'hui, et si l'on refuse de se lancer là-dedans, je pense que l'on s'exclut quand même très largement des flux d'information, de connaissance, qui font aussi ce monde aujourd'hui. Les étudiants du monde entier voyagent dans tous les sens et je pense que c'est important de ne pas rester à l'écart de cette évolution-là... les universités britanniques recrutent partout dans le monde des étudiants qui sont particulièrement, très motivés, qui sont brillants, qui ont fait leurs études d'un côté, puis de l'autre et c'est ça qui est valorisant aujourd'hui je pense et qu'il faut stimuler. C'est aussi le marché académique international, essayer d'évoluer dans la formation du monde entier qui valorise leurs capacités artistiques, leur compréhension de ce qui se passe autour, leur capacité à saisir les avantages là où ils se trouvent, je le vois aussi avec les étudiants russes qui utilisent aussi notre institution comme marchepieds vers d'autres formations, en France, etc. Au moins essayer à l'international, c'est aussi notre rôle. (SSGEARDF)

Moreover, most researcher respondents took the international students as push force in their teaching, which helps them to reinforcing the international dimension in their courses and research and motivates them to improve their teaching competences.

Je pense que c'était, au niveau des étudiants, comme une ouverture intellectuelle et pour les profs aussi, donc je pense que c'est bénéfique pour les deux niveaux, pour les enseignants-chercheurs et pour les étudiants. (SSGEARR)

You could use more examples; you get them talk about their countries they know the best. I think it's very good for the whole class and I see this as a plus. (SSGEARS)

There are several reasons: One of them is to show that we are attractive, in order to be attractive, we need to be good but it's a motivation for improving the quality of our teaching, the quality of our research.... And also, we learn a lot from the visiting students because they are from different culture and it's very interesting for our students to be with these students coming from different countries. It opens their mind and it's important nowadays not to be just in a small country like France. You need to travel and you don't have to consider yourself as locked into this country. You're a citizen of the world, so you should be open to traveling and to working abroad. (STGECOG)

In the above excerpts, STGECOG, international office director and researcher in the STGEC showed several reasons for hosting international students in his institution and he put the representativeness of the institution's attractiveness on the front. In today's evaluation system, the number of international students recruited in one institution was considered as an indicator to show the internationalized level of this institution. Although it remained a myth to be verified, more and more higher education system and institutions followed that rule.

D'abord humainement, les brésiliens sont des gens tout à fait sympathiques, ils ont énormément de respect pour leurs professeurs, donc c'est très agréable d'avoir en face ces étudiants-là. Ce sont les meilleurs, ils ont été sélectionnés pour participer à ce programme-là. Souvent, Après, sur le plan scientifique, ils sont sérieux, parce qu'ils ont conscience que c'est une chance pour eux de venir étudier ici. (STGECRK)

In the interviews with some international program coordinators, we noticed the personality of the international students from some cultures and their attitudes towards study and research were greatly appreciated by the researchers. Moreover, the interaction between local and international students was mutually beneficial, even inside the international student group.

Les étudiants qui sortent du Master Mxx, (et ça c'est un grand atout de ce Master) ont déjà 20 collègues dans leur pays et à l'étranger. Ils ont un réseau international, plus les profs qu'ils ont vus au niveau des trois universités avec qui ils ont toujours un contact humain. Ceci leur permet de les contacter ultérieurement pour demander un stage ou une collaboration. Pour avoir un

réseau international équivalent, un maître de conférences qui est toujours resté au même endroit, à mon avis, a besoin de 5 ou 10 ans d'activité professionnelle... (STUDRS)

...more internationally communicating, for example, we have some Chinese colleagues at class and I could know more about China as now lots of people like to doing business with China. If I want to do business with Chinese, I have to be nice with them... to know some friends here, develop my social network, to improve my communication skills and open some business possibly one day. (SSUBSK3)

As most of us in small class are international students, we'll discuss the questions trying to know the situations in different countries. For example, in working method conference, we have to do a lot of presentations and communication work. If one of us introduces a subject, the others will start to elaborate and discuss about what happened in their own countries. I found it very interesting and it helps us know about the development of this question in other countries. (SSGEASY)

During the conversations with the student respondents in the interviews, we found that few of them were really involved with their local peers outside of their class in the institutions. Nevertheless, they still confirmed the positive effects that they've learned in this intercultural and international context. Some smart ones even took this experience as a network building process with classmates from different cultures.

4.3.3 Beneficiaries, trainees, cash cows

The international student population was generally categorized as two groups by hosting institutions, cash cows and Einsteins. The membership of these two groups was not exclusive, in other words, one could be both a cash cow and Einstein. In countries like the UK and Australia, the international students really contributed to the national economy development and vice versa, these countries also tries their best to facilitate the recruitment procedures by simplifying their study and visa application process, offering variable programs of education and making their immigration policy more accessible for international students.

Nearly half of international students in France were from its former colonies and the stability of this group of students indicated the strong influence of the political relationship between France and these countries. The cultural, geographic and linguistic proximity also made France their favorite destination. Considering the social, economic and academic level of these countries, most African students expressed their professional development plan in France, at least for a short period of time after their study (research results from master thesis, Bian 2011). With regard to this group of students, they could hardly be considered as cash

cows and their roles of ambassadors for France were more evidently performed once they went back to their home country.

On mobilise les impôts des français pour former aussi les étudiants étrangers en définitif quand dans mon amphi, j'ai 30% d'étudiants étrangers, ça veut dire que mon salaire est payé pour être utilisé à 30% pour former les étudiants étrangers donc un coût modique pour eux en définitif et ça ne peut être justifié que par ce type d'ambition et un peu de calculs plus politiques bien sûr, parce que les étrangers qui auront leurs études en France, s'ils rentrent dans leur pays, ils seront sympathiques par rapport à la France, il y a le côté, rayonnement : le rayonnement de la France, de la culture française. (SSUBRY)

...part of work motivated there is working with particularly defavorized parcel underworld. Now we have teaching groups where we receive a whole load of PhD students from Cameron and so on. Yeah, you help them, you work with them. Partly you know, through helping them, they'll help with the development of their countries, somehow. We should not reduce that to nothing but it's important. There's also other aspect that we get fees from these people. There's a monetary aspect and fees are relatively cheap here compared to the UK, but you know our university needs money and it takes money from foreign students. (SSGEARS)

In these two excerpts, the researchers in the SSUB and SSGEA implied three important dimensions of hosting international students. Firstly, the political and diplomatic rationales were pointed out to keep a good international image of France. Secondly, the deep rooted humanitarian ideology was well expressed and French higher education institutions shoulder the responsibility of forming advanced manpower for French former colonies in order to help their social and economic development. Finally, SSGEARS also claimed the potential economic interests behind this support and although the amount of funds and the funding ways were not explained, the underfunded French universities did get benefits from these programs.

However, this commercial interest was strong refuted by two other researchers from the two universities SSUB and STUD:

...on ne cherche pas à attirer les gens parce que l'on a déjà trop d'étudiants. On les accepte tous parce que c'est le prix de la démocratie. On ne refuse personne. On est très contents de recevoir des étudiants étrangers de bonne qualité. On regrette que certain ne se soient pas suffisamment préparés à cette difficulté qui est la confrontation de problèmes liés à la langue mais on a pas de stratégie véritablement pour faire venir des étudiants... Elle est quasi-gratuite parce qu'elle est payé par l'impôt des français. Donc, en réalité, lorsque l'on intègre les étudiants étrangers, c'est un beau cadeau qu'on leur fait. Ça nous permet aussi d'attirer pas mal d'étudiants que l'on espère de bon niveau mais ce n'est pas toujours le cas. (SSUBOV)

Encore une fois il faut préciser des choses, le « tuition fee » est gratuit cependant ça coûte cher parce que c'est les Français qui paient avec leurs impôts. Là, nous somme comme les autres, par contre les dernières lois sur les universités permettent de faire des « tuition fees » adaptables. Les universités pourront augmenter les frais de scolarité si elles le souhaitent. Personne ne l'a

fait encore... la stratégie américaine et canadienne est de faire payer plus cher les étudiants étrangers. Il ne faut pas non plus exagérer si l'on veut établir des relations à long terme, si l'on veut que les étudiants qui viennent soit des ambassadeurs auprès de leur pays, de l'université qui les a formés, on ne peut pas les assassiner, on ne peut pas les stigmatiser en leur faisant payer des frais complètement ridicules. (STUDOS)

These two interviewees took the small price of French higher education registration fees as their principal argument to defend the non-commercial benefits for the institutions; in other words, there's definitely no international student business and the international student recruited were the beneficiaries of the democratic French society. As an international student and researcher myself, I understood that the calculation wasn't that simple to lead to this conclusion. For example, French universities need a certain number of students in order to get national or regional funds and with the demographic changes in recent years and local students' decreasing passion for universities, recruiting more international students has become one of the solutions. Nevertheless, the recruitment also depends on the disciplines, academic performance and geographical location of the universities. When we related the two respondents' point of view to their institutional status: international office director in the SSUB and STUD, it's not by accident that they share the same view. We could also feel in the interviews that a strong and serious message was repetitively sent out, which was that French institutions welcome those top quality international students in order to make good use of the expensive 'gift' from the French society. Meanwhile, with the on-going reform on the autonomy of universities in France, this gift could be taken back; nevertheless, for the moment none of the universities have taken any serious action on that. According to STUDOS, in order to develop and maintain a long-term international relationship, French universities should not charge ridiculous prices for international students. Although he didn't mention it directly, we thought he implied that if France were to lose the price advantage in the international competition with major English-speaking countries for international students, what else would remain?

During the interviews, the international administration directors of the STGEC and STUD both evoked a recent new trainer-trainee relationship that has been formed between institutions and international students and most of the demands were from emerging developing countries (BRICs)

Prenons le Brésil, par exemple : c'est un pays en pleine expansion qui souhaite s'ouvrir vers l'Europe et le monde. Pour cela, il lui faut donner à ses étudiants les meilleurs enseignements. Un accord a été signé, l'an dernier, entre le gouvernement brésilien et le gouvernement français

pour faciliter les études des étudiants brésiliens en France. Cet accord prévoit non seulement l'octroi de 10000 bourses entre 2012 et 2015 dans le cadre du Programme « Science Sans Frontière » mais également une subvention pour les universités françaises qui se sont portées volontaires pour accueillir et accompagner l'inscription, l'intégration des étudiants brésiliens dans leurs cursus pendant un an.

La Chine souhaite que nous accueillions des étudiants chinois, d'excellent niveau d'études. La problématique est double : d'une part, nous devons tenir compte de nos capacités d'accueil et d'encadrement de doctorants ; d'autre part, des enjeux politiques et économiques qui tiennent au domaine de la recherche, lui-même.

L'intérêt économique est lié. L'Inde, les pays du Maghreb sont des pays qui sont aussi très intéressés par des échanges avec B. Nous gérons deux projets Tempus, qui ont bénéficié de financements européens avec les pays du Maghreb. (STUDOL)

Both the Brazilian and Chinese governments showed great interest in sending their students to study in France with great financial support. These governmental initiatives were obviously based on the national economic demand for science and technology, and the implementation of these initiatives facilitated the relationship building between different HEIs in these two countries. Moreover, these top-down policies have changed the institutions to trainers and this trainer-trainee relationship could modify to some extent the international student mobility effect, which means the institution has turned from brain drain actor to trainer. As beneficiaries of these governmental programs, the international students were generally supposed to be returnees after the training programs. Although not all the international trainees went back to their home country, it's still the norm. I interviewed one Brazilian student from this program; she told me the government scholarship was the only reason why she chose to study in France. She also said that nowadays, numerous scholarship programs have been implemented by the Brazilian government to push their students out in order to have them back with a better package of knowledge acquired from abroad. The Chinese government also practiced the same policy as in Brazil; and according to STUDOL, the development of all these training programs was closely related to the national economic interest.

The role of cash cow wasn't overtly expressed in the interviews. However, through the examples mentioned for some programs with English courses, we could see the emerging phenomenon of implementation of tuition fees in the public university system. This early stage was closely related to the development of internationalization of French higher education in the global context, in particular the social debate on commercialization of higher education. As noted in the previous chapters, some conservatives considered this as being

against French democracy and cosmopolitanism. Moreover, we couldn't ignore that the institutions charged very high tuition fees for their exported educational programs and education delivery in their offshore campus or double/joint degree programs overseas.

The international nature of the universities since their creation, with a common language for teaching, international student and academic population and the knowledge transmission from the Western world still remains today, and the tension between national embeddedness and international openness always exists (Altbach, 2006, p.122). In this chapter, we summed up the thematic commonalities emerging in the interview data with the participants in the four institutions (SSGEA, SSUB, STGEC & STUD) and some of the institutional documents were also used as complementary data. In the first section, the convergence of interpretations of internationalization and the forms of its implementation were identified in the four institutions. The increasing awareness of the necessity of internationalizing the activities in teaching and research, the programs and developing the international relations have become a certain institutional priority without a doubt. On the basis of Knight's frameworks of internationalization of higher education (2012), the campus-based and cross-border education activities and programs were analyzed respectively in the four institutions and in spite of some minor divergences, the majority of the findings proved the similarities. In the second section, the international language, English, was particularly discussed. In spite of the international power of the 'Francophonie' and the national protection law for the French language, the reality was that it is crucial for French academics to recognize the predominance of the English language worldwide and chose to confront this challenge and adjust to it. As regards the different disciplines, we found different levels of problems for the application of English in teaching and research. For some fields of study, it seemed inappropriate to teach an extremely national-based subject in another language; for others, there's no actual constraint for practice and the only concern came from the practitioners themselves. Developing courses and programs taught in English was considered as a must to attract non-French-speaking international students for study and doing research in these institutions. Meanwhile, the interviewees highlighted the demand from local students and their motivation for practicing the English language. All of these arguments justified the multiple functions of the English language: an academic language for facilitating hosting international students, an indicator of attractiveness, a useful professional language tool, a plus for students' competence package in the labor market and an indispensable medium for academics and institutions to be known in the global context. The last section focused on the international students' roles in these

institutions. It's clear that study abroad in certain institution was a bilateral choice between international students and the host institutions, which indicated the match could bring maximal benefits for both parties. The key role of human capital in this knowledge economy era reinforced global fighting for talents, which was confirmed by the researcher respondents' discourse. The universality of knowledge, in the science and technology in particular, and research with no frontiers put more value on international talent hunting. Moreover, the presence of international students in the class also enriched the intercultural communication and exchange, which benefited both teachers' teaching and students' learning and ways of thinking. However, these benefits had a price according to some researchers and came from an expensive 'gift' prepared by the French citizens to international students in France. The small price of registration fees for public universities and *grandes écoles* couldn't cover the study expense for the students, and considering that international students enjoyed the same rights as their local peers, they naturally got benefits from the social welfare system and became beneficiaries of the whole system. Last but not least, with the increasing demand for high-level manpower, some emerging developing countries, like Brazil and China, turned to the French HEIs specializing in advanced technology for training their selected potential manpower. This new phenomenon has resulted in a new trainer/trainee relationship between institutions and international students, which definitely has an impact on international student mobility effects.

The findings in this chapter including the common language application, international student recruitment, the awareness of the necessity of internationalization and the different forms of implementation in the institutions, kept the consistency with the global development in this field and have justified again the effectiveness of the research that has been conducted during the last three decades in particular. However, it's just the tip of the iceberg and what interests so many researchers in studies on internationalization of higher education resulted from the complexity and diversities of the phenomena and the local embeddedness and the contextualization of this process in different institutions.

Chapter 5 Institution branding with application of mixed philosophy in the international context: from awareness to practice

After identification of the major commonalities related to the awareness and the challenges of internationalization in the four institutions, the analysis continued with the institutions' strategies for branding in the international context and concrete moves in the implementation process for promoting inbound student mobility. We adopted mixed perspectives of viewing the practices of related stakeholders in the two groups of institutions. In this first section, we used the corporate branding approach to see how the *grandes écoles* and universities should make their national niche to be recognized by the international market, during which networking could be very effective for improving the institutions' international visibility. The second section mainly revealed the divergence of the institution's guidelines with regards to identification of a potential student population, foreign institutions and market. The last section analyzed the strategic application of branding for the purpose of international student recruitment promotion in the institution's international academic activities.

5.1 Institution positioning: corporate branding approach

Positioning was the first step for institutions to brand themselves and also a difficult one. The question of 'Who am I?' was definitely a philosophical trick; however, institutions had to be very clear on this question in order to make their potential clients understand. The corporate branding approach served as a basic frame for the analysis of institutional positioning in this section. Corporate branding considered the whole organization as the foundation for branding positioning, which was capable of distinguishing itself from its competitors through decision-making, organizational process-designing and activities' exercises (Schultz & Hatch, 2006). The strategic vision, organizational culture, stakeholder images and identity were defined as the framework for corporate branding (Hatch & Schultz 2001, 2003; Schultz & Hatch 2003, quoted by Schultz & Hatch, 2006). The four indicators were transformed as leadership, institutional culture, students' feedback and institutional identity in higher education institution branding. In this study, the institutional identity and network building were used to distinguish the *grandes écoles* from the universities. The missing dimension of leadership by international office directors in these two groups of institution was briefly mentioned at the end of this section.

5.1.1 Institutional identity brand: extended national privilege to the global context

The institutional identity promotion in the global context started with its image created in the national context as its fundamental brand. Brand identity was considered as “the essence of how you would like alumni, prospective students, legislators, and the public to perceive our institution (Lawlor 1998, p.19 quoted by Judson et al., 2009, p.57)”. Several important indicators needed to be pre-defined before the creation of an identity brand for an institution: the type, the governance, the funding, the access, the degrees, curricula and graduates’ employment. Some of these factors clearly demarcated the line between the two groups of institutions.

On the one hand, as previously mentioned, the universities were generally governed by the Ministry of Education and expected to conduct research missions. For the local students, the two universities SSUB and STUD were non-selective for access by following the egalitarian rule. The delivery of national degrees of Bachelor’s, Master’s and Doctor’s was authorized in these universities in different disciplines: law, economics and management for the SSUB and sciences and technology for the STUD. Meanwhile, they’ve all developed some profession-oriented courses for postgraduate studies (*Master professionnel*). As public universities, they received their major funding from the ministry’s grants with a small amount of excellence premiums and some financial support from the regional authorities. The evaluation of the curricula was conducted every four years by the AERES and the implementation of LMD structures in HEIs provided the universities more autonomy to create their own programs in education and research. The evaluation became more comprehensively related to the overall coherence of program design and the institution’s academic strength to fulfil the expected demand from national, regional and local contexts. As regards the graduates’ employment situation, the ORPEA (*observatoire régional parcours étudiants aquitains*) conducted a survey every year to ascertain the graduates’ situation 30 months after their graduation. According to the latest publishing results, 80% of the graduates with a professional master’s degree in 2009 got a job; for those graduates with research master degrees in 2009, 44% of them found a job and 47% continued their study in the 2011 survey.

On the other hand, the *grandes écoles* in France could be governed or co-governed by the Ministry of Education and other ministers or some regional Chambers of Commerce. In this study, the SSGEA and STGEC were under the control of Ministry of Education just like the two universities however, they enjoyed more autonomy in terms of governance and funding.

As noted before, even inside the group of *grandes écoles*, there's a hierarchical distinction on the basis of the institution's prestige and reputation constructed and recognized in the national context. A few *grandes écoles* in this group benefit from more resources and autonomy than the other members, such as ENS, *École Polytechnique* or HEC. In this study, under the title of *grandes écoles*, the SSGEA was legislatively attached to a public university with full autonomy and obtained its funding from a national foundation and the Ministry of Education. The STGEC belonged to a group of regional engineering schools under the administration of the Ministry of Education and its program evaluation was conducted by the CTI (*commission des titres d'ingénieur*), which was highly valued among the engineering schools. The access to these two institutions was quite selective and the majority of the students could only be enrolled by the entrance exam (*concours*). The SSGEA offered a five-year study program for high school students who succeeded both in the baccalaureate exam and the institutional *concours* and the prestigious institutional diploma (*diplôme d'établissement*) was delivered by the end of the fifth year of study. The STGEC offered a three-year program for those who have been trained in the CPGE and succeeded in the *concours*. Moreover, a very few places were distributed to those candidates who got excellent academic scores in their post-secondary education (either in the university or other forms of formation) and the selection was mainly conducted by document application and interviews. The diploma of engineer was only delivered to those who were trained at least two years in this institution. The educational programs in these two institutions were both very profession-oriented and an international mobility was required for their students. According to the ORPEA 2012 survey, 79% of the graduates with the diploma of engineer got their jobs, 15% chose to continue their study and only 5% were still hunting for jobs one year after their graduation. If we compare these statistics with the employment situation of the graduates with a university master's degree, it's quite clear that the diploma of engineer was far more valued in the labor market.

In order to verify whether the general information above related to the institutions was well transmitted to the international students, the question of the co-existence of universities and *grandes écoles* was brought up in the interviews.

A: Connais-tu un peu le système des *grandes écoles* comme XX?

B : L'XX c'est l'École d'ingénieur, tu y entres par la voie d'un concours...

A : Oui, tu n'as jamais pensé t'inscrire dans une École d'ingénieur ?

B : Non, je n'ai jamais eu cette idée d'aller dans une École d'ingénieur, moi, tout ce que je voulais à travers les études, c'est avoir mon diplôme et travailler, faire ce que j'aime. Après, me valoriser pour dire que je veux faire un doctorat, être chercheur, ingénieur, tout ce que je voulais

c'était réussir et dans le football et dans les études.... (STUDSB)

A : Avant de venir, connaissais-tu le système des *grandes écoles* en France et la différence entre une grande École d'ingénieur et une université ?

B : En fait, c'est la même chose au Maroc. (STGECSD)

A: have you ever heard of the “*grandes écoles*”?

B: no. (STUDSM)

A: did you have knowledge of *grandes écoles* before your coming?

B: I kept hearing about it but I don't know anything about it particularly. (SSUBSO)

A: does this elitism system exist in XX?

B: we don't have structures like *grandes écoles*. (SSGEASS)

A : Connais-tu le terme Grande École, sais-tu que XX est une grande École ?

B : C'est-à-dire une université très bonne et de très haut niveau... (SSGEASN)

The first two student respondents' answers showed that they had good knowledge of the French higher education system, and both of them were from African countries, former colonies of France. The other three mentioned their vague ideas of this system and the last student even considered the *grandes écoles* as elitist universities. Relating these five responses to our total 19 interviews with students, the answers could be divided into three groups. The students in the group of no-knowledge-at-all were from Asian countries, China, South Korea, Iran and Vietnam. The group of vague-ideas students came mainly from Russia, Ukraine, UK, Brazil and some English-speaking African countries. The group of full-knowledge students came from some EU countries like Germany and Greece and some Francophone African countries like Morocco. The small details about the students' background indicated the different niches that the institution could create in the global branding context.

Moreover, as the major agents for international promotion of their institutions, the 19 academic and administration staff members unanimously expressed their criticism of this dual system. Some of the researchers from the group of universities considered this historical product deeply blocked the development of the universities in terms of student selection.

Je pense que c'est catastrophique pour l'université. A l'arrivée ce que l'on fait c'est que les meilleurs étudiants partent faire des classes préparatoires à l'issue du Bac. Ceux qui sont un peu moins bons sont sélectionnés par les IUT, les DUT, etc. Donc le reste vient à l'université et quelques étudiants dans le lot savent pourquoi ils sont là, ils viennent à l'université pour la liberté qu'elle offre, etc., mais ils sont minoritaires, en général, je constate que les étudiants qui sont là, ce n'est pas toujours par choix. Après il y a les disciplines aussi, la gestion attire plus que l'économie, il y en a qui viennent en économie pour faire gestion plutôt. Voilà pourquoi je ne suis pas favorable à ce système-là. Ce système marche, ça permet à la France d'avoir une massification de l'enseignement à l'université, tout en ayant des structures pour produire "l'élite"

d'un côté et les cadres supérieurs de l'autre côté sur un cycle de reproduction sur Bac + 5, ils font deux années de prépa plus trois années d'École en général. (SSUBRY)

SSUBRY, a researcher-teacher in the SSUB, explained that the existence of this dual system produced serious brain drain for the universities because the best students were selected by the *grandes écoles*, and even inside the universities, inequality still existed because of the 'attractiveness' of some disciplines over others. Meanwhile he also admitted that the open access to the universities benefited the massification of higher education in the universities. His opinion was echoed by several researchers from the universities, SSUB and STUD.

SSGEA a un avantage : c'est ce que l'on appelle une grande École. C'est l'émanation de *grandes écoles*, donc, ils peuvent choisir leurs étudiants, les sélectionner et en limiter le nombre. Nous, on ne peut pas. Donc, c'est un gros avantage qu'ils ont et ils jouent beaucoup sur cet avantage pour développer des formations qui n'auront rien à voir avec les sciences politiques (SSUBOV)

En France, historiquement, on a les universités d'un côté, et de l'autre les *grandes écoles*. Les Écoles d'ingénieurs travaillent plutôt avec les entreprises et ont un prestige supérieur. L'université est considérée avec mépris, on nourrit une opinion publique qui pense que l'université c'est l'endroit où tout le monde peut aller mais l'élite va dans les Écoles d'ingénieurs. (STUDRS)

The *grandes écoles* enjoyed more prestige of elite formation in the public view because of the competitive selection and the limited number of admissions, which enforced the negative image of the universities. This interesting observation was also confirmed by STGECRK, a researcher-teacher in the STGEC.

Puis pour la formation à l'École d'ingénieurs en France, il y a une sélection qui est faite à l'entrée, c'est le classique du concours commun, et de mon point de vue, ça donne des étudiants qui sont à priori meilleurs que ceux que l'on peut trouver dans des systèmes où les portes sont ouvertes. Mais bizarrement, plus les portes sont ouvertes et moins les gens ont envie d'y aller et plus le système est sélectif et plus les gens ont envie d'y aller... Et puis, derrière, vous avez un accès à l'emploi, nous on est quasiment dans le plein emploi. (STGECRK)

The selection attracted more potential candidates for the engineering school while the non-selection criterion destroyed students' appetite for application. This apparently contradictory phenomenon actually seems reasonable if we use the brand theory to analyze it. One important characteristic of brand was to fulfill the clients' psychological demand and sometimes clients were more interested in the symbolic value of the brand than the real quality of the products. The brand of the *grandes écoles* has been formed during several

hundred years with efforts of generations and generations of students and academic staff. Moreover, the fewer products there were on the market, the more value was attributed. In this case, students and families were well aware that when fewer students were recruited, there would be fewer graduates and more job opportunities. That explained why they would fight for the limited places in the *grandes écoles* instead of entering directly in the universities. However, the comparatively easier access to the labor market was not the only niche that attracted the candidates.

Je pense qu'on leur dit dès le départ que c'est quelque chose qui date de Bonaparte, en France, on a une séparation historique des établissements d'ingénieurs et de l'université. Et après les cursus sont identiques à ceux dans les autres pays en fait... La reconnaissance des études, des diplômes, l'assurance d'intégrer l'entreprise avec un certain niveau de savoirs assuré par les diplômes. (STGECRE)

...this first thing is that it's relatively selective; the second thing is that we have the resources to have quite small classes; the third thing is that they are constantly told that they're different from the rest of the universities. And the fourth thing is many of them, most of them succeed in getting in good jobs and a lot of them are within the administration, the state administration; so we train elites. It's a school of elites in a broader sense of the term. You know, also there's an intense associative activity, associations of students, there are many other associations, you see them in the hall organize selling cakes, they're organizing, so I think on the social side, there's a whole load of things that goes on. I don't know about it because I'm not on the spot sight. It's all cultivated the identity of a student in xx is not an accident; it's work properly. (SSGEARS)

The value of the diploma, the assured good quality of teaching and training, the well-developed associated student life, well-equipped materials and resources and the high quality of their graduates have all become the selling points for the *grandes écoles*. The following two interviewees from the group of *grandes écoles* (SSGEA & STGEC) re-stated their institutional advantages and pointed out the nature of this competition for brains in the national context.

c'est un peu en compétition. Les collègues des universités regrettent un peu de perdre des étudiants de haute qualité au profit d'une grande École qui est dans une université en concurrence, c'est un peu la réalité, on a des étudiants qui sont plus souples en termes de vitesse intellectuelle que les étudiants à l'université, donc ça donne un peu deux vitesses dans l'enseignement. Avec mon regard allemand, je trouve ça curieux, bizarre de coexister comme ça avec un établissement avec une grande sélection, une grande sélectivité... (SSGEASR)

I think that they can be competitors but obviously the *grandes écoles* like ours will be able to attract more students because we have very good reputation. I think that we're more attractive because we have more money to manage the school and our students have higher level because they were recruited by the selection. All of that makes us more attractive to people who know about the *grandes écoles* so we advertise about this system. I know it's not very democratic to say that but it's better because we have more money, that's one of the reasons and also because of the recruitment... If you take the university, the students going to the universities maybe less

than 50% will get something out of that and 50% will never finish their studies. If students enter a school like ours, 99% will come out with a diploma of engineer and will get a job easily. We have good collaboration with the university; we are not just an elitist group within the university system. We share the research facility, the research laboratories, the professors from the University of B are not better or worse than the professors of this engineering school but it's just the students. The students from the schools are usually better but the quality of the professors is the same whether it's from *grandes écoles* or the university. (STGECOG)

Facing all the strength that the two *grandes écoles* possessed in terms of human resources, funds and better quality of students, the university interviewees insisted on their particular identity in terms of educational programs and formation objectives, which were explained in detail in the targeting phase.

As mentioned before, some international student interviewees didn't quite understand this system; however, they still felt the distinctive regard from the public when they mentioned their host institution.

There's a Jamaica girl in my filière and so I'll be speaking to her in the tram in English. Someone would speak to me like "hi, where are you?" I said "I'm from xx." "are you here for studies?" "yeah, I'm here for my study?" "what do you study?" "I'm studying xx." "Are you in SP?" "Yes, I'm in SP." "wow, c'est très bien mais c'est dur." You know I don't need to describe the school because everyone already knows and I think it's because of the elitism and it also helps the elitism. It's the cause of the elitism and it's also the reason. It's just like a cycle. (SSGEASS)

The privilege of these *grandes écoles* was so strong in the national context that it created a win-win environment for both institutions and their students. The question is how to transfer this superiority to the international context? STUDOS, the director of the international office in the STUD, expressed his concerns for potential 'damage' that this privilege for *grandes écoles* has produced.

C'est historique, c'était sous Napoléon, c'était pour avoir de la formation d'ingénieurs. Encore une fois : pourquoi doit-on avoir une internationalisation des institutions ? Qu'est-ce que ce qu'un ingénieur ? En 2020 ? En 2050 ? Qu'est-ce qu'une entreprise attend d'un ingénieur ? Qu'est-ce que l'entreprise attend d'un docteur ? Ça, c'est un vrai problème qui ne sera peut-être pas résolu si vous mélangez tout le monde... Le Doctorat est le seul diplôme dans le monde entier. L'ingénierie, il y en a qu'en France dans les Écoles, mais il y a des départements d'ingénierie dans le monde entier, comment positionne-t-on tout cela ? Là, ça peut être une réflexion mondiale. (STUDOS)

He considered that the institution should work on the one hand on the development of a long-term vision in the engineering training program which should be connected with the demand from the enterprises in the global context, and the international recognition of the national diploma on the other hand.

En grande partie, parce que les grandes Écoles sont survalorisées par rapport au Doctorat. En d'autres termes, il vaut mieux faire une École d'ingénieur ou un diplôme de SSGEA qu'un Doctorat de sciences politiques. (SSGEARD)

The over-evaluation of the diplomas of the *grandes écoles* has created inequality in the labor market for the graduates, confirmed by the ORPEA survey, and discouraged the students from furthering their doctorate study which would not be very helpful for a more promising career. Its impact could be more harmful for the national economic capacity building in which research and innovation has played the major role.

5.1.2 National Network Management: choices of being bigger and more visible in the international context

The previous subsection was more concerned with the respective positioning of the two groups of institutions in the national context, which worked not only for the local student enrolment but also for those international students who have already started their study in France. However, what should these institutions do to be visible in the international promotion? What are the problems? What are the solutions adopted? In the interviews, the size of the institutions seemed to be the major common concern from the respondents in the four institutions for their international promoting. Considering they were competing with some very large comprehensive universities in the global market, the respondents mentioned the necessity to find some allies for ameliorating the institution's international visibility.

A l'étranger les *grandes écoles* c'est school of Engineering, ça peut être intégré dans les College of Engineering ou faculty of Engineering, quelque chose comme ça. Et on a énormément de difficulté à expliquer qu'est-ce qu'une grande École, parce que les gens pensent université. On est tous petits nous, à STGEC, il y a 1200 étudiants, c'est tout petit, ce n'est pas une immensité. (STGECOIA)

STGEOA, the director of the international office in the SSGEC explained that only 1200 students were enrolled in his institution, an engineering school, and it was just like a small college or faculty in some large universities. Thus, it's very hard for the academics to advertise for student recruitment from this kind of university, particularly when its privilege wasn't recognized. The challenge was also collaborated by SSUBRA, a researcher-teacher in the SSUB, and he pointed out that even the comparatively larger French universities were not bigger enough to compete with some American universities. He proposed in the interview that in order to obtain a more important image for French universities in the global market, reconstruction and merging in particular could be solutions.

Les universités françaises étaient trop petites, du fait de cette faible taille, très peu d'enseignant-chercheurs, donc une université de petite taille ne peut pas concurrencer avec les grandes universités américaines, c'est impossible. L'idée, c'est de, comme dans le cadre de la restructuration, fusionner afin d'avoir une taille critique pour avoir un nombre d'enseignant-chercheurs et d'étudiants plus important, qui donne une image plus importante, pas seulement au niveau national, régional, mais surtout international. (SSUBRA)

The implementation of the University 2000 plan greatly increased the number of universities during the 1990s, and many new universities, antenna campuses, institutes of technology and small engineering schools attached to universities have been created in the new sites since then. The merging tendency started in 2002, and this reconstruction intended to rationalize the education program offerings in the area, implement local synergies and develop a more visible academic structure in the global context (RERS, 2013). Thus, as a result of this regrouping, the *grands établissements* emerged. As we mentioned in the section of the introduction regarding research sites, this study has experienced a very special moment in the university site reform. When we looked for potential institutions for field research, the negotiation for the merging was an on-going process, and the members of the future large university didn't clearly express their decision. However, the new university started its official function as a unique entity from January 1st 2014 with only three former universities and the members were far less than expected. The SSUB and STUD have now become two colleges inside the new University.

The message behind the merging was loud and clear: to be more competitive in international education and research collaboration. Building the world-class university has been a very popular propaganda in some major English-speaking countries. Salmi & Liu (2011, p.xi) summarized three basic strategies to establish world-class universities based on recent international experience:

- Governments could consider upgrading a small number of existing universities that have the potential for excelling (picking winners)
- Governments could encourage a number of existing institutions to merge and transform into a new university that would achieve the type of synergies corresponding to a world-class institution (hybrid formula)
- Governments could create new world-class universities from scratch (clean-slate approach)

Although none of the interviewees in this study mentioned the ambitious objective for transforming their institution to a world-class university, this whole reconstruction has still manifested a top-down national reform. Salmi (2011) also compared the costs and benefits of these three strategies and the merging approach could create the opportunity for changing leadership and attracting new staff; however, it might be difficult to recreate a new identity for the new larger institution out of the different institutional cultures, and some resistance from the existing staff was inevitable.

...c'est pour avoir une stratégie unique pour l'ensemble de composantes de la grande université de B de façon à avoir une meilleure visibilité sur le plan international, dans la mesure où actuellement, quiconque veut voir quelles sont les stratégies de développement de l'université de B...(SSUBOV)

L'objectif est d'avoir un projet stratégique commun permettant de construire un établissement universitaire unique, innovant, et à grande visibilité internationale, renforçant ainsi notre attractivité par rapport au classement de Shanghai, par exemple. (STUDOL)

Donc, dans le cadre d'un site, je ne prends plus des universités mais je prends le site de B. Si l'on arrive à survivre à une politique de développement très intelligente avec des pays comme les États-Unis, il faut que l'on s'associe. (STUDOS)

The three interviewees from the SSUB and STUD considered this regrouping as a strategy for consolidating the strength of the new university and being better ranked in the global competition. Meanwhile, it's also a smart move for institutional long-term strategy development. One of them mentioned the Shanghai ranking, which was a very sensitive topic for French scholars. In the interviews, I unintentionally threw this question to the academic staffs and their reaction confirmed this opinion.

Mais nous on n'apparaît pas dans le classement de Shanghai, parce que les universités qui y sont classées comptent beaucoup plus d'étudiants, donc ça donne plus de poids à l'université. Le classement de Shanghai fait aussi appel à la partie recherche donc il y a plus de professeurs qui peuvent publier... En France, on est très nuls par rapport au classement de Shanghai. (STGECOIA)

The researchers' first reaction seemed all very defensive and by admitting the unsatisfactory ranks of the French universities and of their institution, they criticized the bias produced by the Shanghai ranking. A lower number of students and researchers and the language barrier for publication in the English academic journals were considered as the major arguments.

C'est-à-dire qu'une très grande université, elle n'est pas forcément meilleure, mais parce qu'elle est grande, elle est plus visible, plus productive à cette échelle-là, plus de lauréat de prix Nobel, Fields etc. Donc elle va avoir un ranking qui est plus haut qu'une petite université, qui travaille très bien, avec des chercheurs très performants mais qui se retrouve au 350e ou 500e rang... D'où une des raisons pour lesquelles les universités en France commencent à fusionner... Il y a des biais, plus on est gros, plus on a de chances de monter dans ce ranking... Je ne connais pas tous les critères qui mènent à ce ranking, au niveau des publications, ça peut être la barrière de la langue. Il existe des journaux Français, mais leur impact est faible. Des chercheurs de notre laboratoire ont publié du bon travail dans des revues francophones, comme les comptes rendus de l'académie des sciences, mais peu de collègues à l'échelle internationale lisent ces journaux, même si ce sont des travaux tout à fait honorables. (STUDRS)

Some of the interviewees also pointed out the influence of the complicated dual research system. The researchers' various affiliations to different research laboratories, institutes and universities could be very confusing at the moment of publication counting, and the lack of a consistent regulation has had a negative impact on the French higher education institution's international visibility.

Le classement de Shanghai est très très très polémique. Il y a peut-être trois ou quatre ans, notre ancien président a commencé à utiliser le classement de Shanghai pour essayer de faire passer une certaine politique. Tout le monde s'est rendu compte que le classement de Shanghai était très particulier, il se fonde sur le nombre de Prix Nobel. Est-ce que c'est ça qui permet de quantifier la qualité d'un établissement ? Après il y avait le gros problème sur le niveau de publications des établissements, on s'est rendu compte que comme les enseignants-chercheurs étaient associés à des laboratoires du CNRS, les publications n'étaient pas comptabilisées parce que l'on considérait que c'était des publications d'un organisme de recherche et pas d'un organisme d'enseignement. De ce fait, la France était très mal classée. Mas aussi, on s'est aperçu qu'il n'y avait pas d'accord commun entre toutes les universités au sujet d'un nom d'affiliation commun. Et comme chacun a un nom particulier, moi si je mets STGEC, et si l'on ne met pas B, ce n'est pas classé comme université de B et de ce fait, nous sommes classés très mauvais dans les classements. Mais d'après nous, nous n'avons pas la place que nous méritons, c'est un problème d'affichage alors comme en plus, au niveau politique, avec le classement de Shanghai, on nous tapait un peu dessus pour nous dire : "regardez le mauvais classement" alors que l'on sait maintenant que le classement est dû à d'autres choses. Est-ce que l'on regarde le classement de Shanghai ? Non, je pense que l'on ne va plus jamais regarder le classement de Shanghai. (STGECRE)

Behind these criticism, the interviewees from the two groups of institutions felt the critical importance of being reunited for more strength. However, the question 'who is the suitable

ally' was under discussion. The two *grandes écoles* SSGEA & STGEC in this study refused to merge with other universities and they also expressed some reserves and concerns although they were deeply aware of the good intention behind this reform.

Sur le principe c'était bien mais c'était sur la mise en œuvre qui était une fusion des moyens... Par exemple, si je pars à la retraite ou si je démissionne de mon poste, actuellement, mon poste appartient à l'institut polytechnique de B, et comme je suis électronicien, on va me remplacer par un autre électronicien. Dans un système proposé par l'université de B, tout était centralisé, une grande direction restreinte. Par exemple, mon poste est libre, eh bien ce ne sera plus un poste d'électronique, ça peut être un poste de médecin ou d'enseignant en littérature. C'est-à-dire que la direction de l'université de B aurait la liberté d'orienter sa recherche comme elle le veut, orienter la politique d'enseignement comme elle le veut et ça vient à faire disparaître une formation complètement ou diminuer des pouvoirs de recherche. En France, on aime bien l'équilibre, on aime bien donner un peu tout à tout le monde. Nous, on est sortis de ça parce que l'on a eu peur de perdre nos moyens, et très clairement, nos postes peuvent être changés, par exemple, mon poste peut devenir un poste de femme de ménage aussi ou de comptable ou de n'importe quoi... On avait peur de ça et ça n'a jamais été clairement écrit... (STGECRR)

STGECRR, a researcher-teacher in the STGEC, considered the merging more of a centralization of resource management. The centralized power could limit the development of some research fields, and researchers' autonomy and the balance of resource attribution could be more easily broken. Due to this shared concern in these two institutions, they chose to find their own strategies to be more visible and attractive in the international student market.

At the moment of our interview, the final decision for the SSGEA wasn't made yet.

Donc, concrètement il n'est pas du tout certain que l'on aille dans cette structure unique parce que même si l'on a un Collège, on ne serait pas mélangés aux autres ; on serait tout seul. S'il y a une très forte centralisation, pour nous, ça n'ira pas. Mais, de toute façon, on a des laboratoires d'excellence, on est dans les stratégies à l'international, de formations internationales d'excellence, donc, on sera partie prenante. Je vous parlais d'une autre solution, ça pourrait être rattaché non plus à SSUB, mais rattaché à cette grande université pour bien signifier que SSGEA veut être sur le site. Voilà, on est dans le chantier, on veut être présent parce que nos collègues des universités sont très contents d'avoir un pôle en sciences sociale fort. (SSGEAOR)

The international office director of the SSGEA insisted on the autonomy of his institution whether or not it would join the new university, and its academic strength in social sciences guaranteed its presence in the reformed structure of universities. The reaction from the two *grandes écoles* in the reconstruction of HEIs indicates that centralization in terms of management and resource allocation could be worrisome for these small elite institutions.

La chance de SSGEA, c'est que SP, c'est une marque, c'est-à-dire, que le modèle SP est connu à l'étranger en ce moment. (SSGEAOR)

Je vois ça avec notre filière, on s'est mis ensemble avec d'autres filières de Province pour être visible à côté de Paris, parce qu'il est vrai que les candidats, en masse, se ruent vers xx Paris et les xx de Province, c'est le second choix. (SSGEARR)

The SSGEA was one of the nine institutes specializing in political science studies in France, and thanks to the success of its peer institute in Paris, the brand has obtained great reputation at both the national and international scale. Moreover, its collaboration with the other universities has been well developed with the shared doctoral schools, research centers and some postgraduate programs. Thus its main strategy was to maximize the benefits brought by the group brand to attract more international students on the one hand; on the other hand, it was to make good use of the resources in possession of the universities to which it decided to be attached.

Compared with the SSGEA, the STGEC has decided to run multiple networks with its similar peer engineering schools. In France, there are two organizations to represent the groups of *grandes écoles*, the CGE for publicly-recognized *grandes écoles* of commerce, engineering, and other sector; and the CDEFI (*conférence des directeurs d'écoles de formations d'ingénieurs*) for the engineering schools.

Nous et les Écoles du réseau, pas simplement STGEC, on a ce point commun, on est positionné sur les TIC... Ce qui est clair c'est que nous ne sommes pas, à l'École d'ingénieurs, initiateurs de ce programme, normalement c'est la CDEFI, je pense qu'il y a à côté de la CDEFI le ministère des affaires étrangères qui dans un élan commun avec des directives ministérielles vise à promouvoir ce genre de coopération. Au niveau des Écoles, nous avons des accords ponctuels d'École à École. (STGECRK)

C'est le réseau Ampère, ce sont différentes Écoles regroupées pour avoir un meilleur niveau international. Il y a une École qui se trouve dans la ville de Caen qui s'appelle l'Ensicaen qui avait déjà un contact en Corée du Sud et je suis passé par eux pour faire une visite et après l'année suivante on a envoyé des étudiants et là on envoie régulièrement des étudiants, ça se passe très bien.... l'institut polytechnique de B. On a plusieurs Écoles, il y a 6 Écoles, chaque École a une direction des relations internationales et au-dessus, il y a un directeur des relations internationales, mais pour l'instant, il y a très peu de coordination... Il faut qu'on communique, à l'interne c'est avec la newsletter, il faut qu'à l'externe, par le moyen du réseau Ampère par exemple, et qu'on soit plus actifs sur l'international. (STGECO)

At the national level, the engineering schools could rely on the CDEFI and the different ministries of their affiliation to negotiate international collaboration with foreign institutions. At the regional or institutional level, these schools could build networks among themselves

either with peers who have similar disciplines or with others in search of a complementarity. The STGEC and other 7 other engineering schools specializing in different disciplines of science and technology on the site have grouped into one official entity since 2009, and after having refused to enter the new university, this group decided to become a member of a larger national network of polytechnics with 30 engineering schools.

To sum up, all these institutions intended to be part of a bigger and larger network in order to obtain international visibility and they chose their allies based on institutional similarity. The most important element for entering in the network was to share the collective resources but not be more controlled or have intervention in terms of autonomy. The choice of network affiliation once again distinguished the universities and *grandes écoles* and it's easy to understand because all institutions wanted to have partners at their levels. However, the network could create a stronger image but it didn't facilitate the outsiders' understanding of the French higher education system and that's the reason why they need more precise targets.

5.2 Institution targeting: ideological transformation from the fulfilment of others' needs to one's own needs

The positioning phase helped the institutions to decide its distinctive identity and the network affiliation reinforced its image-building. The next phase was to fix the targets: potential markets, clients and products to sell. Unlike in some major English-Speaking countries, the economic benefits counted for comparatively less in most French higher education institutions, although they did exist for some business schools. In the branding for international student recruitment, most institutions had to figure out their own needs in this targeting phase. The process of internationalization of higher education was never unidirectional or unilateral, which indicated that all the involved stakeholders should be taken into account. In this subsection, the aspects of orientation and niches for targeting were analyzed comparatively in the four institutions.

5.2.1 Utilitarian vs. Ideologist

The terms utilitarian and ideologist were employed here to describe the logic or orientation of the four institutions to initiate their targets in the branding. On the one hand, the term utilitarian was used to indicate the attitude and objectives of the two *grandes écoles* (SSGEA & STGEC) in this study for targeting the sending countries, institutions and student population. Based on the interview data, the agent for planning the target seemed to know how to maximize his institution's benefits and adopted a very utilitarian vision of this international branding move. On the other hand, compared to the two *grandes écoles*, the two universities (SSUB & STUD) seemed more traditional in pursuit of accomplishing the university mission, and the humanitarian and diplomatic talks were still very prevalent in university respondents' answers.

In the two *grandes écoles* in this study, international mobility for its local students was officially written as an obligation for delivery of the institutional diploma. STGECRK, a researcher-teacher from the STGEC explained that the local students had to accomplish a period of two months' abroad either for study or for internship during their three years' study program in this institution, and some of the researcher-teachers volunteered to be program coordinators for different countries of destination in order to motivate and help their students with their outbound mobility.

...nous avons rendu la mobilité à l'étranger obligatoire pour nos étudiants. Ça a contribué à ce que tous nos programmes d'échanges, il n'y a pas que le Brésil, ont mieux fonctionné parce qu'il y a une facilité de mobilité. L'obligation est de partir deux mois sur les trois années de formations ici. Ils choisissent la période, ça peut être des petites périodes de-ci de-là mais en tout, ça doit faire deux mois. (STGECRK)

..on a imposé à nos élèves d'aller à l'étranger. On a un cursus de trois ans d'études, et ils doivent aller au moins deux mois à l'étranger pendant leurs années d'études donc on a mis des coordinateurs géographiques pour motiver les élèves et pour aller faire des échanges à l'étranger. (STGECRR)

The SSGEA applied the program of an international year for the local students to get one-year of formation abroad. According to the introduction from the international office director, the local students needed to obtain 60 credits in a foreign institution for accomplishing their second year of study. For those students who didn't achieve enough credits, they had to repeat the year back in the institution.

SSGEA se présente comme l'établissement d'enseignement supérieur xx, comme le plus internationalisé dans la mesure où à SSGEA tous nos étudiants partent à l'étranger pendant un an. Le diplôme dure cinq ans et en deuxième année, tous nos étudiants à quelques exceptions après, partent en deuxième année pour un an, faire une mobilité, donc, la plupart dans le cadre d'Erasmus, le programme Erasmus, mais également dans le reste du monde, on appelle ça « le reste du monde », les étudiants partent un an. Ce qui est important, ce qui distingue SSGEA en tant qu'École d'autres universités, c'est que cette deuxième année compte comme une année qui est forcément reconnue à SSGEA. Si l'on ne valide pas cette année, si l'on ne ramène pas soixante crédits (ECTS) dans le cadre d'Erasmus ou un certains nombres de crédits, car si l'on est aux États-Unis, au Canada, ce sera différent. Et bien, on ne validera pas cette deuxième année de l'SSGEA sans les crédits, concrètement un étudiant qui ne ramène pas les crédits, on le fait redoubler en France. (SSGEAOR)

Both measures implemented in the two *grandes écoles* aimed at pushing their local students to have some experience abroad during their study period, which on the one hand could broaden their students' vision of the world and diversify their knowledge of their study field; on the other hand, this experience could enrich students' competence package in the labor market. Some of the very positive impacts of the outbound mobility were mentioned in the interviews. Because of the linguistic sojourn and cultural and social exploration, the international year for the students in the SSGEA was considered as a valuable experience for its students, and more importantly, it helped its future graduates to discover another market for their employment.

C'est-à-dire que les étudiants dans le cadre de l'année obligatoire pour tous les étudiants ici en deuxième année, la seule mobilité linguistique unique, c'est celle avec mention. C'est-à-dire que les étudiants qui ne connaissent rien au russe, ont la possibilité d'apprendre le russe, parce que notre partenaire est un acteur de la coopération internationale très réputée en Russie. C'était l'université qui était supposée être chargée de former les cadres des pays frères du monde entier... du coup, les étudiants qui partent en Russie, c'est une expérience humaine, considérable, ça change souvent leur vie. Parce qu'ils découvrent un pays, une langue, une culture qui devient essentielle dans leur vie, qui change leur vie, j'en ai fait l'expérience aussi. Et c'est vrai que ce qui est aussi une satisfaction pour moi c'est de voir que ce programme fonctionne aujourd'hui, dans la conjoncture actuelle de dépression, de faible croissance en France. A Moscou, je vois qu'il y a une très forte demande pour nos diplômés...(SSGEARDF)

En général, c'est vrai que les étudiants de STGEC quand ils vont à l'étranger, les professeurs qui accueillent les étudiants sont très satisfaits par la formation et par leur apport dans le laboratoire. (SSGECO A)

Moreover, the student-ambassador role was also attributed to its outbound students. As elaborated in the branding in higher education, this process needed collective efforts of all the involved stakeholders in the institutions. The students on outbound mobility could create a direct image of their home institution in terms of formation quality and academic ambiance. Their short mobility in the host institution abroad exercised either positive or negative

influence on the future collaboration between the two institutions. Sometimes, the word of mouth of a student on mobility worked more efficiently than all the branding efforts.

Thus when they go abroad, for example, we have students going to California, they talk to Californian students and they advertise for our school. They are ambassadors. I think that these two students who will come to (our institution), they've talked to our students and at least one of them was convinced by our students. (STGECOG)

If international mobility has become an inseparable component of students' formation, the undeclared information was that the institutions have to develop a network large enough to help their students complete this mission. This unspoken obligation imposed directly on the institution's mission statement has turned into a most efficient form of internationalization of education and research in the *grandes écoles*. It clearly drew a line for the distinction of *grandes écoles* from universities, and the institutions have developed strategic orientation based on their needs for targeted institutions and countries.

We have the priorities oriented by our students. It means that we don't force our students to go to some place. It's open to them, where they want to go... (STGECOG)

Le but c'est que nos élèves ont l'obligation de partir, ils veulent partir d'ailleurs, ils aiment bien voyager maintenant... Ils aiment aller le plus loin possible, donc pour l'Australie et la Nouvelle-Zélande, je suis très demandé, beaucoup vont aussi en Afrique du Sud et au Brésil, les pays européens n'ont aucun succès. (STGECRR)

The students' preference for the mobility destination was considered as the priority for the institutions to create the link and as mentioned by several researchers in the interviews, the demand for English-speaking countries has increased. However, considering the different tuition fees for education and systems of credits, there were still more difficulties to conquer. In order to avoid the complexity of the educational systems, the STGEC has developed the short-term internship system for its students abroad.

(le stage) c'est que le moyen le plus simple pour un étudiant de partir à l'étranger c'est d'aller travailler. Nous, on offre la possibilité à partir de la deuxième année, d'accéder à des universités, faire des stages dans des laboratoires, et en troisième année, on a la possibilité avec certains partenaires de proposer des semestres académiques, donc c'est pour une période un peu plus longue et le contenu est plus intéressant aussi parce que là, ils vont suivre des cours comme les autres étudiants de l'université en question, et éventuellement après la dernière année, ils feront un stage dans les laboratoires. (STGECOA)

According to STGECO, the international office director of the STGEC, the internship was the simplest and most efficient way for students to go abroad, and meanwhile, it could possibly be the starting point for educational program or other forms of collaboration negotiations. Students' preferences were considered to be personal choices and more importantly choices which helped them with their professional careers from a long-term perspective. Two major objectives were implied in the institutional targeting process: to establish the relationship with the targeted destination for its local students to learn more advanced technology or to practice students' acquired skills in a more promising environment. Compared to the STGEC, in the SSGEA, a member of the *grandes écoles* specializing in social sciences and politics, the targeting needed more long-term visions and prudence and in particular, the international year required a one year formation program for its students in a foreign host institution, which demanded more quality guarantees from both institutions and longer period of bilateral testing.

Parce que l'on a des accords. On a passé des accords, des conventions, en Europe, dans le cadre d'Erasmus. Il y a aussi des accords hétéros avec des partenaires dans le monde. On a environ une dizaine de pays qui sont représentés en dehors de l'Europe, qui nous permettent d'envoyer les étudiants en Inde, au Brésil, en Argentine, en Corée, au Japon. (SSGEAOR)

SSGEAOR, the international office director, explained that most of their students accomplished their second year abroad through the Erasmus program and also in some new emerging countries like BRIC (Brazil, Russia, India, and China). Although the respondents in these two *grandes écoles* didn't indicate the geographic priority for their institutions' priority for targeting, we could still interpret their proactive move in the targeting process on the basis of the institutional needs, in particular students' demand. Meanwhile, related to the targeted international student population, the two *grandes écoles* strictly followed the rules of elite formation for elite students and the details of their selection and admission were discussed in the next chapter.

Compared to a more proactive move from the *grandes écoles* in targeting countries and institutions for their branding, the two universities in this study seemed less vigorous and more reactive. International mobility for university students was mainly an option to enrich their student experience, and most of the outbound students chose to go abroad by the Erasmus program inside Europe for a semester or two. Thanks to the credit transfer system, they could accumulate the credits they've obtained in the host institution and validate them

back at their home institutions. The huge network in the Erasmus and Erasmus Mundus program due to the construction of EHEA facilitated university students' choice of destination and meanwhile, the two universities (SSUB & STUD) were also the host institutions for the Erasmus students from other member countries. Without the international obligation for students, the two universities still had some general international policies written in their institutional mission statements. We downloaded these statements from their website as preliminary material for data analysis. Moreover, when we searched the same type of documents in the two *grandes écoles* (SSGEA & STGEC), the information was transformed into a very short brief introduction of the institutional educational programs and research on their official brochures.

The international development strategies were summed up in two pages with five main points elaborated in the STUD:

- Mobility and exchange programs: according to the document, the expansion of the already existing official university networks for developing more diversified educational programs with other European universities and improving its attractiveness for international student recruitment
- Exportation of the applied educational programs to the countries which require short-term professional training programs, such as Mexico, African countries, Argentina and Thailand etc. to help them with their capacity-building, implantation of the ECTS to the East European countries to facilitate the inter-European mobility and collaboration
- Double/multiple degree program development based on the European education and research network, in particular Erasmus Mundus and Erasmus Mundus External Cooperation Window.
- Academic research development
- Amelioration of the attractiveness of the institution's education and research in the global context: connectedness to the networks at different scales, local, regional, European and global and development of the exported educational programs for future possible collaboration between institutions in education and research

(Source : Une politique active d'ouverture à l'international, STUD)

Similar to STUD, the SSUB made their international relations development policies accessible to the public with 9 pages of information (including some official statistics). Two aspects were highlighted in this document: the consolidation of internationalization of research and education, and the support for international mobility (students, researchers and administration staff). Related to the first aspect, five important measures were mentioned as strategic moves:

- Encourage the development of the joint programs with peer universities (double degree, international master degree, joint PhD degree, research projects corresponding to the university's demand, etc.): special focus on the Francophone universities and the program cost funded from the partner universities
- Research development through international cooperation
- Ethics policies: collaboration with institutions in the developing countries (not exclusively francophone and flexibility for program funds) and urgent aid for the reconstruction of education systems in the countries suffering from civil wars or other destructive social movement
- Geographic priority orientation: francophone countries (sustaining the historical and linguistic relationship), English-speaking countries (special effort demanded for collaboration both in education and research), Iberian countries (traditional partners, Spain, Portugal, Latin America, Caribbean) and emerging countries (research collaboration and attracting students from these countries, in particular BRICS)
- Consistency with the new university politics

Related to the second aspect, three points were elaborated:

- Student mobility: developing bilingual-teaching courses and partnership with universities in major English-Speaking countries
- Academic mobility: via international or regional research projects, developing joint PhD programs, visiting scholarship and foreign scholar recruitment

- Administrative staff mobility: for practice exchange and professional experience enrichment

(Source : Déclaration de politique relative aux relations internationales, SSUB)

Several common elements were shared in these two official statements related to their institutional strategies. Firstly, relative to the student mobility, the Erasmus program was the principal network that the local students could use for their outbound mobility, which means the students made passive choices among the pre-defined options at a larger scale. Secondly, the targeting countries and institutions were worldwide; the francophone countries seemed to be prioritized above others, and the new emerging countries were considered to be key partners for education and research. Finally, one important distinction for these two universities from the *grandes écoles*, the exportation of educational programs had special emphasis and was aimed at benefiting the institutions and countries with the two universities' advanced knowledge of training or educational programs.

In a word, the pressure of finding international destinations for their outbound students made the two *grandes écoles* more motivated for targeting foreign institutions, and the process was initiated based on their own needs with a more proactive attitude. Nevertheless, the two universities seemed to position themselves as donors and receivers, which indicated that they were more prepared to be responsive to external demand.

5.2.2 Generalist vs. Specialist

Besides the orientation of fixing the targets, the four institutions had to consider what they could offer their potential targeted populations and institutions and the answers to these questions were tightly related to the differences between the *grandes écoles* and universities in terms of their student profiles, curricula and education orientation.

En France, on a cette chance d'avoir les *grandes écoles* et les universités françaises. Elles concurrencent en fait les facultés de gestion et de management parce que les *grandes écoles* ne font pas concurrence à la médecine. Donc les *grandes écoles* uniquement par rapport à l'IAE par exemple, ça n'affecte pas le droit. Nous avons en France la chance d'avoir une offre de formation importante. Les *grandes écoles* vont s'adresser à un public bien ciblé, bien précis avec leurs propres objectifs, c'est pour cela qu'ils sont connus à un niveau international, de très bons managers... L'université française, les facultés de gestion liées à l'IAE, c'est notamment la formation ouverte à tous. (SSUBRA)

As part of the historical heritage in the French higher education system, the particularity and division of the educational programs naturally separated the *grandes écoles* and universities. Medicine and law were the oldest disciplines existing in the universities, and there's no confusion or competition for potential foreign partners and international students. However, the existence of some similar specialties in the *grandes écoles* and universities might need more elaboration.

On the one hand, in terms of the curriculum design, the *grandes écoles* (SSGEA & STGEC) were more directly profession-oriented for training students with more applied knowledge of the discipline.

Nous, la formation que l'on propose à l'École c'est une partie théorique et une partie pratique et pour la partie pratique, on recommande le stage pour être proche de l'industrie même dans les laboratoires de recherche, il y a beaucoup d'industriels qui sont en contact avec les chercheurs. Cette formation par le stage est quand même enrichissante. (training programs)

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...on ne gère pas une École comme on gère une université. Nous, on est proches du terrain, on a besoin d'avoir nos étudiants en stage. À l'université, le stage n'est pas obligatoire. Après la manière dont l'École fonctionne est différente, on a plus de moyens dans les salles de TP pour faire des manipulations des choses comme ça, à l'université, il y a moins de moyens. Ensuite, il y a la sélection, chez nous, les étudiants passent par les classes préparatoires, et le concours, ça permet d'avoir des étudiants d'un niveau relativement élevé. À l'université, il n'y a pas de sélection, donc comment est-ce que l'on va gérer tout ça. (STGECO)

As explained by STGEOA, the international office director and researcher-teacher in the STGEC, the educational programs were divided into two phases: theoretical studies and practical studies in his institution. Compared to his peer university, the STGEC had more advanced materials and larger local networks with the private sector to serve his students' internship needs. His discourse was confirmed by a Chinese student recruited in this institution through document application, who had also had two years of study experience in the universities before. She gave me an example to describe the pedagogical differences in her former university the STUD, and her current institution STGEC.

For example, we started to learn very specialized major-related courses at my first-year of postgraduate studies in the STUD. We spent the whole morning to do TD, 9h to 12h; the whole afternoon for theoretical knowledge, 14h to 18h. I remembered there was one course about micro-electronics and we learned it for more than one month. When I got in the STGEC, we have the same course taught by the same professor. However, he only spent three hours to finish

this course, the one I took in the STUD for more than a month. So it could be easy to understand if the students in the STGEC don't take more time to study the course after class, they could understand nothing. As an engineering school, the STGEC forms engineers and puts more emphasis on training students, the future engineers, how to manage instead of how to do it. The training here is a little bit management focused and how-to-to is also important but not highly demanded. In the universities, we focus more on theoretical knowledge and the to-do-ability is very weak. (STGECSW)

According to her experience, students in the university spent months on one course, while in the engineering school, the theoretical part was finished in three hours. Two important messages were indicated in her response: as regards the pedagogical model, the engineering school had more focus on students' do-ability and the university had a better theoretical learning environment. To meet this kind of training intensity, we could imagine the competences of students in the engineering school were definitely not the same as their peers in the university. Regarding institutional connectedness with the private sectors, she used an interesting metaphor to describe the whole engineering school system.

To be honest, engineering school is just like a talent mafia market. When you are searching for a job, the first thing that the employer looks at should be from which university you graduated. You know actually it's very possible that we encounter the alumni in the job market and it's very easy for us to get the opportunity.... Therefore, students like us, when we are looking for a job, it's very easy to meet some of our alumni and get the job offer and that's also one of the major reasons to explain why some many students want to study in engineering school. We are here not only for the good teaching quality but also for this social network. However, universities don't have this network. Most of the professors in engineering schools have direct contact or working cooperation with the enterprises and they could recommend us to do our internship there or even to get a job. These are definitely advantages. (STGECSW)

As a witness and beneficiary of the two different groups of institutions, her words revealed the true advantages of attracting international students to the *grandes écoles*. The good reputation created and developed by generations of graduates of the institution, the large alumni networks constructed in the private and public sectors, the wide professional links developed by the academic staff for research, all these aspects could bring certain benefits for their students. As elaborated previously, this highly professionalized training programs and close relationship with the private sector were present since the creation of the first generation of engineering schools. This group of institutions existed to respond to the national demand for high- level scientific professionals, and the pragmatic and functionalist approach was well embedded in its training program design. Corresponding to this functioning logic reflected in its curriculum, the finality of education was fixed to train future engineers. The orientation

also implied one big difference in the target population. In other words, students who wanted to be engineers were the potential candidates for this kind of institution and furthermore, students recruited to the institution had already a clear idea of their future career development.

On the other hand, the universities proposed more theoretically-oriented programs as mentioned by the student respondents, and the knowledge structures in the universities were greatly appreciated by the students, in particular in terms of the academic strength of the professors. Moreover, the two respondents from the SSUB gave some concrete examples to show the differences in terms of program design philosophy and professional orientation for the students.

(SSGEA) Ils font un peu de tout cela mais ce ne sont pas des spécialistes. Théoriquement, ce sont des spécialistes de la science politique mais ici on fait de la science politique aussi, on l'a toujours fait mais ce n'est pas la même science politique. C'est-à-dire, que l'on fait de la philosophie de sciences politiques ici alors que là-bas, c'est la science politique appliquée. On n'est pas vraiment en concurrence. On essaie de ne pas être concurrence parce que sinon la relation serait très mauvaise. (SSUBOV)

L'économie et la gestion, pas trop, parce qu'ils ne sont pas dans les mêmes domaines. En sciences politiques, ils font un peu d'économie mais c'est très marginal. Par contre, en sciences politiques, j'imagine qu'il y a plus de concurrents parce que ce sont des étudiants en sciences politiques, à SSUB, et indépendants de l'institut d'études politiques qui est en face... Là, il y a peut-être de la concurrence... Apriori, je considère que les étudiants qui vont en sciences-po ont un profil différent des étudiants qui veulent faire de l'économie, ce n'est pas nécessairement les mêmes, ils ne visent pas une carrière nécessairement. (SSUBRY)

Facing the more specialized and selective programs in the *grandes écoles*, the university interviewees confirmed the existence of the similarity of the curricula on the list of educational programs; however, the nuances were identified as different educational goals. The real competition in program choice didn't appear to be important if the students had a clear future plan for study or work. According to the above interviewees' discourse, there's an obvious difference in the students' profiles in the *grandes écoles* and the universities.

On ne fait pas la même chose déjà... On forme des chercheurs, contrairement à eux, ils forment des jeunes ingénieurs... Mon expérience me dit que ce sont des bons exécutants, mais ce ne sont pas des gens vraiment préparés et intéressants pour la recherche. Un collègue, professeur d'École d'ingénieur, cherche plutôt à recruter des étudiants sortant de l'université pour les thèses de Doctorat qu'il encadre. (STUDRS)

The students recruited to the engineering schools were not interested in the research, at least at the very beginning, and were trained to be good executives in the professional work field

instead of being researchers. As a research advisor himself, the STUDRS pointed out the strength and the weakness of the students trained in the universities and engineering schools and the intentions of professional orientation implied in the programs.

Leur avantage pour le recrutement des étudiants étrangers dans les Écoles, c'est très finalisé, on parle de l'ingénieur en électronique, l'ingénieur en aéronautique. Je dirais que l'employabilité est beaucoup plus précise parce que la spécialisation est plus grande dès le début, vous êtes dans telle École et pas une autre. Par contre, à l'université, ce sont des sciences fondamentales. Vous prenez une Licence de maths, c'est très général. Donc, vous me demandez qu'est-ce qui peut être attirant pour un étudiant étranger ? Probablement les Écoles, parce que les Écoles sont très sélectives et l'université n'a pas de sélection à l'entrée ; c'est plus intéressant après pour modifier le diplôme pour dire que l'on est capable d'entrer dans une filière très sélective française, en termes de post-emploi, si l'on prend toujours cet objectif de l'emploi. (STUDOS)

L'attractivité des écoles d'ingénieurs est grande internationalement. L'insertion professionnelle de ces étudiants est élevée par rapport à celle des universités « plus classiques » qui délivrent des Masters qui peuvent être des Masters professionnels, destinés à favoriser une insertion professionnelle en lien avec les besoins socio-économiques régionaux ou nationaux. Le Master recherche étant réservé aux étudiants qui souhaitent poursuivre sur le Doctorat et la recherche fondamentale ou appliquée. Le Brésil, pour reprendre cet exemple, favorise la mobilité de ses étudiants vers les Écoles d'ingénieurs françaises car elles dispensent des enseignements de haut niveau scientifique et technique débouchant sur des emplois à haute valeur ajoutée. (STUDOL)

Selective entrance, specialized courses, pre-defined educational goals and a large professional network were the filters for international students or institutions to do the preliminary auto-evaluation of whether they were the right targets for the *grandes écoles* or not. Meanwhile, a well-structured knowledge system and research-oriented generalist formation were the major message sent by the two universities to their potential targets. As elaborated by the two above interviewees, in this mutual targeting process the four institutions set different criteria for profiles of student candidates and of foreign institutions on the basis of their own educational program design and objectives. At the same time, the foreign institutions and international students could target the right type of institutions with the clear objective of their own educational or research needs. Therefore, after the positioning period of defining 'who am I' and the targeting period of clarifying specific information about 'what I sell', the question of how to send these detailed institutional messages into the international education market has become a key step to accomplish.

5.3 Institution operating

Due to the collective characteristics which distinguished the *grandes écoles* and universities in terms of national prestige, network management, institutional culture and discipline particularity, it's evident that the four institutions in this study have to position themselves and target their potential peer institutions, students and countries. In the operating phase which required the institutions to transfer all the related messages to the involved stakeholders in the international student market, we identified more similarities in this study in the operations of the four institutions. This subsection focused on two principal elements: indirect strategy and direct practice for institutional branding, in particular oriented toward inbound student mobility. During this study, we found the strong impact of the world-system theory and the international academic relationships theories on the practices of the two groups of French HEIs'. We also added a small part of leadership analysis to the end of this subsection because the interviewees mentioned several times the impact of their 'leaders' on some important institutional development orientation on the one hand; on the other hand, institutional leaderships studies have attracted more researchers due to the new demands the societies are placing on the universities in the internationalization of higher education.

5.3.1 International collaboration development: from research to student mobility

Program mobility and individual mobility were two fundamental forms to describe the inbound student mobility in these institutions. However, as regards competitive selections, the two *grandes écoles* provided very few study places for the free movers.

Interviewer: I know that there are some free movers.

AR: oui, un ou deux ou trois, toujours très petit. On en reçoit chaque année ... (SSGEAOR)

CA : Des passerelles, oui mais ça concerne très peu d'étudiants.

Interviewer: Des étudiants de niveau Master peuvent postuler en deuxième année.

CA : Oui, ils peuvent rentrer avec des diplômes mais c'est très rares, il n'y en a pas beaucoup, peut-être 4 ou 5. (STGECO)

According to SSGEAOR, the international office director, the SSGEA only hosted two or three free movers per year by document application selection and most of these candidates were not diploma oriented. The situation in the STGEC was quite similar. Most of its students were recruited from the CPGE or equivalent through entrance exam (*concours*), which indicated the free movers had to be already trained in the similar system and pass the *concours*. STGECO mentioned that although the institution accepted a few students directly

for the second year study, the number was very limited and students' individual applications must be outstanding.

...une précision au préalable : les étudiants étrangers qui viennent en mobilité individuelle ne passent pas par notre service. (STUDOL)

In the four institutions, only the SSUB has registered information for the free-movers' in their international office service. The administrator of the international office mentioned that she was aware of the enrollment of international students on individual mobility in the STUD; nevertheless, these students weren't taken care of by the international office. Therefore, it's more effective for institutions to brand for program student mobility and this general strategy from researchers' collaboration to student mobility has been implemented in all the institutions in this study.

Education and research were two inseparable parts in the international collaboration development between institutions, a process in which researchers' initiation has played a key role.

...je suis parti deux ans au Japon, pour faire un post-doctorat... j'ai gardé des contacts avec les universités japonaises et j'ai initié une collaboration avec ces universités, ce qui a permis d'envoyer des étudiants en stage. (STGECO A)

Comme je connaissais le pays. Et quand j'ai vu qu'un tel projet se montait, je me suis proposé pour m'en occuper parce que j'ai un goût pour ce pays, je sais comment il fonctionne, j'ai des contacts là-bas, qui peuvent me dire comment ça se passe au niveau des affaires administratives par exemple, ça peut être de bons conseils pour les étudiants. (STGECRE)

Parce que j'étais le seul à connaître l'Australie. L'année dernière, comme j'y ai fait six mois en tant que professeur invité, j'étais le seul à avoir vraiment été sur le terrain pour comprendre comment ça marchait, donc on m'a choisi pour cela, parce que j'avais déjà été en Australie (STGECRR)

In the interviews, the three researchers talked about how and why they initiated their collaboration programs. Personal and professional contact was the most frequent start for the initiation process; and as researchers, they were used to working with foreign colleagues or used to having some research experiences in a foreign institution, which have become the case both for the development of their career and working institutions. Meanwhile, we should also pay attention to some potential collaborative rules in the researchers' network.

... some of your first contacts are because you know colleagues through research, a better example, is people work on Germany here we have very strong link with University of xx even since the FxFA is with xx and that started with research. Basically you found colleagues that you have some affinity with and you tried to set up a research and teaching links with them. It's not simple because you know people but because you know there's for example again in Prague, the one I work with, he understands my research, he respects my research; vice versa, we have something to exchange. There's no point sitting exchanging with you adversaries. (SSGEARS)

... je suis tout à fait d'accord : complémentarité et réciprocité. La complémentarité c'est même plus important parce que l'on ne va commencer à travailler avec quelqu'un qui fait exactement la même chose, cela n'a pas d'intérêt, il faut que ce soit complémentaire. (STUDRS)

The affinity between partners and complementarity in research were two indispensable elements for successful collaboration between researchers. As the above two researchers elaborated, there's no interest for them to work either with someone who had the opposite academic ideas or someone who did exactly the same things as they. The partner choice for starting a possible collaboration was highly dependent on researchers' research interest. Following the first contact between researchers, the collaboration development could be categorized into several levels.

Cela peut avoir plusieurs formes. Ça peut être simplement deux enseignants qui se rencontrent lors d'un colloque et qui décident de travailler ensemble. Leurs universités vont être associées mais de façon marginale. Un travail de recherche peut être par exemple, la collaboration autour d'un ouvrage commun ou ça peut aussi déboucher sur la tenue de colloques dans l'une ou l'autre université. Voilà, ça c'est le plus informel. On peut aussi répondre à des appels d'offre de l'Europe pour des programmes Tempus. Là, il faut se trouver des partenaires qui acceptent de travailler avec nous sur les thèmes qui seront ou correspondront à l'appel d'offre. (SSUBOV)

Les initiatives viennent le plus souvent des enseignants-chercheurs eux-mêmes. Ils ont pris l'habitude de travailler ensemble sur un thème précis dans un laboratoire en France et dans un laboratoire à l'étranger. Lorsque ces échanges se font de plus en plus fréquents, ils souhaitent leur donner un cadre plus administratif, plus officiel aussi pour permettre davantage de mobilités enseignantes, mais aussi diplômantes pour les étudiants. C'est ainsi que naissent les projets de double-diplômes. Ils s'adressent alors à notre service pour la rédaction des accords de coopération. Nous disposons d'un modèle type mais le plus souvent, nous sommes dans l'obligation de l'aménager pour tenir compte des besoins des partenaires, tout en restant dans l'application de nos propres contraintes juridiques et administratives, ce qui n'est pas toujours facile. (STUDOL)

Cela commence toujours par des contacts personnels, et puis après, quand il y a des contacts personnels, grâce à ces contacts personnels entre chercheurs, on arrive à rencontrer des responsables, et après, on se dit : "essayons de généraliser cette petite relation à deux, à des choses beaucoup plus grandes". Ça peut être des étudiants en Doctorat, des étudiants de Master, ou des étudiants de Bachelor. Qu'est-ce que la mobilité dans une université et à quoi sert-elle ? Pourquoi et comment, est-ce que l'on peut faire des choses ensemble ? C'est-à-dire, typiquement, est-ce que l'on peut définir un diplôme qui serait commun pour les deux universités ?... C'est-à-dire que lorsque nous avons des chercheurs qui viennent au bureau des relations internationales, qui disent : « nous voulons faire un partenariat avec tel pays et telle

université », on dit : « d'accord ». Ils disent : « on va faire une mission pour établir les points des accords », on dit : « d'accord ». Mais à ce moment-là, il faut s'impliquer et il faut ça concerne d'autres personnes parce que si ça concerne simplement le professeur A dans le laboratoire A et le professeur B dans laboratoire B, j'appelle cela un partenariat bilatéral. C'est-à-dire que les institutions ne se sont pas emmêlées. Si c'est le professeur A qui dit : « dans cette université, il y a un nouveau type de formation, par exemple en ingénierie ou en sciences sociales qui pourra intéresser aussi le professeur B, le professeur C, le professeur D », et que ces derniers correspondent à des institutions, des formations ou des domaines scientifiques B,C et D. Là, je dis : « d'accord, vous partez tous ensemble et nous réfléchissons et voyons ce que l'on pourra faire »... Absolument, ils se généralisent, fleurissent, ils se développent au niveau de ce que j'appelle l'« institution ». (STUDOS)

Là, pour les conventions, on va essentiellement s'appuyer sur la recherche de partenaires sur nos enseignants et nos chercheurs. Au départ, ce sont souvent des contacts individuels qui vont faire que nos chercheurs ou nos enseignants vont nous dire « voilà, j'ai identifié un bon groupe de collègues qui pourrait être intéressant ». Et après, on va prendre contact, voir si c'est possible de faire des échanges des étudiants. Pour nous la formation est très importante... On va beaucoup compter sur les conventions sur nos réseaux, sur nos enseignants-chercheurs, les collègues, on ne va pas prendre le classement de Shanghai ranking, on le fait parfois. (SSGEAOR)

On the basis of the introduction from the three international office directors (SSUB, STUD, SSGEA) to the question of institutional academic relations development and the official documents published on the institutions' website, we found three levels of relationship in the four institutions: individual, bilateral and institutional, which were represented in seven types.

T1: researchers' individual research collaboration (personal networks, conferences, colloquiums, consortiums etc.)

T2: collaboration between two research labs/teams

T3: trans-disciplinary collaboration among different research teams

T4: joint doctoral thesis, student internship, individual student exchange or academic mobility

T5: exchange programs

T6: joint diploma or double degrees

T7: education program exportation & offshore campus

(not necessarily chronological by going through all the types, edited by Bian 2014)

We identified the seven forms of collaboration in the two universities and six of them in the *grandes écoles* because the T7 didn't exist in the SSGEA and STGEC. Nevertheless, the preferences for types of collaboration were a little bit different. For example, the value of the diplomas delivered by the two groups of institutions became an important factor to consider in

this process. As previously mentioned, the international office director in the SSGEA expressed seriously his opposition for the exportation of education programs or the creation of offshore campuses and he considered that the insufficient quality assurance and evaluation system could destroy his institution's reputation in the international context. On the contrary, the universities were comparatively favorable towards this kind of collaboration and from their existing programs, we could still tell some particularity in their partners for this kind of collaboration. In order to clarify the different profiles of the collaborative partners, we used two criteria to define the classification: cultural-linguistic relationships and geopolitical and economic relationships.

On the basis of cultural-linguistic relationships:

C1: traditional partners (EU members, Francophone countries)

C2: new emerging exotic partners (BRICs, for example)

C3: frenemies

On the basis of geopolitical and economic relationships:

C1: family partners (EU)

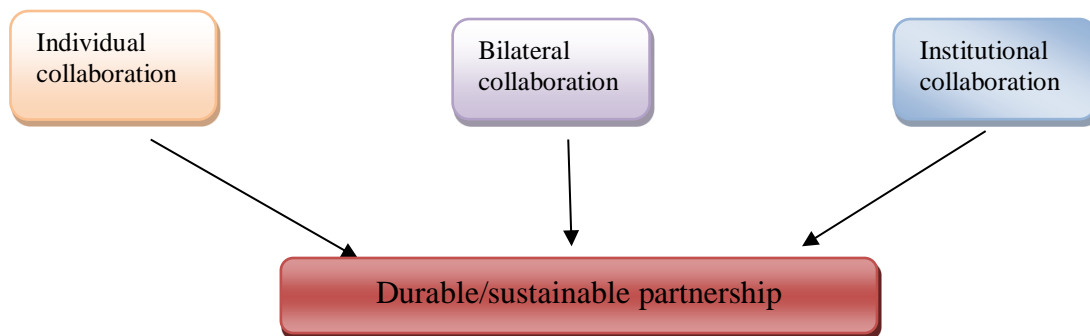
C2: competitor partners

C3: cash partners

C4: humane partners

Among the group of categories based on cultural-linguistic relations, the traditional partners included the European countries with which France shared cultural, political and historical affinities and the Francophone countries due to the linguistic aspects among which the former French colonies were the majority. The composition of this category could also be interpreted as the result of French cultural diplomacy and soft power application, in particular with French-speaking African countries. The new emerging exotic partners mainly concerned the countries where large gaps existed with France in terms of political, cultural and even ideological differences. With economic globalization and the opening of the market in these countries, France has started to attract or to be attracted by certain aspects in these countries that remained semi-peripheral in the world power system. The frenemies (friends & enemies) represented the major English-speaking countries that occupied a central position similar to France's in the hierarchical system. On the one hand, in the international market, these countries were definitely France's strongest competitors in students' recruitment and academic research. On the other hand, France had to develop its collaboration with these countries based on the national demand for research and innovation. The relationship between

French HEIs with foreign institutions could also be categorized differently in terms of geopolitical and economic relationship. The family partners here in this study meant the countries which intended to construct the European Higher Education and Research Area and this partnership was comparatively more solid and had more resources to employ for developing more diversified forms of collaboration. The competitor partners mainly represented the major English-speaking countries: the US, the UK, Canada, and Australia. The cash partners here concerned those countries which sent their students to France for training or whose institutions accepted the importation of French education programs and the creation of offshore campuses. The last humane partners included the former French colonies, African countries in particular which still needed technical assistance and educational training from French HEIs, and this kind of relationship was more characterized as giver-receiver, which was hardly called bilateral collaboration. Different categories of collaboration showed us that the world system theory still functioned today for understanding the international relations development.



The three levels of collaboration, individual, bilateral and institutional all intended to form a durable partnership which could not only benefit the individual researchers, the research teams but also the whole institutions and even the local communities. However, to develop durable relationship with partners wasn't an easy task to accomplish. The interviewees gave us some unsuccessful examples of their relationships with some partners, and it was also confirmed by the published official information of their partners in the last several years of which very few could last for a very long time. In the interviews, some of the involved academic staff explained the golden rules for sustaining bilateral and institutional collaboration.

First of all, one of the most frequently mentioned rules was reciprocity, and almost all of the academic staff mentioned its importance in developing partnership. On the one hand, reciprocity was represented in terms of bilateral student exchange.

Alors forcément c'est difficile de les faire venir, comme les échanges d'Erasmus sont fondés sur le principe de la réciprocité. Si nous, on peut y envoyer des étudiants mais que l'université partenaire ne peut pas nous envoyer, alors, très vite, le partenariat tombe à l'eau et on ne peut plus envoyer nos étudiants. C'est pour cela qu'il faut que nous fassions des efforts pour les faire venir en leur proposant des formations en anglais. (SSUBOV)

Apparemment, eux, ça ne les dérange pas, ça veut dire que dans la formation, ils n'ont pas obligation de mobilité à l'étranger... Mais c'est très déséquilibré, on le regrette parce qu'on voudrait que les étudiants étrangers puissent venir... (STGECO A)

Exactement, il faut de la réciprocité, c'est le Brésil qui l'a demandé parce qu'au départ il y avait beaucoup de brésiliens qui venaient et peu de français qui y allaient. C'est parce que le Brésil n'est pas forcément une destination qui attire les français de par la langue qui est le portugais. Les étudiants français, notamment des Écoles d'ingénieurs, recherchent des pays anglophones pour travailler l'anglais. Mais petit à petit on est arrivés à envoyer nos étudiants au Brésil maintenant, c'est quelque chose qui fonctionne très bien, au point que l'on a trop d'étudiants par rapport au nombre de... (STGECR K)

Et en échange, parce qu'il y a un échange, pour chaque élève australien qui arrive en France, j'envoie un élève français dans le RMIT, donc le RMIT s'engage à trouver des stages dans leur laboratoire pour mes élèves français. (STGECR R)

We're interested in that (attracting Anglophone students) because we need to keep a balance if we want to send students, we need to receive students... So we try very hard to do that because we know that the relationship could last a few years but if there's no benefit, well, there may be some benefit sometimes when we send our students, they are very good students and if they go and do internship in labs, it's a good profit for our partners.... we have three programs with Latin America, you know the BxxTEC program, so we are very successful, we're one of the most successful networks for BxxTEC program, so we send a lot of students to Brazil and we receive a lot of students from Brazil for this network. (STGECOG)

To keep a comparative balance between the inbound and outbound student mobility was the central message sent in their discourse, although it's not absolutely balanced in terms of quantity. In the relationship with a majority of the partners, the French institutions acted as receivers of foreign students from partner institutions, while the mutual benefits needed to be accomplished in order to sustain the partnership. On the other hand, the economic aspect was also an important dimension to consider. Considering that the exchange students didn't need to pay the tuition in their host institutions and the international students studying in French HEIs got free registration fees, in exchange, the French HEI students needed to get the same benefits from their partners. It could be extremely complicated in the partnership with English-speaking countries because of the high tuition fees charged in these institutions.

Ça devient économiquement très important. Ce qu'il y a aujourd'hui, c'est que beaucoup de programmes européens avec le continent nord-américain s'effondrent parce qu'il n'y a pas de réciprocité. (STUDOS)

...on a des rapports avec le RMIT de Melbourne, on appelle ça a friendship collaboration, ça a facilité nos échanges, on reconnaît que l'on est "amis", donc nous, on accueille gratuitement des élèves du RMIT, aucun n'est venu pour le moment et eux peuvent accueillir nos élèves avec 10% de réduction par semestre, sachant qu'un semestre australien coûte 7000, 8000 dollars, ça fait 5000, 6000 euros, ça ne s'est pas encore fait... (STGECRR)

...because we lost partnership with Ecole polytechnique de Montreal because there was no balance after many years of partnership.... Quantitative because we only received one student from Ecole Polytechnique de Montreal while we sent maybe hundreds of students to them.... The French students didn't have to pay. But now, they are more concerned with money issues so they can't accept a French student at École polytechnique de Montreal if they weren't sure to have one of their students coming here. The students from École polytechnique de Montreal are more interested in going to an English speaking country than going to a French speaking country... (STGECOG)

C'est un programme en suspens pour le moment parce que nous avons du mal à travailler avec les Chiliens parce qu'ils prennent les décisions de façon unilatérale, c'est assez difficile. Il y a eu des problèmes d'organisation pour faire valider des procédures, des accords de coopération et finalement, il y a eu des retournements de situations. (STGECRE)

How to attract more English-speaking country students in order to send more French students out has become a huge challenge for French institutions, which also explained their motivation for developing programs of courses in English.

... nous sommes une École classée A. Il y a un classement : A+, A, B, C et D, on est classé A. On ne va prétendre aller voir des universités très très haut classées, je fais référence au classement de Shanghai, des choses comme ça. On essaie de rester modestes, de se dire "nous sommes là et on va visiter des universités qui sont à peu près au même niveau, on ne peut pas aller visiter des universités qui sont excellentes. Donc dans le choix des universités, on essaie de voir de très bonnes universités qui seraient intéressées par un partenariat avec l'École. (STGECOA)

...l'université de bon niveau qui va nous permettre de nous dire, « nous, SP, nous sommes une École d'excellence ». Si, par exemple, je fais un accord avec une bonne université en Chine, je peux plus dire à mes interlocuteurs que je suis bon. (SSGEARD)

Secondly, besides the reciprocity, the partners should possess comparatively similar academic strength or reputation in the collaboration. As mentioned in the interview, the STGEC was ranked as an A group institution in France, and in the process of initiating the partnership, it intended to look for candidates at its level in another national context. Meanwhile, the partners' academic reputation was considered as an indirect image transmitter for the institution itself. The criterion of excellence was comparatively objective and applied by the

agent of collaboration initiation. Thirdly, developing a successful partnership required mutual respect and understanding in terms of social and cultural aspects.

D'abord, parce qu'il y a une tradition entre la France et le Brésil, dans le sens où beaucoup de professeurs brésiliens, notamment dans le domaine des sciences et technologie de l'information et de la communication, ont fait leur Doctorat en France. Ça peut être à B, Toulouse, Grenoble, Lille, Limoge, Brest. Donc il y a déjà cette attirance pour la France, ils en gardent un excellent souvenir, ils parlent parfaitement français. De plus, la France a la réputation d'avoir un bon niveau sur le plan scientifique. (STGECRK)

The diplomatic impact for the student-ambassadors was well indicated in this discourse. As former students educated in French institutions, these foreign researchers were familiar with the academic and cultural demand and these qualities facilitated the different levels of collaboration between the two institutions. Finally, long-term relationships needed to be active in exchange and engaged to be innovative from both or multiple parties, which required some strategic vision of partnership orientation for long-term mutual benefits.

Ce n'est pas simple parce qu'il faut expliquer à certain pays, quels intérêts il peut y avoir à s'impliquer dans les relations internationales, cela n'a rien de simple. Par contre, cela peut être extrêmement productif, même au niveau financier ; un exemple : avec les États-Unis, un exemple simple, tout ce qui est sciences humaines, humanité, il y a beaucoup d'américains qui voyagent au niveau international. Pour les universités en « humanities », en sciences sociales, j'ai eu un tableau hier, dans les domaines de ce type, vous pouvez voir le taux de 30% à 50% des étudiants qui sont en mobilité ; vous prenez maintenant sciences exactes, « engineering », ça tombe à 3% parce qu'en fait les sciences dures américaines ne voient pas l'utilité de bouger... C'est-à-dire que par exemple, quand vous faites une relation bilatérale entre les sciences « engineering » entre l'Amérique et la France, vous allez avoir plein de Français qui vont aller à l'Amérique et personne qui va aller là-bas. Or comme les études coûtent très cher aux États-Unis, ils ne peuvent pas justifier le fait de ne pas faire venir les Français et il faut justifier le fait de faire venir les Français sans leur payer leur fee si réciproquement, ils n'envoient pas les étudiants américains qui ne paient pas de fee en France. Donc le programme européen s'arrête. Hors, si vous proposez des programmes européens, vous amenez tout le monde, c'est-à-dire, à la fois des humanités, là c'est équilibré parce que là, les États-Unis vont accepter de recevoir beaucoup de Français qui vont venir sans payer parce que vous prenez la partie des étudiants en humanité qui vont aller en France sans payer. Et là, le business plan est bon. (STUDOS)

The collaborative strategies explained by STUDOS, the international office director and researcher in the STUD, showed us the importance of identifying the institution's strength and weakness compared to its partners, and it tried to neutralize its own weakness and maximize the mutual benefits. In the partnership between French institutions with American universities, an enlarged network constructed among multiple French institutions specialized in different disciplines could balance the economic expense in terms of students' tuition fees.

As a result, the French students majoring in science and technology could benefit from the free tuition fees in American universities and American students majoring in social sciences and humanities could enjoy the same right in French institutions.

From different forms of collaboration, different categories of the partnership to some golden rules to follow in the collaboration development, more similarities were identified in these four institutions; however, the preferences of forms of collaboration and profiles of partners were differentiated a bit in the *grandes écoles* and universities, which was closely related to their institutional position and targets.

5.3.2 In practice: how to do marketing advertisement and maintaining relationship

Besides the guidelines mentioned in the previous subsection, this part concentrated on the institutional practices in marketing and relationship maintenance with its partners. The advertising methods, niches for institution promotion, administration management and fund raising were respectively analyzed in the four institutions.

Related to the advertising methods, the two institutions of *grandes écoles* seemed to have more engagement with the targeted institutions or countries in the promotion.

Dans un premier temps, au niveau local, avec des annonces dans les journaux. Parce que l'on a commencé il y a quinze ans, et les salons étudiants, où l'on fait la promotion des cursus, n'existaient pas encore en Allemagne à cette époque-là, c'est assez moderne. Donc, dans un premier temps, c'était dans la presse locale, puis dans la presse nationale, en diffusion auprès des Bacheliers, pour annoncer une filière qui s'ouvre. Et après, très vite, cette université-là, via son site internet, a donné l'information à un public franco-allemand déjà intéressé. Après, nous avons fait de notre côté, des brochures que l'on a envoyées dans les lycées... il y a déjà dix promotions de diplômés, qui sont diplômés depuis un certain temps, et qui font la publicité. On a un réseau des anciens, les associations des anciens. Donc, les candidats aujourd'hui, peuvent prendre des informations qu'ils ne pouvaient pas prendre au début. Au début, on a essayé d'expliquer, ils n'ont pas compris. Maintenant que l'on a les témoignages des anciens, ça va, ils comprennent, on a aussi avec l'insertion professionnelle, un fléchage, on peut dire ;"OK, on peut faire ça avec cette filière". (SSGEARR)

SSGEARR, the coordinator of an international program in the SSGEA, introduced how her institution did its advertisement in its partner country in the interview. As the program was initiated more than ten years ago, the local and national press, university website and brochures used to be the principal tools for dissemination. After years of development, the alumni associations have become the most convincing way of advertisement both for this

program and for the SSGEA. Some researchers also explained how they advertised for their institution STGEC.

We have several ways, one of them, for example is to try to visit our partners and I think that's very important.... So we put efforts in doing and we have all these professors doing research who have contact with the universities, so we try to take advantage of that because they travel a lot, we tell them : "if you travel, please advertise for our school", they do advertise, they have all the material like these presentations, we also have movies... (STGECOG)

Visiting the partners was considered as the most direct way to conduct field research; however, due to the financial expense, it's less expensive and more efficient to make good use of the researches' mobility.

...j'ai une présentation de (STGEC) en anglais, et on fait le tour des universités là-bas. (STGECRK)

...ce que je fais c'est que je rencontre les responsables dont le directeur des relations internationales, le directeur des programmes de stage, le directeur du département électrique et computer science, et j'apprends à connaître les professeurs au fur et à mesure et là, par exemple, au mois d'avril, je vais participer à une journée internationale, donc j'aurai un stand comme l'année dernière où l'on rencontre directement les élèves et aussi, je ferai des présentations pour présenter STGEC. Je l'ai fait l'année dernière aussi, donc présenter STGEC en power point et échanges directs avec les élèves. L'année dernière, on l'avait fait, il n'y a que trois personnes qui sont venues, trois personnes sur 50000 étudiants au RMIT... Le département compte je ne sais combien d'étudiants mais... Pour la publicité, mon but actuellement, c'est faire les accords, instituer les accords, clairement écrits et faire la publicité... (STGECRR)

Moi, je suis allé là-bas, donner une conférence pour ma recherche et j'en ai profité pour visiter les universités. Je suis enseignant-chercheur, donc je pars à l'étranger pour donner des conférences et quand je suis sur place et ça c'est un point que je veux développer aussi, j'en profite pour visiter les partenaires du pays... Je fais une présentation de STGEC, je leur explique exactement comment fonctionne le système éducatif français, les *grandes écoles* et je leur explique comment on se positionne par rapport à l'université, ce qu'on peut leur apporter et ce qu'ils peuvent nous apporter. (STGECOA)

Most researchers voluntarily took the responsibility of doing the advertisement for their institution, visiting the potential partner institution and launching the first contact during their participation in international conferences and on visiting scholarships. The institution introduction in terms of its educational programs, academic strength and demand was indispensable in the advertisement. STGEOG, the international office director in the STGE also evoked some dissemination strategies that he implemented in the promotion.

...there is a presentation on the website.... On B campus, in general, there are big labs, which are not inside of our school. They are outside, there is the computer science lab, and there is

now the national research center in automatics and informatics... great scientific strength..... On YouTube... I made the movie. It's a movie I made with teachers from our school... we invite people. We have a lot of visitors. For instance, this year we have visitors from Australia and from Japan and from South Africa, so we try to welcome them as well as we can and they are very impressed by our laboratories for example... if you search on Google EIRBMMK, you can find our Facebook international account and you also find this You Tube channel. I do some videos of the lectures and usually, the visiting professors agree to put that on you tube so the students who cannot attend can watch it... We do that a lot so you can see how many events we can have and it's a lot of work... (STGECOG)

YouTube videos of the visiting scholars invited into the institution STGEC, website information, the institution Facebook account, all these new media have been well employed to facilitate students' and partners' access to the institution's information and the whole dissemination process has become more vivid.

On the other hand, the two universities in this study have applied comparatively traditional ways to do advertisement.

Je ne fais pas vraiment de publicité, je suis à mon stand et j'ai des rendez-vous avec des universités partenaires que j'ai contactées, des universités avec qui j'aimerais être partenaire, et donc là on se voit. Et quand je suis à mon stand, des gens viennent, posent des questions sur l'IxE, c'est tout, je ne vais pas faire plus de pub... (SSUBOA)

Car nous travaillons beaucoup avec les ambassades de France... D'une part, nous connaissons notre qualité à nous. N'oublions pas que notre objectif, notre raison d'être c'est l'étudiant donc on cherche à donner à l'étudiant le meilleur que nous pouvons nous offrir, afin de donner des cours, des maquettes qui vont en accord avec le marché, afin que l'étudiant puisse avoir les outils nécessaires pour pouvoir réaliser sa vision professionnelle. Ici à la maison, nous sommes entourés de collègues de très bonne qualité. Et à l'étranger, nous réalisons les premiers contacts avec les universités, on va visiter l'université, on va rencontrer les collègues, on va voir sur place l'établissement... Lorsque l'on arrive dans un pays, la première chose que nous faisons c'est de demander un rendez-vous avec l'ambassadeur et avec le service chargé des aspects culturels et de l'enseignement. (SSUBRA)

On participe à certains salons à l'étranger, notamment dans la région de Palcan, pour inviter des étudiants de l'Europe de l'Est, par exemple, à venir chez nous pour étudier. On essaie parallèlement d'envoyer des étudiants français là-bas parce que c'est toujours enrichissant de découvrir d'autres méthodes de travail, d'autres universités. On fait un effort particulier en faveur de ces pays-là parce que les pays de l'Est ont toujours eu la réputation en France de ne pas avoir un système éducatif de très bon niveau. (SSUBOV)

Working with the official agencies, like Campus France or French embassies, participation in student salons overseas and some consortiums were the most used methods for the universities to advertise their educational programs and institutional promotion. Meanwhile, although the researchers' activities of marketing for their institutions were not mentioned in detail by the interviewees, we assumed that they conducted similar activities as their peers in the two *grandes écoles*.

In the advertising activities, in particular the presentation of the institutions, one common point was identified based on the interviewees' discourse in four institutions: the niche of the geographical card.

La situation géographique, c'est un des points, ce n'est pas le plus important, vous savez, l'important c'est la motivation qu'ils vont y trouver. Le fait que l'on soit proches des Pyrénées, proches de l'Océan, qu'il fasse beau, qu'on ait un climat plutôt agréable, qu'on ait une ville aussi agréable, la proximité des résidences universitaires, c'est pratique pour les élèves, on a des facilités au niveau des restaurants universitaires, on a des facilités au niveau des transports, on a le tramway qui en un 1/4 d'heure, vous emmène au centre-ville de B. Le fait que B ne soit pas très loin de l'UNESCO. Ça fait partie des choses à mettre en avant, ça, c'est un critère. Après, on fait de la publicité par rapport au type de formation que l'on propose... il y a un Bassin industriel qui est intéressant même si l'économie tourne beaucoup autour du vin, il y a beaucoup de choses qui se font autour de l'espace, l'aéronautique, l'électronique, et puis il y a de petites boîtes autour de B, l'informatique notamment. Donc on leur fait de la publicité par rapport à cela... Grosso modo, c'est la formation, le type de stage qu'ils pourront faire, le lieu où ils habiteront, les facilités, la façon dont ils vont vivre au quotidien, c'est à peu près ce sur quoi l'on communique. Et puis aussi le nombre d'étudiants que l'on a déjà reçus... (STGECRK)

Nous avons fait des présentations aux étudiants, power point... : la notoriété de la ville de Bordeaux, l'art de vivre. Nous avons des établissements très similaires, dans le réseau Ampère, il faut donc essayer de trouver autre chose, une fois que l'on a dit : "nous faisons de l'électronique, nous avons des laboratoires de recherche". Ce n'est peut-être pas dans notre culture de se comparer scientifiquement aux autres Écoles, ce serait politiquement incorrect, lorsque l'on fait une présentation dans une université argentine, nous passons tous les uns après les autres pour présenter et si l'on commence à dire "on est les meilleurs", ce n'est pas très fair play, donc on ne joue pas la carte de la comparaison scientifique, on essaie de vendre autre chose. (STGECRE)

Je le fais déjà, j'ai une présentation que je donne.... Je ne présente jamais le côté enseignement, c'est absurde puisque c'est la même chose, il concerne la même chose, sauf que c'est en français. Ce que je vends toujours, c'est le Sud-Ouest de la France : B, la gastronomie, la plage et les montagnes. (STGECRR)

D'autres sujets se prêtent également aux échanges et surtout B, sa région, son vin, la mer, le Bassin d'Arcachon, les Pyrénées à 2 heures de route. Nous sommes dans une région où il fait bon vivre. (STUDOL)

Educational programs' presentation and large academic and professional networking could be very attractive for foreign partners and students; however, they needed time to understand all the formal information. Therefore, for advertising, it's more efficient to create some direct and striking image for potential institutions or persons of interest. For example, living and study conditions sometimes played a more important role in students' choice than the academic reputation, particularly in the situation when students couldn't get fully informed about the educational programs or the academic strength in the institutions. Moreover, for the institutions in the same group specializing in similar disciplines, sometimes it's difficult to

explain to foreign partners the differentiation from its national peers. Thus most academic staff have built the consensus that when advertising they preferred to attract the partner institutions and students by using their unique niche, which in this study included the climate, food culture, nature and the developed industry network. The international students actually responded well to this strategy in the interviews, which is discussed in the next chapter.

Once the advertising terminates, collaboration entered the administration processing. Some differences were clearly identified in the two groups of institutions related to this process. Due to the larger size and strict hierarchical system, the partnership started from a different entrance point and went through different procedures. A general observation showed that the processing could be very long in the universities but comparatively shorter in the grandes écoles.

Nous adressons le texte au Ministère de l'Enseignement supérieur et de la Recherche. Passé un délai de 3 mois, sans observation de leur part, nous pouvons faire signer cet accord de coopération par notre Président. Il passe également pour information au Conseil d'Administration de (STUD). A noter que le Ministère de l'Enseignement supérieur informe le Ministère des Affaires étrangères et européennes afin que le poste diplomatique du pays concerné par cet accord soit informé également..... (STUDOL)

STUDOL, international office administration directors, generalized that to pass an agreement between two institutions needed at least three months in the STUD because the agreement had to be approved by the authorities at the national level and committees at the institutional level. The international office director in the SSGEA highly criticized this hierarchical working method.

A SSGEA, tout se sait, c'est dans le couloir, les politiques à SSGEA se décident dans les couloirs quand on rencontre et on se voit, on va parler, personne ne pourra pas faire quelques choses sans que ça se sache. Voilà, donc, on a ce caractère. On le tient beaucoup à SSGEA cette part informelle mais de réactivité, on est très réactif, on n'attend pas, si quelqu'un veut, un partenariat qui attend la réponse, il va venir me voir, je l'en parle au directeur, ça va pas prendre 3 mois de passer par un comité, je ne sais pas quoi, un second comité, je ne sais pas quoi, ça tue tout, toutes les initiatives. Dire, qu'on a des stratégies dans le sens où il aurait différentes autorités qui valident les choix, etc., c'est faux parce que concrètement, si vous observiez, vous verriez que ça ne répond à aucune logique, il y a un conseil scientifique, il y a un conseil de direction à SPB. Bien sûr, ce sont des organes importantes qui vont parler des choses qu'on va échanger, mais principalement les choses à faire de manière informelle. (SSGEAOR)

He expressed his appreciation of the transparency and efficiency of how the administration works in his institution. The initiatives came from the bottom, his colleagues, and were

discussed directly with the office and person in charge. Regardless of the size of the functioning administration system, the type of collaboration also had an impact on the processing procedures.

C'était aussi pour un stage et la première convention que l'on a signée, peut-être en 2005, elle a été renouvelée récemment, c'est-à-dire il y a deux ans. Il y a deux ans, on a étendu la convention au semestre académique. Et l'année dernière il y a un étudiant qui est allé faire un semestre académique en Afrique du Sud. (STGECO A)

...it's just that over the years we had had both ways of working, depending on the partners but we find that the most effective strategy was often to initiate exchanges before developing the agreements. We don't want to see the agreements as an absolute prerequisite and an agreement shouldn't be there to prevent you from doing things. It's not meant to be complex, if it's too complex, then if you try to decide everything in advance, it doesn't work. You have to make it as open and flexible as possible. I always say: write the minimum in the agreement to leave it open. (STGECOG)

... au début, ça se fait entre personnes qui se connaissent, avec des petits programmes désordonnés, c'est plutôt du point par point on va dire, d'une université à l'autre et puis, il y a tellement d'échanges, peut-être que ça peut devenir un programme bilatéral on pourrait dire... (STGECRR)

As mentioned by the two international office directors in the STGEC, the agreement should facilitate the collaboration process instead of blocking it, and the past unsuccessful experience with partners made them realize the necessity of the adaptability and the flexibility in the collaboration between institutions. The trial experience starting from student internship contracts or similar small scales of programs could be considered as tests for future possibilities of collaboration. The explanation of this comparative simplicity in administration procedure comes from the high level of autonomy in the groups of *grandes écoles*.

Donc, si vous voulez, les relations internationales, quand vous dite que l'on doit identifier des partenaires, c'est pour identifier des gens qui ont envie de s'engager dans les perspectives à très long terme. (STUDOS)

Le rendre durable, c'est envoyer des étudiants, que ça se passe bien avec des étudiants de qualité et le plus important pour moi c'est d'aller rencontrer le gens, c'est-à-dire que régulièrement, il faut aller dans le pays, rencontrer les gens, leur expliquer comment a évolué l'École, comment elle se positionne par rapport à eux, ce que l'on souhaite faire par la suite, par exemple, faire évoluer les conventions, des choses comme ça, donc avant d'être directeur des relations internationales, tous les ans, je demandais la possibilité d'aller au Japon pour rencontrer les partenaires, si possible d'aller aussi en Corée du Sud, d'aller aussi en Afrique du Sud de temps en temps, etc. (STGECO A)

As indicated the partnership in higher education definition (Kinser & Green, 2009), participants, projects, objectives, resources, responsibility and accountability were considered as fundamental components in the partnership in which the participants have played decisive roles in the whole collaboration process. Developing a long-term partnership didn't end with all the previous procedures but started with identifying the partners, meeting, visiting and trial experiences of collaboration, and all of these were prepared for a real durable relationship building. The whole process took time and energy from both parties in terms of interactivity and engagement.

Quand nous avons des évolutions à l'École, on leur présente les nouvelles évolutions, ensuite, si la convention arrive bientôt à échéance, on peut leur proposer de renouveler la convention et d'inclure d'autres options qu'on n'avait pas incluses au départ. Quand on fait un partenariat au départ, on part sans convention, on envoie un étudiant... Pour tester, pour voir si l'université est contente de ce que fait l'étudiant en stage et si ça leur plaît, après, on peut faire une convention. Alors, ça prend deux ans, trois ans, ce n'est pas immédiat, ça prend du temps. (STGECOIA)

Il y a des partenaires avec qui j'ai des relations par mail ou par téléphone pratiquement toutes les semaines, et il y en a d'autres avec qui c'est beaucoup moins fréquent, soit parce qu'il y a moins de demandes, soit parce qu'ils ne nous ont envoyé personne et nous n'avons envoyé personne non plus cette année, ça peut être ça tout simplement. Mais ça peut aussi être parce que l'on n'a pas de programme vraiment concret avec eux à part le simple accord d'échange d'étudiants. (SSUBOA)

The maintaining of partnership needed to be considered as a daily job and the phone calls and email contacts were the basic tools for informing and being informed about the recent reform or changes in the institution. Time, mutual respect and quality assurance were all the elementary criteria to test the durability of the partnership, which was valued both in *grandes écoles* and universities.

One last small point that we noticed in the data analysis was related to the funding resource for different institutions' international collaboration development. Regardless of the difference created by the disciplines, the researchers in the *grandes écoles* seemed to have more opportunities to fund their mobility overseas and bring in programs or students with their funding, which definitely made the partnership processing paths' smoother to continue. The universities preferred to take advantage of applying for European programs or projects in order to get general funds from the EU and a small part of funding from local authorities.

5.3.3 Missing leadership of international office in developing international education for both groups of institutions

The word 'leadership' did appear in the interviews several times and it made us wonder if there's a French version for this word. The answer was no because the interviewees employed this English word directly and this concept wasn't actually well developed in the interviews. The role and mission of the international office has been elaborated in the previous chapter and according to the interviewees' discourse, we could conclude that the office was more directed to the mobility of students and faculties and cooperation inside the European programs. The influence of the international office has been increased with the development of the internationalization of higher education. As evoked by the interviewees, the composition of the bureau varied from 3 to 10 people (the director excluded). Among the four institutions selected for this study, the universities had more personnel in their international office compared to the two *grandes écoles*. With the expansion of the international office and international education and collaboration, the director of the office has become more involved in the strategic development of the institutions. In the two universities SSUB and STUD, the director of the international office was also entitled as the deputy vice president in charge of international relation development, which implied the increasing importance of international education in these universities. The missions of the bureau were well divided into several small sections for the staff. However, in the two *grandes écoles*, fewer personnel were engaged in the bureau: three for SSGEA, two STGEC. As the director of the international office SSGEOR said, the full-time position has been created quite recently and it used to be a part-time mission voluntarily shouldered by a researcher-teacher in this institution. The comparatively lower human resource investment in the office has limited the institution's engagement in large collaborative projects.

Après, les SP en France, les *grandes écoles*, elles ont aussi des défis à relever, je crois. Elles ne se comportent pas de la même façon que les universités à l'international. Mais les universités ont mis en place aujourd'hui des bureaux Europe, par exemple : elles ont appris à gérer des programmes européens dans lesquels il y a beaucoup de partenaires qui, du point de vue des suivis administratifs, demandent beaucoup de travail, beaucoup de personnel. A SSGEA, on reste très limité. (SSGEAOR)

In the interviews, the director leadership could be traced to the question of rationales for internationalization in the institution and the priority of geographical partnership.

Et puis à SSGEA, on est dans une structure dans laquelle les individus jouent un rôle important, si vous êtes avec quelqu'un qui est le moteur. Nous, on a un directeur, qui est dans la carrière, c'est un directeur de recherche, directeur de SSGEA, il est très internationalisé. Il a créé un poste de directeur des RI, il veut que l'on fasse des choses internationales. Il parle très bien l'anglais, c'est aussi une volonté très forte de l'individu de mettre ne place de choses. (SSGEAOR)

La priorité, honnêtement, ça va être les États-Unis, parce qu'on a un directeur qui est pro États-Unis... (SSUBOA)

C'est très important parce que ça peut soit aider, soit freiner et quand ça freine, c'est vraiment un obstacle. Dans tout ce qui est relation internationale, il faut être ouvert et discuter avec les gens... (STUDRS)

The 'director' was considered as the driving force and steersman for the internationalization and the orientation for international collaboration development. As mentioned by the above interviewees, due to the director's strong personal interest and professional vision, the international office was created in the SSGEA and the SSUB's priority was to initiate and develop the partnership with American institutions. During the interview with another researcher in the institution STUD, he told me that since the former international office director considered China to be the priority for partnership, the other international programs initiated by the researchers with other countries were blocked. Identifying the strength and grasping the opportunities required more visions, skills and judgment from the 'leaders'. Successful leaders all had their shared merits and were capable of adapting their management based on the institution's individual situation at different phases of internationalization.

The process of leadership in international relations needed to deal with four kinds of relationships: supervisor-subordinate, colleague-colleague inside the institution, colleague-colleague at the regional or national level and colleague-colleague at the international level. On the basis of the leadership theory, the transactional relationship indicated that the relationship between supervisor and subordinate was like a transaction between "leader and follower, often entailing a focus on incentives such as promotions or other recognition for good work." (Heyl & Tullbane 2012, p.114) Transformational leadership implied a more interactive leader-follower relationship, and the leaders were capable of the engaging the followers in an idea which motivates the followers and maximizes their potentials. The positive reciprocity between the two parties in this relationship could be productive, efficient and creative (ibid, p.114). During the interviews, the staffs in the international office in the universities seemed to be more passive and waiting for orders from the top. As mentioned by STUDOS, the international office director in the STUD, he had visions of how to develop a

long-term durable relationship with certain partners but not all of his peers could understand it or put it into practice. A lack of internal communication was a fact that the interviewees admitted in the interviews, through which we could conclude that the leadership here was far from being transformational and we might barely use the term transactional leadership to describe it. In the group of *grandes écoles*, the ambiance was more collegial.

We have developed a team of what we call geographic coordinators. We're covering most of the areas of the world and usually, the idea is that someone who is involved in research contacts with some country and is often traveling to that country, is very interesting for the development of the relations with that country. These people aren't really paid for doing this, they're volunteering. Sometimes, they get some help because sometimes the school may pay for traveling, but sometimes, they do it on their own research contract money...

we do share it with staff here because mobility doesn't only involve the three people in this office. It involves a lot of people, for example, the geographic coordinators, also the department coordinators, and there are pedagogical issues which we don't deal with. If you send someone to do some studies, the learning agreement has to be validated by the professors and this is not the responsibility of the international team... So we need to have a lot of interaction between the pedagogical team and the international team... (STGECOG)

Voluntary participation from the followers and the willingness of leaders to involve all the related colleagues and be open for listening and cooperation have created the vivacity for working. The followers didn't intend to get promotion or economic benefits from these activities but were mainly motivated by their agreement with the ideas of their leaders.

Besides the internal relationship with their colleagues, being the 'leaders' in the international relations development required have a diplomatic and cross-cultural understanding of the target institutions or countries.

...il n'y a pas de stages au Japon, très très peu, le stage en entreprise au Japon, pour découvrir l'entreprise, c'est deux semaines, donc l'étudiant est dans un service, il va être rattaché à une personne... Dans un même pays, il y a des différences d'une université à l'autre. Au Japon, c'est très structuré, c'est très carré, la Corée du Sud, ça peut aller beaucoup plus vite, et la Nouvelle-Zélande, ça traîne un petit peu. (STGECO)

A : Quels sont les avantages pour être coordinateur de ce programme ?
B : La connaissance du russe... Je parle russe, je suis déjà en Russie, j'ai fait de la collaboration universitaire, j'ai vécu une année dans une université russe en tant qu'étudiante, j'ai travaillé deux ans dans une université russe à Saint-Pétersbourg en tant que coordinatrice d'un programme de coopération avec la France et la Russie, donc voilà, j'ai une connaissance des acteurs institutionnels de ce secteur. (SSGEARDF)

Global collaboration should be initiated on the basis of win-win objectives. Identifying well the mutual needs of the parties was the basis for launching the negotiation and to understand well the partner's needs, the leaders had to put the institution into its own social cultural and economic context. In the two *grandes écoles*, the program coordinators usually have had study or living experience in the targeted countries and their knowledge could be very helpful both in the initiation and collaboration processing. This advantage could help the institutions avoid some misunderstandings, particularly cultural. However, the cultural awareness was just the very beginning of a successful communication and more information needs to be obtained in terms of degree structures, regional alignments, assessment and funding patterns, etc. (De Wit 2009, quoted by Heyl & Tullbane 2012, p.118)

The analysis in this chapter was conducted by following the positioning, targeting and operating phases of institutional branding in the international context. The three phases were not linear but cyclical. Identity and networking management were the starting point of this branding process and had an decisive impact on the following targeting and operating procedures; however, the procedures should also be adaptive to feedback considering the institution was always in the process of change for meeting new missions and objectives. Education, research and employment were the elements which distinguished the universities from the *grandes écoles*. In terms of education, the entrance selection, curriculum design and educational goals characterized the identity of the institution and predefined the targeted population and institutions in the international context. In terms of research, the leading role of the researchers was obviously observed in the branding, and their personal and professional networks were the main resources for international collaboration development in the institution. Nevertheless, how their initiatives have been taken and implemented showed some differentiation in the four institutions. In terms of employment, larger professional networks and a better reputation in the labor market have provided the graduates from the *grandes écoles* with more opportunities both at national and international levels. Some strategy is needed to learn how to send all these messages to the foreign institutions and international students. Several types of collaboration at different scales have been identified in the analysis and the preference of forms and partners and the collaboration rules differentiated the *grandes écoles* from the universities in this study.

Chapter 6 International student recruitment: from pooling resources to service provision

The previous chapter focused on how two groups of institutions did their branding in the international context and as a result, the standardized brand strategy was employed in all both groups. Nevertheless, we could see the brand created and developed in the national market for each group was the major element to make the distinction. This chapter dealt with the concrete research question of international student recruitment, which was also the starting point of interest for this doctoral thesis. The first section responded to the question of how the recruitment process really functioned in the two groups of institution from a comparative perspective and the analysis included pooling resources, selection & admission and service provision. In the second section, the recruitment process was reviewed from the students' experience to give better orientation for the future moves. The last section went back to the most elementary and complicate question of international student recruitment rationales in two groups of institutions.

6.1 Recruitment model: program & institution oriented

An effective and efficient recruitment needed both attitude and approach from all the involved stakeholders inside the institutions and partners' in its networks. This section tried to identify the models employed in the four institutions by examining the present recruitment procedures of all the enrolled international student population. From the literature review to the conceptual framework building, we found the studies on this subject barely existed. As we couldn't verify the reasons, we just assumed that on the one hand, international student recruitment was more like a passive reception in the French public HEIs just as elaborated in the previously quoted discourse; which was the institutions have actually no intention to attract more international students considering the overpopulated learning groups and lacking of human resources. On the other hand, the question of recruitment seemed so evident to see and there's no academic value to further the study on it. To sum up, lack of positive attitude toward this issue has resulted in fewer examples, which made it less valued in the whole national context. On the contrary, we found many research works on this question in major English-speaking countries. One major explanation for this difference might lie in the fact that international students had to pay very expensive tuition fees in these countries and with the undercutting financial support for higher education and the increasing growth of the

international mobile students, the recruitment has raised more attention from the institutions and in countries like UK, USA and Australia, it has become more like a professional business. The term ‘professionalism’ was far less appropriate to describe the situation of international student recruitment in French higher education institutions. However, we could still identify some evolving changes and the creation of the international office could be one of them. Moreover during the last decades, with the constantly growth of the Asian students, mostly from China and South Korea, some ‘facilities’ have been provided from French HEIs to facilitate these non-French-speaking students’ study in France (English-teaching programs excluded). The first one was the study pathway, i.e. intensive French learning courses for those who didn’t have enough linguistic level to integrate directly in the academic studies in French HEIs. The second was the agents’ networking, mainly professional recruitment agencies for potential university candidates and *grandes écoles* networks, engineering schools in particular for candidates from some Asian sending countries. One point in common, for these candidates who came to France through these agencies, the first thing was to take French lessons. The last observation was the articulation arrangements, such as the 2+3 programs, which meant the students had two years’ programs in their home institutions and with the credits acquired, they could start their study from certain level in the host institutions, universities in particular. These strategic moves haven’t turned into an organized system in all the institutions and the quality control wasn’t well assured. In this section, we intended to find the answers to the following questions: who were the resources, how were they selected and what kind of service were they provided with.

6.1.1 Pooling resources

In this study, 19 interviews were conducted with international students in the four selected institutions. The analysis started with the question of their rationales of the institution choice on the basis of different groups of institutions and programs in which the students have registered. Their answers to this question helped the institutions to better understand who could be the applicants in the pool and how to convert the applicants to the enrolled students. Then the analysis continued with the limited resource collected from the interviews about the students’ family situations and identifies the role of the financial aid in the different programs and different groups of institutions.

In the SSGEA five student interviewees had different nationalities: Colombian, German, Russian, Barbadian and Chinese and come from different programs: Erasmus, joint degree program (France-Germany), double master degree program (France-Russia), joint degree program (France-Caribbean), Inter-university exchange (France-China). The study duration for all of them was one-year and for three of them, it was the first time stay in this institution and two others were here for the second time. With regard to their personal information, I noticed that their home institutions were all very privileged universities at national or even international level. All of them had very good academic records, fans of travelling, language learning; and three out of five have already had mobility experience before their enrollment in the host institution. Four out of five declared that they got partially financial support from their family. Although I didn't ask them about the family revenue, I could still tell from their parents' professions that they were from middle-class families. The only one who didn't tell me about her family information was a scholarship holder with excellent academic records. Their profiles corresponded exactly to the portrait of elitist. Meanwhile it followed also the cliché indicated in a lot of research work on the social classes of French students recruited in *grandes écoles*, which meant they were both academic and social elites to some extent. Moreover, student mobility demanded two more important factors, open mind and language skills. With regard to the choice of host institution and country, we noticed that the French culture and the ecological situation of the host city played important roles in their decisions, which implied that the institutions' branding card had been well played. Meanwhile three out of five mentioned that their friends who used to be in the program recommended the institution and the city for them. For some, this was a chance for seeing and living in two systems and this experience could be very helpful for their future career. For some, it's a great chance to practice and improve their French. The interviewees' discourses have confirmed some important factors identified in the previous research works and official reports to influence the choice of student mobility, such as the culture aspect and the host city's geographical and ecological situations. Meanwhile, we couldn't deny the linguistic factor and students' personal or family network in their mobility choice. Thus, the French language and culture promotion needed to be enlarged in the international level to create a large pool for applicants.

In the SSUB, unlike the other groups of interviewees, we got these contacts "randomly" around their classroom or in the cafeteria. Among these 5 students, three were free-movers; one was from a not-so-well-structured inter-universities collaboration program and the last

one was an Erasmus student for a one-year mobility program. Five students majored in European business management (equivalent to Master 1 level, English-teaching program) and French law (for the Erasmus student). Except for the Erasmus student, the four others had to pay for the tuition fees for more than 2000 euros and according to their response to this price, they all felt it was quite acceptable and less expensive than the same type of formation in other countries. Thus we could conclude that their family situations were well-off enough to pay for this price and their views towards the tuition fees also were related to the fees they paid for their previous formation and the particularities of majoring in business management. Meanwhile, when I asked why they hadn't applied for some French business schools, they showed their concern about the price, which also confirmed the medium level of financial situation of their families. Compared with the other program students in my interviews, these free movers' academic records weren't that impressive. But we could feel their strong personal desire for the mobility and their gratitude for having obtained the chances to make their dream come true. Most free movers met some difficulties in continuing their study in their home country, such as academic records, economic development situation, etc. They had no clear ideas about the quality of host training programs or the reputation of host institution. The only important thing for them was living this experience and trying to find new opportunities during the mobility. This observation confirmed that with the development of information and communication technology and international transports, more and more families could afford to send their children abroad to live another experience, even if they were not very rich. With regard to their choice of the host institution and country, the Erasmus student has chosen France as host country on the basis of his major French-English law and it was really a great opportunity for him to get an authentic professional training in France. He liked the climate, culture, agronomy and environment in the city and most importantly, he has got some recommendation from former mobility students in his home institution. For others, it was more like a choice after a comparison of price and living environment. All four EBA majors all spent some time learning French before their arrival, which showed their interest in French and French culture. However, when they started searching for master programs in business management, one of the key words was English-teaching programs. As elaborated in all case studies, the ecological situation of host city and the word of mouth information delivery in the personal social networks have played very important role in students' decisions. Meanwhile, we noticed that more and more students have also done "maths" of living and study expenses before making their decision. For all four EBA students, they were more attracted by the English-teaching program than the host institution, which showed us

again the importance for the host French institutions to develop some programs in English to attract more different profiles of students.

In the STGEC, five students had different nationalities: Greek, Moroccans, Brazilian and Chinese, and come from different programs: Erasmus (six months), diploma-oriented recruitment by national concours, inter-institutional program exchange (a year), inter-national exchange program, diploma-oriented recruited by document application. Considering the different nature of their recruitment, their study duration in the host institution varied from six months to three years. By the moment of the interviews, four out of five have been staying in France for less than a year. This group of student interviewees could also be divided into two sub-groups: one subgroup had full knowledge of the host institution and the whole system of *grandes écoles* and universities; while the other had no clear knowledge. With regard to their personal information, all of them have survived very competitive exams after high school and entered very good universities or institutions. They were all very good even excellent students at their majors and from at least middle average families. Three out of five came from engineering schools, one from prepas and one from university of science and technology. Three out of five, their parents graduated from engineering schools. Among all these five students, three are financially fully supported by parents, one institution scholarship holder and one government scholarship holder. If we compared the profiles of the international student interviewees in this institution with their local peers, we could easily find the match: competitive selection survivor, excellent academic scores, middle class family status. Here we had to mention the nuance of the same term “middle class” at their home countries and In France. We couldn’t ignore the income gap between the two countries, particularly for those students from the developing countries. That’s also the reason why even if the French higher education doesn’t cost much; it’s not a gift which could be afforded for every international student. It surprised me a little bit when the interviewees told me their parents’ education backgrounds. The fact that some of their parents graduated from engineering schools or elites schools indicated that some interviewees could be heirs of family heritage and their parents took all efforts to create the best conditions for their children’s education. With regard to their choice of institution and country, three representative reasons were evoked by the interviewees: geographic situation, family or friends’ network and low study cost. For two Morocco students, studying in a French engineer school was their goal since high school, particularly when they had their families in France or even the host city. For the two program students, they did check the city on the google and the institution information including

majors and rankings. For the Chinese student, it's a choice based on the money her family could offer. It confirmed again the aspects published on official reports but most of the students here also mentioned the consistency of the majors and courses that they had to take in the host institution valued in their decision. This was distinct from students majoring in social sciences. They showed examples based on their own experience how difficult it could be if so many differences existed in course design between their home and host institutions.

In the STUD, among these four interviewees, two were Erasmus Mundus students (Iranian and Vietnamese) and one was from an International Master program (French). All three students needed to accomplish two years' postgraduate program in at least two European countries and were partially scholarship holders. Only one interviewee (Senegalese) in this institution was a free-mover for degree mobility. Two students got English-teaching courses, which were considered directly as a French move to internationalizing institutional formation. With regard to their personal information, I didn't ask the question of their family situation very precisely for the fact that two of them were scholarship holders. Three of them graduated from privileged institutions in their home countries. The profiles of the program students surprised me a little, particularly the two students in the Erasmus Mundus program with very good academic records and I could even feel their pride in their previous study experience during the interview. Their profiles were consistent with the elite students recruited in *grandes écoles*; however, lacking of knowledge of the French engineering schools and basic French level has made a difference. With regard to the choice of the host country and city, we noticed that for the program students, they were more attracted by the Europe formation and the good reputation of their host country in their study fields. The Iranian student came to France because the advanced academic level of French researchers in mathematics; while the Vietnamese student chose France as host country without any previous knowledge about the host institution and he was more motivated by the presence of large amount of Vietnamese students in the city. Above all these elements, the English-teaching course has become the utmost factor for their consideration. However, the free-mover student had a very clear idea of the host country instead of the host city. The interviewees' experience confirmed again the importance of the academic strength of host country and relationship developed between France and sending countries. The good image of France or French institutions could be produced either from the historical relationship (with its former colonies) between countries or from the strong academic relations constructed by researchers in two countries. There's one common element among all these interviewees: they all got their Bachelor degree before

getting recruited in either the European program or a French university. They could easily get in the candidates pooling once they got the profile and there's no strict partnership between host institution and the institution where they graduated.

To sum up, there's a continuance of stereotype of student recruited in the group of *grandes écoles*: strong academic records, survivors of entrance selection either at host institution or at their home situation, from middle-class families or with scholarships with comparatively larger dreams for their careers. In the group of universities, the interviewees didn't mention much about their academic records, except for the Erasmus Mundus students and International Master Program student. The students enrolled in the SSUB are economically privileged that those in the STUD and their nationalities also showed some differences in these two universities. The result was consistent with the previous studies which indicated that most African students chose to study in the field of science and technology and students from Asia or other European countries preferred the field of social science. One common point was strong marked in the group of free-movers and they all showed strong desire to come to France and strong interest in French language and French culture, although they didn't actually have a clear future plan.

In this study, the statistics related to all the international students in the four institutions had been expected to be helpful for resource analysis. Unfortunately three out of the four institutions refused to provide us with their official records, except for the SSUB.

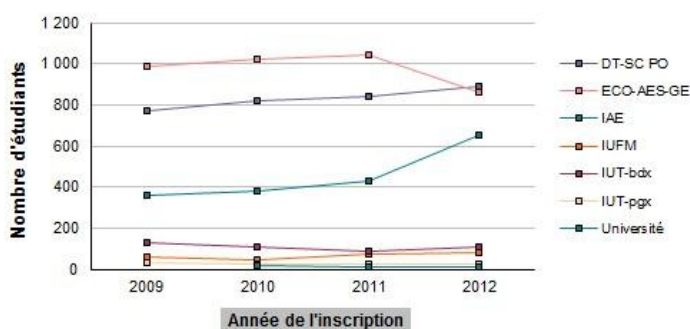
Donc, imaginez, on a mille huit cent étudiants, en quatre ans. On est passé de mille quatre cent à mille huit cent. (SSUBOV)

Table 9 international students in the SSUB: degree programs & study fields 2009-2012

Périmètre :

Nombre d'étudiants, inscriptions
premières
de nationalité étrangère

Composante	2009	2010	2011	2012
DT-SC PO	770	818	839	889
ECO-AES-GE	988	1 023	1 040	862
IAE	361	382	430	654
IUFM	59	46	71	77
IUT-bdx	128	110	90	106
IUT-pgx	34	22	27	25
Université		14	11	13
Somme :	2 340	2 415	2 508	2 626



Cursus LMD	2009	2010	2011	2012
Licence	722	711	783	877
Master	941	1 041	1 008	974
Doctorat	271	240	232	236
Hors LMD	406	423	485	539
Somme :	2 340	2 415	2 508	2 626

Formation délocalisé	2009	2010	2011	2012
délocalisé	495	583	577	475
	1 845	1 832	1 931	2 151
Somme :	2 340	2 415	2 508	2 626

Programme d'échan	2009	2010	2011	2012
non	2 131	2 207	2 322	2 433
oui	209	208	186	193
Somme :	2 340	2 415	2 508	2 626

(Source: SSUB)

SSUBOV, international office director in the SSUB informed us during the last four years, the number of the students registered in the institution has increased from 14000 to 18000. From the official statistics, we could see that the number of the international students remained comparatively stable from 2009 to 2012 with a slight increase. The exchange students have only occupied a very small proportion of the total international population, 209 out of 2340 in 2009, 208 out of 2415 in 2010, 186 out of 2508 in 2011 and 193 out of 2626 in 2012.

Table 10: Top 7 international student nationalities in the SSUB

nation	2009	2010	2011	2012
Morocco	356	330	308	328
Senegal	175	158	147	155
China	138	119	111	140
Ivory Coast	70	83	87	118

Iran	68	82	131	110
Madagascar	81	88	102	109
Belarus	70	81	84	92

As indicated in the above table, the top 8 countries were Morocco, Senegal, China, Ivory Coast, Iran, Madagascar and Belarus and the top three corresponded to the national statistics of the top nationalities of international students in France. The percentage of the students from Morocco and Senegal in the total students from the top 8 countries reached to 46%. Among all the international students, the large majority of the populations were free-movers without scholarship, which meant the institutions should pay more attention to the financial aid to support these students for succeeding in their study. Meanwhile, the increasing number of Chinese and Iranian students, on the one hand, has proved the successful institution promotion in the international markets and on the other hand, it demanded more service from the institution in terms of linguistic aid and intercultural understanding.

Ce qui fait que l'on estime qu'à SSGEA, on a environ deux cent cinquante étudiants étrangers dont deux cent cinquante sur les mille deux cent, comptant les doctorants et ceux qui préparent les concours administratifs etc. (SSGEAOR)

Although the SSGEA didn't give us the official statistics, the international office director mentioned the institution recently hosted about 250 international students out of the total population of 1200, including the PhD students and students registering for national administration exams. Among these 250 students there were barely free-movers, which showed the applicant pool for this small *grande école* was very limited and the applicants could only come from the institution's international partners.

Lacking of the statistics, we couldn't generalize these analysis results but the pooling resource was definitely conducted in a smaller scale for the group of *grandes écoles* than for the universities. Moreover, considering that the very few free-movers existed in the group of *grandes écoles*, if the institutions wanted to enroll more international students, they should enlarge their international partner network. Meanwhile, we noticed that with the development of selective international programs in the universities and tuition fee charged English-teaching

programs, both the cash cows and the Einsteins could choose universities instead of the *grandes écoles*.

6.1.2 Selection & Admission

This subsection tried to find the answers for two questions on the basis of the interviewees' experience: who does the selection and what are the criteria. The analysis approach was to confront the responses of the institution staffs and those of the student interviewees' and to identify the patterns in the two groups of institutions on the basis of the different groups of students: Erasmus, Erasmus Mundus, institutional exchange and free-movers.

Among the 19 student interviewees, three of them were from Erasmus program in each selected institution except for the STUD.

Effectively when we were in Kent, we were asked which university we would like to go. We sort of got automatically our choice. We chose the university that we want to go and we are almost guaranteed. We need to pass a French law and we need to get minimum 50% to come here in the first place. (SSUBSO)

D'abord, j'ai fait une demande dans mon École en Grèce, et après, ils choisissent des personnes... Ça dépend des diplômes que tu as en anglais et en français pour pouvoir communiquer et les cours que tu as réussis, si tu étudies beaucoup, tu gagnes des points, et après tu écris une lettre de motivation.... Non, il n'y a pas beaucoup de compétition pour faire ERASMUS parce que l'École d'ingénieurs c'est très difficile, pour moi, le semestre que j'ai passé ici, c'est un semestre perdu en Grèce parce que tous les cours que je veux faire ici ne sont pas validés en Grèce, on a des cours différents, donc ce n'est pas validé et c'est un semestre perdu... (STGECSA)

I only have two: letter of application to explain why I am interested and then, by your academic average, they look if you're able or not able and also, you have to have an interview with the teacher who proposes the exchange... Actually, it's very easy because they make a linguistic exam that is easy because you only have to reach A1 or A2, I don't really remember but it was very easy to pass that level... (SSGEASC)

From the three students' experience, we noticed that for the Erasmus student who chose to study in the university SSUB, he was almost assured of his choice of university and the only test was very symbolic. For the two students in the *grandes écoles* SSGEA & STGEC, the procedures seemed more complex than those of universities. The applicants needed to send their application documents including their English and French language certification, academic scores and some home institutions also organized an interview for the selection. The lack of applicants for application made this selection more symbolic than serious. The student

in the STGEC explained that due to the different curricula design between her home institution and the STGEC, the credits she has acquired during six-month mobility in the host institution couldn't be validated in her home institution and that might be one of the reasons to explain few applicants intended to apply for this program. In all, the students were first pre-selected in their home institutions and then accepted by the host institution; and due to lack of enough applicants in the pool because of various factors' impact, the selection was comparatively easier and less exigent in terms of French language level and students' academic strength.

On the part of the institution staff, they all mentioned that the Erasmus programs went very well in the European network and the program functioned more in a cooperation spirit. However, they also expressed their comparative less satisfaction with the quality of this group of students, as elaborated SSUBRY, researcher-teacher in SSUB.

...notamment les ERASMUS, que l'on a dans l'École, eux parlent rarement le français, ils pensent parler français mais une fois arrivés sur place, ils se rendent compte qu'ils ne parlent pas français. Moi j'ai des cours en anglais ici et du coup, j'ai des étudiants ERASMUS qui viennent et qui choisissent ces cours parce qu'ils sont en anglais... Du coup, je ne vois pas l'intérêt parce qu'ils n'apprennent pas le français, l'objectif d'ERASMUS c'est aussi de découvrir, au-delà de la culture, la langue aussi... sinon ils doivent aller en Angleterre, ce n'est pas en France où ils vont apprendre l'anglais... les étudiants ERASMUS eux viennent se présenter parce que comme j'aime bien faire des questions réponses dans les cours, ils ont du mal à parler, donc ils me l'expliquent en général, aussi pour les examens, ils s'inquiètent, comment ça va se passer pour eux, est-ce à oral ou écrit ? Etc. (SSUBRY)

As an extension of intra-Europe Erasmus program, the Erasmus Mundus program aimed to “enhance the quality of higher education and promote dialogue and understanding between people and cultures through mobility and academic cooperation with Third- countries. In addition, it contributed to the development of human resources and the international cooperation capacity of higher education institutions in Third-Countries by increasing mobility between the European Union and these countries” (www.eacea.ec.eu.erasmus_mundus/ind). The students recruited in this program needed to get trained in two or three European institutions and the places were very limited because for most of the students recruited, the scholarship was probably offered which definitely reinforces the competition.

Concerning the students' application process, the ALGANT master program was open to all interested students in Europe and worldwide. European Union supported the course by

financing about ten scholarships for students outside the European Union, and five for European students. The candidates must possess an academic degree (Bachelor) in mathematics with a minimum of three years' study (with good results) and a thorough proficiency in English was required for every student because only sufficient level of English offered the possibility for students to follow the entire curriculum in English (academic merit, motivation, recommendations and chances of success in the program). The tuition fees (per year) were 8000 Euros for Third-Country master students and 4000 euros for European students and Excellency scholarship holders. For beneficiaries of an Erasmus Mundus scholarship, the tuition fee was paid by the European Commission. With regard to the MER program, according to the project program coordinator, the candidates must have a Bachelor degree or equivalent and the courses were taught in English (study and academic merits, motivation and well-thought out study program, recommendation letters and chances of success in the program). The tuition fees (per year) were 8000 euros for non-European students and 4000 euros for European students. Scholarships were possible both from partner institutions and in Spain and in France. Last but not least, with regard to non-program application, the students could apply directly online through CEF (*Centre d'Etudes pour la France*) and sufficient French level was required for those who plan to start their major study directly after their arrival.

In this study, the three students were all from the universities and the diplomas that they would get were joint degrees and we didn't find the participation of the two *grandes écoles* in this program. From all the details of students' application process, some nuances of exigency among different programs were identified and it might be related to the study fields. The two programs mentioned above both charged tuition fees, which was ten times to forty times as expensive as normal French university registration fees. However, these training programs ensured their students with international or at least European formation in English and at the same time, more possibilities of scholarships were also accessible for the candidates. It indicated two probable student profiles could be candidates: excellent academic records or/with students from affluent family. The selection of the ALGANT program was conducted by the consortium's commission and the scholarship was attributed based on students' academic strength, their motivation, letter of commendation and chances to success in this program.

This selection process was confirmed by the coordinator of the MER program in the STUD.

Il y a plusieurs personnes qui suivent bien ce qu'on fait dans le Master. La semaine dernière, j'étais à Bilbao pour sélectionner les étudiants pour le Mundus pour l'année qui vient. J'étais accompagné par ma collègue de la DRI pour sélectionner les dossiers, nous donner des informations d'ordre administrative, etc. Elle s'occupe des ordres de missions, des relations avec IDEX,...

... ils doivent avoir une attestation de type TOEIC, TOEFL, IELTS, etc... il y en a plusieurs. On voit leur niveau d'Anglais déjà dans la lettre de motivation ; comment elle est écrite.

La sélection sur dossier. Les gens qui investissent tant d'argent dans leur Master, doivent trouver le financement. Ils sont conscients que ce n'est pas facile, mais ils ont décidé de faire ce Master. Ils l'ont choisi. Quelques-uns ont peut-être des parents riches mais tous n'ont pas des parents riches. Certains ont des parents qui ont peut-être du mal à payer le Master et donc, c'est un privilège. Les étudiants le comprennent. Et puis ils sont prêts à parler Anglais. Ce sont des gens qui sont prêts à bouger pendant deux ans, se déconnecter de la maison, de leurs habitudes. (STUDRS)

The academic and non-academic international office administrators have participated in the selection of the students. According to STUDRS, the coordinator, this program required more than academic records from the students and the financial supports have become a must.

The third category included the student interviewees from the institutional exchange programs, including students from joint degree program, double degree program and exchange between two institutions. The students in this group were all from the two *grandes écoles*.

On the basis of their responses, the students recruited by collaborative programs (double and joint degree programs) were selected in their home institution mainly based on their academic records, motivation letter and interview results. Sufficient French level was required but not exigent. The students recruited by document application were selected by host institution. For exchange students, (although here the word "exchange" isn't quite exact because of lacking of the reciprocity between two institutions) the consistency of majors, students' competences to follow the courses and their motivation were verified by the home institution. We could also see the important roles of the teachers or professors in home institutions: they diffused the program information and held the selection. The different exigency of French level could produce inevitable difficulties for international students in their host institution.

Concerning their application process, we found two points in common: on the one hand, they insisted that there's a selection for the application based on their academic records and the interview result. On the other hand, there were not so many candidates for the application because of the language barrier and the fees to study abroad. Selection process could be just

an institutional and diplomatic move, in other words, when there were not enough candidates, the selection might just be an institutional procedure to go through. To some extent, it might lose the sense of the competitiveness and find the most competent students. Meanwhile, there's another possibility, that the program information wasn't accessible to every student not only because of the way the information was diffused but also the requirement of French language level. Thus, on the basis of these cases, we could tell that the pooling of candidates has been already pre-selected before the real selection starts. That also explained why the selection loses its sense of finding the best ones. In these interviews, all the students didn't precisely tell who did the selection and I noticed the home institutions might be the principal actor in this process, which indicated there might be some nuances in the selection criteria; however, the principal rules stayed the same.

Là par exemple avec le Brésil, ça se fait par dossier. Les étudiants peuvent venir en première ou deuxième année, ça dépend, ça se fait par dossier et il y a une sélection de l'université brésilienne qui nous propose des étudiants et nous, on valide ou pas le dossier proposé. En général, on le valide, s'il a déjà été sélectionné par l'université, on fait confiance à l'université... (STGECO A)

Ce sont les meilleurs étudiants brésiliens qui participent au programme BxxxEC. Ils ont été sélectionnés là-bas, comme il y a des bourses, pour venir étudier en France... Nous demandons à ce qu'il y ait un niveau minimum en français puisque les cours se font en français, donc oui, ils prennent des cours de français ici... (STGECR K)

On regarde dès le départ si les niveaux académiques sont comparables, ça nous permet d'avoir confiance pour l'échange. On ne sélectionne pas les étudiants qui arrivent chez nous, on fait confiance à la sélection qui se fait en Argentine. (STGECRE)

Les étudiants russes, c'est l'université des Peuples qui s'en occupe parce qu'effectivement, c'est un Master, donc voilà, il y a un concours, une entrée sélectionnée sur dossier, etc., donc si vous voulez, il y a tous ces paramètres-là qui font que la pré-sélection par l'université est déjà un frein pour l'entrée dans le niveau Master. Le deuxième est financier, c'est le coût de la formation, pour le côté russe. Le troisième est la petite sélectivité qu'on pourrait introduire nous, moi, je fais une mission en décembre normalement, je rencontre les étudiants russes, je teste leur niveau de français, leur motivation, leurs compétences pour entrer dans le programme, donc, il y a 3 niveaux de sélection... au dernier niveau et encore, c'est une sélection extrêmement soft, c'est-à-dire que dans la mesure où les partenaires français et russes ne participent pas de façon réciproque à la sélection de nos étudiants français, moi, je me sens mal placée pour exercer un veto en disant non, je ne veux pas celui-là, soit la sélection est totalement réciproque, soit, elle ne l'est pas, c'est plus une sorte d'entretien de convenance et de prise de contact que de sélection en tant que telle... (SSGEARDF)

...parce qu'il y a douze places mais il y a plus de candidats que ça, donc on réfléchit aux critères, pour les sélections, on organise des écrits, des examens écrits et ensuite des entretiens oraux avec les collègues partenaires... Les Allemands font la sélection à l'université de Stuttgart avec de notre côté un ou deux collègues qui vont assister au jury, et pour les Français, on le fait ici avec un ou deux collègues allemands qui viennent assister au jury... Il y a un examen écrit qui teste aussi la vitesse d'une analyse possible, c'est dans un temps court : analyse et connaissances, un peu sur les codes culturels du moment. Et après, l'entretien de sélection se passe au moins à moitié dans la langue de l'autre et en plus parfois avec des accents. J'ai des collègues de

Stuttgart qui ont des accents de Bavière, pour les étudiants, la réactivité à l'oral, c'est déjà difficile. (SSGEARR)

The four program coordinators in the two *grandes écoles* SSGEA & STGEC explained the selection process in the interviews and most importantly, they insisted on the mutual trust between the institution and its partners. Just as revealed in the previous chapter, there were some golden rules for developing the collaboration between two institutions and the institution intended to find foreign peers who possessed the same resources in terms of research and academic strength. This rule helped us to understand why this mutual trust has been constructed and it's also obvious that the students' performance must be satisfactory in order to continue this trust between the two institutions. The only difference among these program selections lay in the participation of the academic staff from the host institution and the rest procedures remained quite similar.

The last group of students was free-movers, which represented a large proportion in the two universities but comparatively smaller percentage in the two *grandes écoles*.

Four free-movers in the two universities were interviewed in this study and they all sent several applications before finally got accepted in the host institution. According to the application and admission criteria for the EBA program, the candidates should have had three-year university studies, advanced level of English and beginner level of French. This first-year program ended with a university diploma, literally equivalent to master 1. If the students wanted to apply for another university after one year program, they still had to start from M1; however, if the students stay for the second year in the host institution, they could go directly to Master 2 (more than 4000 euros for tuition fees). According to them, the application wasn't serious or selective. More and more departments or colleges inside universities have created different university diploma programs for some lucrative purpose or for attracting more students. When all these four students were asked if they have had a clear idea about what a university diploma was before arrival, they told me either not being informed or not so caring about that because they were told it was a two-year master program.

For the only one free-mover in the STUD, he was a typical representative for most free-movers for diploma oriented in French-teaching program on the basis of my master thesis results. He obtained his bachelor's degree before applying for the postgraduate study in the STUD. He sent his application directly through the Campus France and came to the host institution without any knowledge of it because his own motivation was to be in France. From this example and combined with the data analysis in my master research, the academic

requirement for these free-movers in the universities wasn't really very exigent. For the applicants Francophone like him, they could start the major directly after being recruited and for those with insufficient French language level, the study pathways are ready to host them.

Ils remplissent en ligne un dossier de préinscription, par l'intermédiaire d'un CEF (Centre pour les Etudes en France) présent dans les ambassades de 31 pays (le premier CEF a ouvert en Chine, d'ailleurs). Le dossier de préinscription est examiné par une commission pédagogique ici, à STUD, qui autorise l'inscription définitive en fonction du niveau qu'ils ont obtenu dans leur pays d'origine. (STUDOL)

However, the free-movers in the STGEC experienced a totally different selection process and they were divided into two groups on the basis of the forms of selection: *concours* for students from some former French colonies, document application for very few students (both national and international).

J'ai fait deux années de prépa là-bas en maths physique et j'ai passé le concours des Mines et le concours CCP, c'est un concours français que j'ai passé au Maroc. Ça se passe dans des lycées français au Maroc et tout le monde ne les passe pas là-bas, il y a un nombre limité de place, si tu es bien classé, tu as une place au Maroc, ça évite les frais de transports, de logements ici, j'ai passé l'écrit à Casablanca et l'oral, je l'ai passé à Paris. J'étais déjà admise à l'écrit... (STGECSD)

...no interview, there might be one for other candidates but not for me. I had perfect academic records and they got me enrolled directly. You know, 80% of student population here in engineering school came for the preparatory classes, around 120 students, particular for the first year study; 20% students from IUT graduates. For the students who want to get enrolled and start from the second year; only 2 or 3 places are open for all candidates in France. (STGECSSW, translated quote from Chinese)

From their responses we could feel the intense competition among the applicants and they were all ranked before finally getting recruited in this institution. For the students recruited by the same French *concours*, they actually were put into the same pool with their French peer or maybe even more competitive. For the very few students recruited by document application, they must have strong academic merits with recommendations before entering in the competition.

None free-movers was interviewed in the SSGEA, if they existed and the director of international office explained for each year less than two students could be recruited as free-movers depending on the quality of their application documents. The free movers were there just for following some courses and not exactly diploma-targeted.

To sum up, although they were all free-movers, we noticed there's a big difference of quality in terms of academic records, former educational background and French language level. Those who recruited in the *grandes écoles* followed the same profiles of their French peers, if they were not better. Those who entered the universities had more diverse profiles corresponding to their programs.

6.1.3 Service provision

Concerning the institution provision service for international students, we would like to analyze it based on their profiles in the registered institutions in terms of administration aid, pedagogical aid and associative activities. The major service provider in these four institutions was the international office assisted by the department service and big differences are observed for free-movers both on degree and credit mobility and program students. The following analysis started from the service provision in the individual institution and the users' feedbacks and the providers' description were confronted in order to verify the gap between the administration commitment and students' real needs. Meanwhile, we could also observe the differences in the services that the international students could benefit in the group of *grandes écoles* and universities.

In the STUD, on the basis of the descriptions from the international student interviewees, in terms of accommodation, the program students were well-informed for the offers and could easily have one dorm in university residence after their application. However, it could be less easy for free-movers. In terms of student activities, the students were less active either because of their focus on study or their financial occupation. In terms of the study support, they were mostly satisfied with the service they got from international office and with the French courses that the institution offered for students from non-French speaking countries.

In general, the registration in a French HEI included both administration registration and pedagogical registration and it worked the same way with international students in or out of programs. The former one offered the guarantee for the international students to get their visa and come to France; and the latter one can only be realized once the students have decided about the options of courses after their arrival in the host institution. In the interviews, the three program students spoke highly of the international office service, maybe a little hope for the reinforcement of working efficiency. The only free-mover interviewee in the STUD didn't

mention any benefits from the international office at all in the interview. However, he had got some help from the tutorship system in his department and the service was provided for those students who met some difficulties in their studies and the tutors could be senior students or teachers.

Notre service des relations internationales accueille uniquement les étudiants étrangers dans nos programmes : il s'agit des masters et doctorats Erasmus Mundus, des masters en partenariat international, la mobilité Erasmus... Ces étudiants bénéficient de modules intensifs de français langue étrangère (FLE) avant qu'ils arrivent... Nous organisons un « campus d'accueil » pendant une dizaine de jours la dernière semaine d'août, les cours débutant généralement le 3 ou le 4 septembre, avec le concours de l'Alliance Française située en centre-ville. Ils passent des tests de positionnement pour identifier leurs niveaux de français langue étrangère. Ensuite, ils sont répartis dans les groupes en fonction de leurs niveaux de français. Parallèlement aux modules de FLE, l'Alliance Française met en place des modules d'intégration dans la ville et la culture française (visites de la ville de B, excursion dans les lieux touristiques voisins). Peu après le début des cours, nous organisons une cérémonie d'accueil où ils peuvent rencontrer les responsables pédagogiques, les personnels administratifs qu'ils vont côtoyer tout au long de leur séjour à STUD. Par ailleurs, nous recrutons au moment de la rentrée des vacataires, qui sont d'anciens étudiants parlant a minima l'anglais, mais pas seulement, pour leur faciliter les démarches administratives (ouverture d'un compte bancaire, caution pour les loyers, ouverture d'un compteur EDF etc). Une collègue de mon service s'occupe plus particulièrement de leurs logements en liaison avec le Crous. (STUBOL)

In the response of the administration director in the international office, we could get the reason why the free-movers in the institution D hadn't got any service from the office. Meanwhile, the detailed service description was elaborated both in administration and pedagogical aid. On the basis of my previous research on international students' experience in host institutions, the early period of their arrival in the host country could be very challenging to them both psychologically and physically, particularly for those who didn't have a good level of French. The immigration papers and the accommodation could be the top two difficulties for international students after their arrival. The program students have got lot of help from the international office, which definitely facilitated their integration in the institution life. For students from Erasmus Mundus and other programs with charging fees, the service could be offered with better quality compared to the normal Erasmus mobility due to more funds and resources for the application of the service.

Moreover, the students in the Erasmus Mundus programs could also receive the help from the program coordinators both for their daily life needs and pedagogical aid and the coordinator's mission was to both supervise and assist these students to well accomplish their study period in the host institution.

Everything is wonderful here and I just finished the courses. I'm doing my master thesis. They've done things to make us comfortable here in STUD. They gave us an office to study for all ALGANT students here.... my tutor cared about how my life was going on in Bordeaux and told me where to go for travelling. He also told me to meet him whenever I have a problem. (STUDSH)

During the interview, STUDSH, one of the Asian students from Erasmus Mundus showed his great satisfaction with the service and help from international office and his tutor. Although his opinion couldn't be representative for all Erasmus Mundus students, it still reflected partially the quality of the service provision from this institution.

In the SSUB, considering the particularity of interviewees' profiles, the analysis results could be a little bit different. During the interviews, the four students in the English-teaching program mainly talked about the service they got directly from the small international office in the department because they didn't have contact with the central office of the institution. In the interview with the one Erasmus student, the central international office was the service provider for him. With regard to its administration service, one point in common between the department international office and the central one was pointed out by the student interviewees as lack of working efficiency and bad organization. The administration service was very important for hosting international students, particularly those in English-teaching program. In the interviews, the EBA students complained a lot about the departmental office in terms of communication, responsiveness and courses' planning. They showed some examples about the bad communication between the office and the teachers, the office and the students and the lack of efficiency and responsiveness have resulted in some problems related to students' study, such as frequent modification of courses' schedules. According to the interviewees' description, sometimes they didn't have classes during the whole week; sometimes the whole week was fully occupied with classes. Considering the majority of their teachers were from other countries, they also showed some understanding about the arrangement of courses. Meanwhile, lack of responsiveness to students' demand was considered as not being serious and had great influence on the institution's image. Besides the efficiency and effectiveness problems in the small international office, they all appreciated the kindness of the working staff in the offices. The only Erasmus student interviewee also criticized the administration service from the central international office; however, compared to the free-movers, he expressed his satisfaction with the accommodation service from the institution.

I think improvement in terms of administration. I know it's asking for too much. Getting some kind of coherence, they have a clear policy about this is what's going to happen rather than for a lot of time we have no idea of what's going to happen... So a little bit more structured and coherent, regarding the way things are organized, clarifying procedures as well to make the forms clearer, we filled a lot of forms and they put them in the drawer. I'm sure that they haven't met them along our registration. (SSUBSO)

In the interview of the central international office director SSUBOV, he explained what kind of service the office offers to the free-movers in the SSUB.

...puisque nous avons une personne qui s'occupe de vérifier leurs dossiers et qui refuse des dossiers qui sont soit incomplets, soit ne correspondent pas à nos exigences, c'est-à-dire que lorsque l'on reçoit un dossier d'inscription, on commence par vérifier si l'étudiant a des moyens financiers suffisant, s'il a obtenu essentiellement des bourses de son pays d'origine, s'il a le bon niveau de français, s'il ne s'est pas trompé de filières, s'il a un visa d'autorisation de sortie du territoire, voilà. On s'occupe de tout ça avant de pouvoir accéder à l'inscription. Une personne dans le bureau des relations internationales s'occupe exclusivement de cela. (SSUBOV)

According to his discourse, one staff was particularly in charge of the service for free-movers, such as verification of their application documents, financial guarantee, French language level, choice of study field and visa for study in France. However, all the elements he mentioned were related to the pre-inscription selection process and concerning the service benefited by free-movers after their registration, nothing was mentioned during the interview.

In the above two universities, relative to the service provision from the institutions, the associative activities were also criticized by the student interviewees. In terms of institution integration, the student association and the associated activities have played an indispensable part.

There's a real student life in England but here there isn't. You got the classes, the coffee, the sandwich and you got home. While in Kent, the evenings there are always some events going on. There's always a society event or something organized by the university. But here after 18h or 19h, that's it. That could be one part of my suggestion. It's a different system perhaps it should be the students- elects to create things instead of the university. (SSUBSO)

I only play with my classmates and it's difficult to make friends with other people, especially in different classes. Moreover, French people often have their own social network and it's hard for us to get in. I participated in some kind of parties organized by CROUS with some of my classmates but we still didn't get more communication with French students. (SSUBSK2, translated quote from Chinese)

On the basis of the students' feedbacks, the organizations of events or parties for international students didn't happen quite often and lack of campus life was a portrait for these two universities.

In the STGEC, concerning the institution provision service for international students, in terms of accommodation, all of them did the application on the internet and were ensured with a room at their arrival. For those who were not satisfied with their attributed room, they also had the choice to negotiation for a better one with the help of the international office. In terms of student campus life, the students mentioned there were always some events on campus but they didn't have the time to participate. In terms of study support, the student interviewees appreciated the full presence of administration staff and teachers for offering their help at any moment. Moreover, French courses were free and compulsory for all the foreign students from non-French-speaking countries and considering the English level requirement for the engineering school students, they also had English courses.

In these interviews, we noticed that they didn't criticize or comment much on the institution provision service. Most of them were more concerned about their study, which, in our opinion was closely related to the intensity of their courses. The obligatory presence at all courses, TP and TD, 35-38 hours' courses per week, four or five team projects to accomplish, etc., all these arrangements made them more focus on their study. Moreover, we needed to recall that the free-movers in this institution are highly selected in terms of academic merits and French language level. Even if they couldn't get much service from the international office, they can deal with the administration procedures by themselves.

En ce qui concerne de logement, ils s'adressent à moi, je suis leur point de contact... je travaille notamment avec le service du logement que nous avons ici, qui gère des logements pour les étudiants étrangers. Ce qu'il faut savoir, c'est que nous accueillons des étudiants étrangers qui viennent en formation initiale et d'autres qui viennent en formation en mobilité, free-movers pour une période courte... mais on s'occupe plus principalement de ces étudiants-là. Les autres qui viennent en formation initiale, ce sont notamment des étudiants tunisiens, marocains, maghrébins. Eux passent par le concours, postulent par le concours polytechnique et ensuite ils ont besoin d'une chambre pour faire une notification qui leur permettra d'obtenir le visa. (STGECOV)

From the elaboration of the administration director of the international office, we could get the information that either free-mover or program students were assured to have the accommodation before their arrival, which was a bit different from the universities. Furthermore, for the program students, they could also get the help from their program

coordinators, in particular relative to their studies and internship opportunities. One of the program coordinator, SSGECRR also talked about the student club in this institution which offered the service for new arriving international students.

On a un club d'étudiants de STGEC qui s'occupe d'accueillir les étudiants étrangers, les accueillir à l'aéroport, trouver l'appartement. Notre bureau des relations internationales au village universitaire, va trouver un logement, les activités de tous les jours, de petites activités avec les étudiants pour qu'ils apprennent à se connaître...(STGECRR)

In the SSGEA, in terms of accommodation, all interviewees got information from the institution about the possible offers and the students did the application themselves. All of them complained about the housing conditions of student residence. In terms of student activities, they were very satisfied with the variety of student associations and the colorful parties and activities that they organized to get international students integrated in the host culture and institution. The welcoming meetings and parties were organized at the beginning of the semester, including city tour visit. In terms of study support, there were different workshops and optional French courses to help international students with their French and working methods. For the double diploma and joint degree programs, the coordinator also played the role of tutor by taking care of students' study and everyday life problems as well.

The SSGEA offered the international students all the accommodation information, which could be considered as a very effective measure. Meanwhile, the vivid campus life also helped international students get rid of the loneliness. The student associations were created not only based on hobbies but also based on groups of students, which reinforced both the communication between local students and international students and different groups of international students. All these activities were initiated by students themselves instead of being imposed by the institution, which showed how the culture or the tradition of the institution was imbedded in students' institutional life. Moreover, the different service provision was also implemented in the institution such as workshops and French courses for facilitating students' institutional integration, which was highly appreciated by the international students and also indicated the advantages produced by the small population of students and fully equipped human resources. In conclusion, all the service provisions mentioned above were initiated with good intention; however, the results also depended on how the international students made use of these activities and also how these activities were practiced. For example, some students mentioned that after having participated twice of these

activities, they stopped because they still felt the difficulty in “being the member” of the group; meanwhile one of them said these activities didn’t approach their relationship with their local peers and they still considered it’s much easier to hang around with other foreign students.

Quand ils ont des problèmes, je suis là, quand ils cherchent des stages, je suis là, quand ils ont besoin d'une attestation, je suis leur référent ici pour les étudiants allemands. (SSGEARR)

Ma mission, c'est de m'occuper de tout ce qui concerne la dimension pédagogique, ça demande un peu de pédagogie en réalité, évidemment, ce sont des liens avec les partenaires. Pour les liens avec les partenaires la transmission des informations à mes collègues de l'administration pour tout ce qui concerne l'accueil des étudiants russes ici à l'IEP, l'organisation des enseignants sur place, la validation des diplômes, tout ce qui concerne la reconduction des conventions régulières, voilà, tout ce qui est encadrement, l'accueil des étudiants russes ici. J'ai une mission pédagogique et une mission d'accueil qui est très importante. (SSGEARDF)

Like in the other institutions, the program students couldn’t not only benefit the service from international office but also the help from their program coordinators. We compared the discourse of the two program coordinators’ missions with the feedbacks from the students in these two programs.

Chaque filière a un responsable de filière qui est censé nous aider dans notre parcours et nous donner des informations si l'on a des problèmes mais ça dépend de la personne. Nous, on a une très bonne responsable, elle fait un peu maman, elle s'occupe beaucoup de nous, nous donne les informations. Et en dehors de Sciences-Po, il y a un petit institut de culture allemande ouvert à tout le monde, il y a aussi de la coopération, on peut y aller, il y a des évènements et ça permet d'élargir un peu l'horizon. (SSGEASJ)

A : Es-tu contente de l'accueil à sciences-po ?

B : Oui, bien sûr parce que les gens sont très gentils, on est bien accueillis, Mme xx est à la tête de notre programme IEDG, elle parle russe, anglais. Je connais ses cours, j'ai étudié tout ça en Russie mais l'approche est différente de la manière dont on nous l'a enseigné en Russie, c'est intéressant, une autre vision, un autre côté... (SSGEASN)

It’s quite evident that the service provision from the program coordinators was well appreciated by their program students. Like what the first student SSGEASJ said in the interview, the professionalism of the coordinators also depended on their personalities. But all in all, the student interviewees were very satisfied with the service they’ve received in the SSGEA.

To sum up the service comparison in these four institutions, on the one hand, we observed the different benefits for free-movers and program students; on the other hand, some differences were also identified in terms of accommodation service and institution integration activities in the two universities and *grandes écoles* . In general, the students recruited in the programs

often benefit double service from the international office and their program coordinators and the students hosted in the *grandes écoles* enjoyed better service provision compared to those in the universities.

6.2 From admission to recruitment: lessons from students' experience

The first section of this chapter presented the whole recruitment process from the institution's perspective, from pooling of resources, selection to the service provision. This section tried to reverse the dimension from admission to recruitment, in other words, as elaborated before the recruitment process was cycling, the institution needed to learn some lessons from the international students' experience in order to improve their performance in the following recruitment. During the interview, one of the student interviewees in the SSUB evoked the questionnaire for his feedbacks of his study sojourn which was sent to him by the international office.

The international office sent us an online questionnaire which I filled in to tell them what I thought particularly about the negative aspects: not enough events, lack of student life, lack of efficiency and coherence within the office; positive aspects are: some of them are really friendly and we enjoyed our year. At the end of my academic exams, we are asked about the academic aspect. We kind of had some feedbacks. Feedbacks are always good but it depends on how people react on that. It'll perhaps be nice to have a student-focus group. (SSUBSO)

Like what he said, this act was initiated from very good intention to ameliorate their service for international students; while this intention could only have effective impacts on the measures if all the feedbacks were taken seriously into consideration by the institution. However, the service provision from the international office or from the department level in terms of accommodation, administrative procedures for social and medical care, modification of courses, etc. was only part of the problems in international students' life. Free-mover or program student, his major mission in the host institutions was to succeed in their study either for credits or degrees. Thus this section concentrated on the analysis on students' experience in the host institution and revealed some key problems related to their academic study and intercultural dimension in the institution integration. How did students describe their experience in the universities and *grandes écoles*, were there any difference, what kinds of lessons should the institutions learn from their students' experience?

6.2.1 Recruitment for retention: students' institutional integration

International students' experience could easily reach to two extremes, which depended on lots of internal and external factors (Bian, 2013); and in this study, three major difficulties have been identified: financial pressure, language barrier and lacking of academic competences. Although these factors have been discussed in the numerous previous studies, including in my master thesis, if they were still repetitively mentioned in the research, it meant the host institutions haven't paid enough attention or implemented efficient resolutions. However, we still noticed some differences between my previous study and this one.

A general pattern was observed in this study and indicated that the financial problem often happened to the free-movers, particularly the free-movers in the universities.

Je n'ai pas réussi en première année, je pensais ne pas avoir les moyens qu'il fallait pour m'en sortir financièrement, j'avais des problèmes et j'étais obligé d'aller travailler et quand j'ai commencé à travailler, ça m'a pris du temps et je n'avais pas le temps qu'il fallait pour mes études, ça a en grande partie contribué à mon échec...(STUDSB)

Among the 19 student interviewees, STUDSB was the only one who talked quite openly about his financial difficulties, which also resulted in his failure in his first year of postgraduate study. His story was quite similar with that of the interviewees' in my master study and could be considered as representative for a large proportion of international free-movers. Thus, referring to the results in my previous study, his situation was closely related to his profile in terms of home country, family situation, educational background and mobility objectives.

Meanwhile, some other students also mentioned their financial pressure in the interviews and they chose to depend on their families' support instead of working by themselves. It's hard to say whose choice was right but this problem should arouse the attention from the host institutions in order to create a better study condition for international students.

...je dirais à priori que l'on cherche les meilleurs étudiants et que l'on donne les Bourses aux meilleurs. Ça dépend de qui donne les Bourses, il y a des Bourses de l'Europe, ça dépend, c'est très variable, (STUDOS)

En général, non, cette année, on a eu une boursière d'Indonésie, elle a eu une bourse du gouvernement français, mais c'est rare.... (SSUBOA)

Un étudiant du Niger m'a contacté récemment : il veut faire le Master, il veut faire une demande de Bourse Eiffel, j'ai signé, j'ai donné mon avis sur le dossier qu'il a déposé, il a eu mon accord, j'ai demandé ses notes, pour voir ce que je pourrais faire, donc j'ai considéré qu'il pouvait

sivre des études en Master et j'ai donné un avis positif. Il a déposé son dossier qui est arrivé au service des relations internationales qui m'a communiqué les dossiers pour que je donne un avis officiel, donc j'ai dit que c'était une admission définitive et c'est reparti à Eiffel. Donc s'il obtient sa bourse, il va venir. (SSUBRY)

Based on the three staffs' responses, for the free-movers, the number of the scholarship was very limited in the universities and only offered to the best ones. Recruitment was for retention and from this perspective, to solve this problem needed two parties' efforts. On the one hand, the free movers should be aware of this situation at the moment of their application and be financially prepared. On the other hand, the universities needed to create more small financial aid or job opportunities on campus, like what's been developing in the major English-speaking countries long time ago.

Besides the financial pressure, the language barrier and lacking of academic competence seemed to be quite general for both free-movers and program students. Furthermore, these two problems happened more often to the program students than free movers in the *grandes écoles* and lack of academic competence seemed to cause more serious problems for students majoring in sciences and technologies than those caused by language barrier.

Pour moi qui ne parle pas très très bien la langue, au début c'était très très difficile parce que je ne pouvais pas comprendre... Je lisais les notes, et je pouvais comprendre à peu près... (STGECSA)

B: I used to study telecommunication in my university of origin, but what I studied there is totally different from what I learn here.

A: did you meet some difficulties here in your study?

B: a lot of (STGECSL)

Both of the interviewees were program students in the STGEC and from their discourse, we could see their difficulties in terms of French language level and academic competences. As presented before, the programs students in this institution were pre-selected by their home institutions and got recruited after a courtesy of symbolic selection in the host institution. The potential problems were revealed from this type of the selection. As the linguistic proficiency wasn't that highly demanded, most of these programs students' were not that satisfactory at time of selection and serious language barrier could definitely influence their study in the host institution. However, after their arrival in the STGEC, they had several hours' French lessons every week and some of them said their French level has been greatly improved after two or three months' study in the host institution. What's more difficult to overcome in their study

came from their previously knowledge of certain courses. The program students had to obtain certain number of credits during their study in the STGEC and as one of the program students explained in the interview the courses could be very different from what they've learned in their home institution. Lacking of basic knowledge to understand the courses and having some difficulties in French language could be lethal to their success. This reminded the institutions that during the selection process, it's better to be strict with the program students' levels of French language in order to facilitate their future study in the host institution. Moreover, before officially receiving the program students, the host institution should improve its communication with the home institution of the courses' design and academic demand for certain majors. It should offer more information for the program students so that they could have more diversified choice of courses on the basis of their own academic competence. Meanwhile, the program students should search more information about the host institution's curricula design and learning contents before their application for the program.

The observation that students' academic competence was more important than their French language level for those majoring in sciences and technology was also confirmed in the study experience of the two Erasmus Mundus program students' in the STUD.

It's hard. You know I used to be a very good student in Iran and everyone considered me as an intelligent boy. But here when the teachers are teaching, I'm just like a robot with no response. But I could guess what they are teaching. You know it's just mathematics and many things were written thanks to my very good background in Iran. If the courses were taught in English, I could definitely be ranked the first in the class without any doubt. (STUDSM)

Actually they almost write down everything on the white board to make us understand. I think the main point here is that you have to have a very good knowledge of mathematics. You can read the books and understand their ideas. (STUDSH)

The first student got recruited in the ALGANT program and chose to study in the STUD for his first year of postgraduate study. He told me during the interview that he had no idea that the courses were taught in French because according to the description on the program website, all the courses in all host institutions for this program should be taught in English. He was quite shocked when he was informed the courses for the first year students were given in French; however, he still survived the exams thanks to his strong mathematics academic competence. The other student told me the same story in the interview and he came to the STUD for his second year postgraduate study. Although his English level wasn't quite satisfactory, he said the most important element for success was to have strong background

knowledge of mathematics and understand the formula. We found it very interesting and impressive that the language of teaching could not be the decisive factor for academic success for these two students. On the one hand, it recalled us the universality of the knowledge, which was also the fundamental element to support the internationalization of higher education. On the other hand, although the two students succeeded in their study in the STUD, we could still find the insufficient service provision in this program, which implied that behind the good initiative of developing English-teaching Erasmus Mundus program, the host institution should be well prepared in terms of academic resource supply. STUDSM expressed his great depression in his one-year program in the STUD. In spite of his 'ok' performance in the exams, we could still feel his pride was in trauma and he used 'robot' to describe himself in the class. Moreover, concerning their future plan, they also showed great interest in doing research; however, considering the demand of French level, they preferred to study in another country which accepted the doctoral thesis in English. Their experience indicated that talented students should not be pushed away only because of their French language level, particularly students majoring in sciences and technology in the French universities or *grandes écoles*.

The impact of language barrier and lacking of academic competence also existed for students in the institutions specializing in social sciences and since the student interviewees in the two institutions didn't mention too much about their serious difficulties in the study, we assumed either they had adequate skill package to succeed in their study or they found a way out of this difficult situation. According to my own study experience, we would like to say the students from non-French-speaking countries, majoring in social sciences are in the double trick of language difficulty and insufficient academic knowledge of study fields.

Il y a trois difficultés, il y a le système académique, la différence de système académique, la différence linguistique.... Il y a une troisième difficulté qui est la différence de méthodologie d'enseignement...la méthodologie qui est ici adoptée, c'est plusieurs éléments, c'est le primat de l'oral, c'est l'importance de l'oral dans la formation, c'est la méthode de la dissertation et la structuration et la rhétorique à la française avec la méthodologie de la dissertation sur laquelle les étudiants russes n'ont pas du tout de formation ailleurs, ils ont une méthodologie qui est vraiment différente. (SSGEARDF)

Dans les filières, on leur demande la même chose, c'est très dur, ils passent tous par ce que l'on appelle le choc culturel. Au début, ils aiment parce qu'ils ont toujours aimé l'Allemagne ou la France et au bout de trois mois, ils souffrent terriblement. Et en même temps, on leur demande de fonctionner, de livrer des travaux très vite et de tout valider tout de suite, de ne pas avoir droit à l'échec en fait, de ne pas avoir le temps de vivre aussi leur difficultés. Alors tout ça c'est difficile et exigeant et puis ceux qui vont au bout en profitent énormément parce qu'ils ont surmonté plusieurs épreuves aussi. Ils ont intégré deux méthodes de travail, ils ont intégré des théories différentes parce qu'on ne travaille pas forcément avec les mêmes références théoriques

de chaque côté, ils ont une maîtrise parfaite de la langue de l'autre, c'est vraiment parfaitement réussi, ceux qui vont jusqu'à la fin sont tous contents. Or, comme c'est difficile malgré le fait qu'on le sait, malgré le fait que l'on anticipe, malgré le fait que l'on écoute, que l'on entoure, il y a beaucoup d'échec et il y a beaucoup d'abandons. (SSGEARR)

In the interviews, the two program coordinators from the SSGEA expressed their own observation of their students' difficulties in their study. Language level, academic level in their field of study and working methods are all mentioned in their discourse, more importantly, the international students were facing the equal demand from the institution as their local peers and in spite of numerous failures, the students who could go through this very difficult period and stick to the end could get a lot of benefits from this trial.

6.2.2 Intercultural learning

The first subsection summarized the general pattern of the difficulties in student interviewees' experience in the host institutions and the analysis was conducted from internal perspective. The subsection focused more on the analysis from external factors, which meant the student interviewees' feedbacks for teachers' teaching, interaction with their classmates and integrated process in the host institution's specific culture.

In terms of the teachers' teaching, the general feedbacks of the interviewees from the four institutions were positive and it could differ a bit based on students' institutions and programs. In the groups of universities, the students in the SSUB complained a little bit about some of their teachers' English pronunciation and their teaching methods in the class. Nevertheless, they were very satisfied with the teachers' professional knowledge. In the STUD, all the students spoke very highly of their teachers and appreciated the quality of the courses, teachers' competences and responsiveness to their demand.

Compared to the more generalized description from the university interviewees, we found some specific points of opinions of the students from the two *grandes écoles*. In the STGEC, besides the well-structured organization and the well-equipped infrastructure, the students put emphasis on the large professional network possessed by the institutions. Unlike the students in social sciences, the interviewees in this institution seemed more cautious about their choice and they checked the institution rank and familiarized with the courses before their arrival. With regard to educational programs and activities, all of them praised the high teaching quality and the expertise of their teachers. Meanwhile, they also mentioned the tight professional relationship constructed by their teachers and the companies, which they could

get benefits from later in their internship or job hunting. According to their description, there were around 100 students for each promotion, 25 students were for TD and 12 for TP, which enforced the interaction between students and professors. The stereotype of engineering school was again confirmed in their discourses: small populated class, highly interaction between students and teachers, well-developed equipment, good combination of practice and theories, large professional network, highly intensive training courses.

Compared to the more ranking and employment oriented comments on the STGEC, the interviewees in the SSGEA evoked the dimension of internationalization of this institution. They all considered the SSGEA as a very international institution and showed me some indicators: number of international students, courses in English, visiting professors or lecturers from other countries and lots of collaborative programs with foreign universities for their students' international year. However, they suggested the internationalized level might not be sufficient and the institution should still work on its openness by integrating more cultures in its educational programs and try to be less French-centered.

Their criteria of measuring the internationalized level of the institution reminded us again the "Five myths about internationalization" (Knight, 2011), there were some myths that we couldn't tell, for example, the number of international students and the number of international institutional agreements. Could we say that the more international students the institution hosts, the more internationalizing the institution is? Could we say that the more international agreements signed by the institution with foreign partners, the more internationalizing the institution is? The answer was hardly yes. We had to consider the way the institution use all of these resources. The internationalization always started with people's awareness; therefore, we could consider all these measures or effort as a good beginning. Meanwhile, they declared unanimously their presence should have been more "used" by their peers, teachers and even the institution. In terms of teachers' teaching, they appreciated the researchers' expertise in their fields of research. Four out five criticized the teachers' posture and the level of interaction in class and they also questioned the France-centered teaching programs. According to them, their presence should be taken into account into the design of the programs. Some of them also pointed out most of the teachers were very good at their study fields and the individual factors played an important role in their teaching. In terms of institutional level, as previously mentioned, in the SSGEA there were some courses in English. Three out of five questioned the English level of their teachers and thought it might be pointless if the course was taught in English; however, the exams were in French.

Furthermore, they suggested that the institution should do more to internationalize the disciplines.

Regarding the interviewees' relationship with their local peers, the general feedbacks were coherent from the students in the universities and *grandes écoles*. In the SSGEA, three out of five interviewees mentioned that they didn't have many courses with their local peers and didn't communicate much with them either. They all mentioned that local students were very attentive at class and tried to take everything the teachers said in their notes. Two of them implied that the ambiance between local students was a little bit competitive, which according to them, might be produced by the elitist system itself. In the SSUB and STUD, the interviewees confirmed that not much communication existed between them and their French peers due to their own French level and different personal occupations. In the STGEC, the interviewees explained they preferred to make friends with their foreign peers because they considered the French students were a little bit closed and it was much easier to communicate with their compatriots or with other foreign students at class.

Moreover, the students from the *grandes écoles* also explained some 'specialty' in terms of ideology and culture in their host institution. The interviewees from the SSGEA mentioned the famous working methods in this institution and all the students should learn and master this method; otherwise they could fail in their study. On the one hand, the interviewees considered it as an effective training for their thinking and logic development. On the other hand, they suggested with more and more presence of the international students in the class, some openness and flexibility should be input in this typical institutional working method. During the interviews, the international students described the superiority of their local peers and even the researchers they showed similar feeling in their interviews. Similar to this superior feeling, the students in the STGEC were told to study and act as engineers since the moment they got recruited in this institution. The combination of numerous hours of TD and TP indicated the nature of the training in engineering schools: professionalizing their study and reinforcing their competences in practice. The strict ranking during years of study, even written at their diploma could be considered as the most obvious proof for this elite and highly selective system.

6.2.3 Marginalized free movers

This subsection concerned only the group of free movers in the universities and *grandes écoles* and the reason why we put special focus on this group of students came from the size of this population in the French higher education institutions and the marginalized situation they were in their host institutions. In this study, the free movers were interpreted as students who came to the host institution either by document applications or being selected by entrance examinations and diploma oriented.

Graph 5 Evolution of international students & Erasmus students in France: 2006-2010

	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	Évolution 2006-2010
Étudiants internationaux en France	247 510	246 612	243 436	249 142	259 935	5,0 %
Étudiants internationaux français	52 240	54 040	44 412	51 154	54 407	4,1 %

Source : UNESCO

● Mobilité entrante ● Mobilité sortante

	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	Évolution 2006-2010
Étudiants Erasmus en France	20 673	20 503	20 955	22 033	23 173	12,1 %
Étudiants Erasmus français	22 981	22 556	23 560	24 426	25 709	12,2 %

Source : Commission européenne

● Mobilité entrante ● Mobilité sortante

According to the above two tables published by Campus France (Chiffre Clé 2012), on the basis of the data collected by European Commission, 23,173 Erasmus students were hosted in French higher education institutions during 2010-2011. Although we couldn't mix the resource from EC and UNESCO, we still could tell the small percentage of Erasmus students among all the international student population. If we related these two tables with the previous official statistics provided by the SSUB, we could identify the consistency of the large majority of free-movers' presence in the French HEIs, universities in particular. Meanwhile, there were also some other program students outside of Erasmus programs but the number of these students were very small.

Based on the interviews conducted in the four institutions and my previous research result, we noticed the paradoxical reality that this majority of international student population has become a marginalized group in the host institutions. As elaborated in the service provision section, this population was not eligible for service from international office except for their application selection and document verification in the SSUB which held 1,958 international free movers either for training or degrees. Thus, who should take care of this group of students?

In the group of universities, the free movers who were directly integrated in the major studies were often those from French speaking countries and with the increasing number of students from non-French-speaking countries, these students got recruited after having obtained an adequate French language level. Due to the non-competitive selection, these students could easily get recruited in the universities and one thing was indispensable: financial support proof. What's happening next follows the logic of 'take-it-for-granted'.

The international office personnel considered this group of students has already possessed the linguistic and financial resources to start their life in France by taking care of all the administrative procedures related to the accommodation, social welfare and medical care. The pedagogical team of researchers-teachers assumed that this group of students should accomplish the study missions as other local students because their recruitment in the universities symbolized they've got the skill packages to succeed.

Was it true? The reality said the opposite. When I started my research interest in the international student group in 2009, I read Coulon's report of the international student situations in France published in 2003 by OVE (Observatoire de la vie étudiante). More than ten years later, the situation remained the same. Due to my personal interest, I'm always curious about what happened to other Chinese students majoring in social sciences in my institution of study and the result was far less than satisfactory.

On the other hand, we noticed the free movers had more opportunities to succeed in their study in the group of *grandes écoles* and as previously explained, the competitive selection in the admission might have played an important role in terms of linguistic and academic competences evaluation.

Therefore, before ending this small part, we would like say that from the perspective of present and future, the free movers are and will be the most important targets for the French

higher education institutions. In order to ameliorate the host service provision and situation, the institutions need to first understand who these people are and what they need to identify what the institutions could offer. According to the previous studies, the accommodation situation, the French lessons, the pedagogical tutorship system and the small campus job opportunities could be on the top of the list.

6.3 International student recruitment: obligation and opportunity

As Chandler (1989) noted in her research report on “foreign student policy in six major receiving countries, foreign student policy indicates to some extent a nation’s philosophical biases and the consistent or contradictory themes contained in its culture” (p.15). The national foreign student policy was created under the influence of national factors in terms of diplomacy, economics, education needs and immigration policies and reflected the strategic national priority in certain period of time. As one the major receiving countries of international students, French foreign student policy lived in the dilemma between the past and present. It’s not surprising to see the French intellectuals’ attitude and response toward the recruitment of international students if we put it in the ideological context of French great civilizing force (Chandler 1989) and long-standing traditions of French cosmopolitanism (ibid, p.15). The equality in the foreign student policy reflected France’s generosity, which could turn into financial burden in a difficult national economic situation. Meanwhile, this generosity was also questioned by the prevalent neoliberal market-driven practices in other major receiving countries.

The title of this subsection was inspired by the report written by Chandler in 1989 related to the foreign student policy in six major receiving countries and the only difference was the option of obligation or opportunities for hosting international students has turned into obligation and opportunities nowadays. In this subsection, we would like to analyze some of the unexpected elements in the study.

6.3.1 An exceptional case study

As elaborated in the data collection, due to personal curiosity and professional interrogation, I interviewed the international office director in one *grande école* specializing in agriculture.

Unlike the other two *grandes écoles* in this study, agriculture is a field of study highly contextualized in the national, regional even local level. Thus, I was very curious about several questions: what are the general challenges it's facing in the internationalization of higher education, how it is going to respond and what's the international student recruitment situation in this institution. In fact, this interview was realized during the first period of interview waves. I searched the contact directly from its website and got the reply quite rapid from the director. In the interview, he told me he just arrived in this école and he is also a researcher in a research center in Paris as well. The reason why he accepted my interview was that he was also interested in the question of internationalization, which was closely related with his mission in this new office created in 2011 with only 1.5 full-time staff.

...un établissement d'enseignement supérieur agricole qui dépend du ministère de l'agriculture, qui n'est pas attaché au ministère de l'enseignement supérieur de la recherche, c'est une spécificité, il y a un certain nombre de ministères qui ont des établissements dont ils assurent la tutelle mais tout l'enseignement supérieur ne dépend du ministère de l'enseignement supérieur et de la recherche. C'est une École d'ingénieurs agronomes, qui forme les étudiants en trois ans, ils vont en L3 et après, ils font M1, M2. On a des promotions de 140 étudiants par an. Le recrutement à 80% est issu de classes préparatoires. (AGRO)

This institution was affiliated to the Ministry of Agriculture and delivered a three-year training programs. Like the STGEC, the students who succeed in all the programs obtained the diploma of engineer, equivalent to Master degree and 80% of the student population was from preparatory class. As he described in the interview, the institution only recruited 140 students per year and it's easy to imagine the total number of students enrolled in this institution. With regard to the actual situation of international student presence in this institution,

...aujourd'hui on a très peu d'étudiants étrangers, très peu, et ce sont des étudiants européens, souvent dans le cadre d'ERASMUS. Et donc, dans le cadre d'ERASMUS, il n'y a pas de frais d'inscription. Il va faire un semestre, il n'est pas diplômé de l'École. Aujourd'hui, on n'a pas d'étudiants étrangers diplômés de l'École. (AGRO)

He explained that nowadays they only hosted few Erasmus students for short-term mobility and none of the international students had obtained their diploma because the delivery of the engineer diploma demanded a study period of two years in the host institution. This factual description has also enforced the interest in this interview and if we used 'emerging' to describe the process of internationalization in the four selected institutions, this one hasn't

moved its first step. In responding to our questions of rationales for creation of the international relation office, he summed up two reasons: on the one hand, there was a change in the leadership and the new leader has put the internationalization in the institution mission.

Je dirais un établissement qui n'a pas d'ouverture à l'international aujourd'hui, est-ce qu'il peut continuer à exister. S'il n'ouvre pas pour se faire connaître de l'extérieur, mais aussi pour ouvrir ses étudiants au monde. ... ça dépend du marché de l'emploi et du type de formation que vous faites mais il me semble que dans tous les cas, s'ouvrir à d'autres réalités, ça crée des jeunes professionnels plus mûrs, plus à même de réagir à un contexte qu'ils ne maîtrisent pas forcément, à des problématiques qu'ils n'ont pas forcément anticipé, etc. Et donc, pour moi, l'information qu'on donne aux étudiants, gagne en qualité si on les ouvre à l'inconnu et l'international c'est l'inconnu. (AGRO)

On the other hand, in his opinion, open to the international context has become a necessity for an institution to survive and the institution should provide the students with better educational opportunities in terms of visions, programs and mobility in order to keep the close connectedness with the industry sectors and labor market both at national and international levels.

A : Vous créez des formations basées sur les demandes des entreprises...
B : Il y a à la fois l'état des connaissances, on a des enseignants-chercheurs donc on essaie de caler l'enseignement sur le niveau de la recherche actuelle, d'être sur un niveau d'exigences pour avoir des jeunes qui aient la tête bien faite. Ça c'est la moitié, pour les connaissances en agriculture, l'environnement et les problématiques actuelles, la pollution et pas mal de sujets d'actualité. Et l'autre volet de la formation c'est les sciences de l'ingénieur et là ça va être des questions de communication, de GRH, de gestion de projets, d'animation de réunions, de gestion de réunions un peu conflictuelles, de leur fournir un certain nombre d'outils, indépendamment du fait qu'ils étudient l'agriculture, donc les outils de l'ingénieur. Donc c'est deux facettes...(AGRO)

Like the other *grandes écoles*, the education programs were initiated both from the present reality and future demand in the field of study and research with some general skills in management, which indicated the common characteristics of engineering formation in France: future engineers equipped with managing competences and in our opinion, that's the fundamental difference from the 'technician' and 'engineer'. Meanwhile, the highly connectedness and interactivity between the institution and private or public sectors not only facilitated its graduates' employment but also forced the institution to be open to the global market.

Ça marche très bien. Les étudiants à 6 mois, les 2/3 ont un emploi, au bout de six mois à la sortie, ce qui dans le contexte actuel est... Et à 18 mois, ils ont tous un travail. Et on essaie d'améliorer ça encore. (AGRO)

According to his description, the graduates have all found their jobs in the following 18 months after their graduation. The statistic was consistent with that of the graduates from the other *grandes écoles* as being presented in the previous chapter. In his interview, he also mentioned a very special advantage that the institution needed to take into account and make good use of.

On a une forte demande internationale d'étudiants, de collègues chercheurs, ou de chefs d'entreprises qui voudraient former du personnel sur la question de la vigne et la fabrication du vin et du management des exploitations, donc on est en train de réfléchir à la mise en place d'un Master tout en anglais qui soit ouvert aux étudiants étrangers mais pas seulement, s'il y a les étudiants français qui veulent aussi étudier en anglais...Le coût, on est sur du 8000 euros, c'est comme ERASMUS Mundus, c'est le coût des Masters... (AGRO)

The academic strength related to the wine industry has created the great opportunity for this institution to develop some international education programs, those in English in particular. His discourse confirmed again the commonalities identified among the four selected institutions in developing English-teaching programs. Thus, the institution and the researchers were facing the same kind of challenges in terms of academic resources and language demand.

A : Quel est le rôle joué par la langue française pour le recrutement des étudiants étrangers ?

B : Aujourd'hui la stratégie de l'École c'est d'essayer de développer l'enseignement en anglais.

A : Est-ce possible ?

B : C'est difficile, certains collègues le font, la caractéristique de l'École aussi c'est d'avoir des enseignants qui ont des parcours différents, j'ai deux collègues qui sont hollandais, donc eux, faire cours en anglais, ça ne leur pose aucun problème, et ils sont très proactifs pour dire qu'il faudrait développer l'anglais. Et puis il y a des profs très franco-français qui vont dire : "non, moi j'explique moins bien en anglais, je n'ai pas de plaisir et les étudiants non plus", je comprends le principe, je suis d'accord avec l'idée mais non, je ne peux pas.(AGRO)

Facing the dilemma produced by the language of teaching and targeted population, the director of the international office admitted the difficulties and necessity for developing international master programs in English on the one hand; on the other hand, he also explained the priority or the most direct way of recruiting international students.

La zone méditerranée, on a le Maroc, la Tunisie et l'Algérie où il y a un bon niveau d'études, et puis une connaissance réciproque forte donc les étudiants peuvent intégrer le système plus rapidement... (AGRO)

In his opinion, it would be easier to start the recruitment from the Francophone students and he considered the former French colonies as the main targets for the first move for enlarging the international student population in this institution.

This only one case study helped us understand better about the influence of internationalization from a small *grande école*'s perspective. Internationalizing the curriculum, developing English-teaching programs and recruiting international students were not only the missions for the comparatively bigger and more universal fields of study but also were noted down on the top of list for these kinds of *grandes écoles*. Meanwhile, as elaborated before, the promotion of the pluridisciplinary study and research collaboration; and the globality of the problems worldwide prepared good communication and working ambiance for the academics and institutions in the world. In the interview, he also mentioned the importance of reciprocity in the international collaboration and confronting the situation that half of its students have accomplished a short-term study period abroad through the Erasmus program, he insisted the necessity to hosting some international students in his institution both for obtaining international reputation and facilitating the internationalization at home for those immobile students.

6.3.2 International student: more than a technical definition

If the above case study gave us a more complete view of the picture of French HEIs in the process of internationalization, the unexpected questions asked by the participants during the interviews helped me to develop some new understanding about the subjects in this research. 'Who is international student', the question has been answered with the two official definitions from UIS and OECD in the chapter introduction. International students were considered as those leaving their country or territory of origin and moving to another country or territory of which they were not a permanent resident with objective of study (UIS, 2009). In the definition of OECD, the prior education background was added as alternative criteria to depict the profile of international student. These two technical definitions facilitated the data collection of international student population by the international organizations for comparative studies. However, in this study, when I asked the staffs in the institutions about their definitions of international students, some responses were very insightful.

C'est un étudiant qui a beaucoup envie de bouger, de connaître, qui est souple et très flexible.
(STUDOS)

Un étudiant qui n'est pas né en France, même un étudiant juste à côté de la France, c'est un étudiant international. (SSUBOA)

Pour moi un étudiant étranger c'est quelqu'un qui a fait toute sa vie : école primaire, secondaire, dans un autre pays, et qui vient après faire ses études en France, ça peut être un semestre, ça peut être le Master. Cet étudiant n'a pas la nationalité Française mais je ne me pose pas vraiment la question... (STUDRS)

Si vous parlez des "étrangers", vous entendez par là les étudiants non français, mais certains sont passés par le cursus normal donc pour moi, ce sont des étudiants français donc je ne les interprète pas différemment. (SSUBRY)

The majority of the interviewees told me they actually had never thought about this question and therefore, they just gave me their answers based on their first reaction. From the above discourse, we could conclude that some of them still followed the nationality or citizenship to demarcate the line between local students and international ones; some provided a more ideological definition by concentrating students' characters such as open-mindedness and flexibility in their personality. However, what interests us most was the last interpretation and the interviewee identifies the international student by whether they've already been in the French system. I assumed that his definition could be shared by some other researchers and it reminded me immediately two questions: was this definition fair for international students? For an international student, how 'foreign' should she or he be?

Let's start from the first question of fairness: should the teachers treat the international students who have registered in the French education system for one year the same way as they treat the French students? Should the researchers treat the students from Morocco the same way as the students from China, for example, their difficulties at class, their performance in study etc.?

The answer is definitely positive. The law of December 31, 1981 assigned the admissions process to the universities' responsibility and since then three basic premises of French foreign student policy have been established: equality, welcome and autonomy. (Chandler 1989, p.17)

Equality: all students, foreign and domestic have equal rights. These include the same requirements in attainments for admission, the same requirements in attainments for admission, the same necessity for dispersal among the universities, even the same delays in the enrollment process. All higher educational programs in France must reflect equal levels of achievement. No 'bargain diplomas' (diplômes au rabais).

There must also be equality among foreign students themselves. In order to insure that all students undergo the same admissions procedures, all preliminary formalities must be fulfilled in the

country of origin, thus eliminating both the competitive edge of foreign students temporarily domiciled in France and also the problem of unnecessary costly travel.

Welcome: a true policy of welcome has two imperatives: (1) that the students' mastery of the French language and overall academic preparation be responsibly evaluated in order to assure a likelihood of success equal to that of their French student 'comrades'; (2) that they be guaranteed a suitable personal and academic reception through the "harmonious distribution" of students among French universities.

Autonomy: That the pedagogic autonomy of the universities shall be reinforced by granting them total responsibility in decisions regarding enrollment.

If we related these three premises with the recruitment of the international students in the French HEIs, we could still find small 'added etiquettes' in the explanations. The institution's autonomy in terms of pedagogy and admission decision was the fundamental premise in the international student recruitment. In this study, this autonomy allowed the institutions to decide targeted groups of students and selection criteria and it explained why the two groups of institutions have developed different forms of international academic relationships. The welcome attitude showed both the generosity of French HEIs and its cosmopolitan culture. Nevertheless, if we examined closely, the welcome was under certain circumstances: for the students to be welcome, they should 'master' the French language and have acquired the basic skill package to succeed in the study; for the institutions to welcome these students, they should provide proper service to the students recruited. The international student enrolled should be 'harmoniously' attributed to all the French universities; however, the fact was Paris and other major cities were still the favorite destinations for most international students. The main point in this premise implied that the French HEIs should recruit students with proper linguistic and academic levels, based on their own hosting capacities. Last but not least, the equality principal was considered as the most attractive element for recruiting international students: same registration fees, same right of social welfare and medical care with French students. However, when we concentrate on the equality of benefits, we shouldn't forget the aspect of 'responsibilities': same criteria for admission and study evaluation.

If we related the three premises with the definition of the international students mentioned in the interview, one interesting question was brought up: does equality equal to being indifferent to the difference? We think the institutions will improve their way of hosting international students if they find the answer to this question.

The second question about the foreignness of the international students was actually derived from the first question. In this study, we conducted 19 interviews with international students of 15 different nationalities in the four selected institutions. As elaborated in the previous chapters, their foreignness in terms of linguistic, cultural, familiarity to the system has played a primordial role in their study sojourn in the host institution.

A : Avant de venir, connaissais-tu le système des *grandes écoles* en France et la différence entre une grande École d'ingénieur et une université ?

B : En fait, c'est la même chose au Maroc. (STGECSD)

When we asked about their knowledge of the *grandes écoles* in France, two Moroccan student interviewees told me the existence of same system in their country and they were enrolled in the French system since their secondary school. Meanwhile both of them mentioned they had families in the host city and for them, they were no foreigner neither for the system nor for the French culture. Nevertheless it depended on whether they would like to accept or get integrated in this kind of culture. With regard to the majority of students, in particular students from Asian countries, they came to France with little knowledge of French higher education system and were still struggling with the language barrier. It's quite obvious the institutions have to take into account of the different degrees of foreignness.

To sum up, international student recruitment wasn't just the admission but a cyclic process and the service provision in the host institution was also a key step. The institutions had to develop its awareness of the cultural difference and try to be adaptive and absorptive from the resources produced by international students as well.

6.3.3 International student recruitment: more than a by-product of international academic collaboration

The term 'strategy' was one of the key questions that we intended to explore and also the word repetitively appeared in the interviews. As the majority of the interviews with the institution staff were conducted in French, we had to make sure the interviewees' understanding of this word was consistent with its implication in this study. Therefore, we added this question about interviewees' interpretation of the term 'strategy' in the process of internationalization in the institutions.

Pour moi, la stratégie c'est savoir ce que l'on veut, un objectif clairement affiché. L'université de x veut devenir une université d'intérêt international, attractive à l'international. L'objectif est clair et après la stratégie ce sont les moyens que l'université est prête ou capable à mettre. (STUDRS)

C'est mettre en place des actions, se donner les moyens de les réaliser et aboutir à voir l'action se réaliser... (SSUBOA)

La stratégie, c'est le fait de se donner les moyens nécessaires pour atteindre un objectif qui peut être un objectif de toute sorte : humanitaire, universitaire ou politique. (SSUBOV)

La manière en fait est de savoir d'où venons-nous ? Où en sommes-nous ? Où voulons-nous être ? (SSUBRA)

Based on their definitions, we identified several key elements: objective, resource and action. The objectives should be initiated on the basis the resources and put into practice with the availability of the resources to achieve the objectives. Most interviewees complained about lacking of resources in both groups of institution; however, the *grandes écoles* were still in a better condition in terms of allocation of funds and academic resources. What's important in their interpretation was related to the institution's logic of developing the initiatives and activities in student recruitment, even internationalizing the whole institution. Furthermore, it also reminded us that in the reform of internationalization, each institution should be realistic and make their own strategic moves based on their own situations and find their own position.

As declared by Knight & De Wit (1995), they used the term 'strategies' to "characterize those initiatives which were taken by an institution of higher learning to integrate an international dimension in research, teaching and service functions as well as management policies and systems" (p.17) . They divided various activities of internationalization into two major categories: program strategies and organizational strategies. In 2006, Knight re-confirmed the reasonability and applicability of this classification in the conventional public and private higher education institutions.

The program strategies refer to those academic activities and services of a university/college which integrate an international dimension into the main functions of a higher education institution. Organizational strategies include those initiatives which help to ensure that an international dimension, or in other words the activities discussed above, are institutionalized through developing the appropriate policies and administrative systems. (Knight & Altbach, 1995, p.17)

According to the elaboration of the forms of internationalization in the four institutions, we noticed that many programs have been developed or are in development. However, could we consider all these programs have been oriented from the institutional level?

Y a-t-il une stratégie d'internationalisation, institutionnelle ? Non. En d'autres termes, on pense que l'internationalisation est indispensable, c'est bien marqué. Mais on ne fait pas le lien avec notre propre identité ou notre propre définition. C'est-à-dire, que l'on ne prend pas en compte ce besoin d'internationalisation pour nous reconstruire et nous positionner pour être actif suffisamment et reconnu. On pense en termes d'internationalisation des étudiants, ça oui. On ne pense pas en termes d'internationalisation de notre institution. (SSGEARD)

SSGEARD, researcher-teacher in the SSGEA gave me his answer to this question, which represented also the consensus among most interviewees. Since several years ago, the four institutions fastened their steps of developing international academic collaboration and student exchange programs. Nevertheless, they still didn't figure out how to make a long-term development plan at the institutional level, particularly the universities.

One of the initiative research questions in this study concerned the strategies for recruiting international students in these four institutions.

B : Vous attirez beaucoup d'étudiants étrangers mais pour quel objectif ?

V : Alors, non, on ne cherche pas à attirer particulièrement des étudiants étrangers, simplement, on accueille tout ce qui se présentent à condition qu'ils ont un niveau de français suffisant pour pouvoir suivre les cours et réussir aux examens. (SSUBOV)

Il y a une vraie stratégie mise en place pour attirer les étudiants étrangers ? NO... je pense que si l'on veut attirer les étudiants étrangers, il faut faire des cours en anglais. (STGECO)

The responses of directors of the international office from the SSUB and the STGEC could be a good summary of answers for the majority of the participants. On the one hand, the universities have not really implemented any measures for intentionally attracting international students and the reasons were well explained before in terms of limited academic resources and the public investment. The creation of the international office has already been considered as a great step for internationalizing the education and research in the universities. On the other hand, like the STGEC, although the *grandes écoles* have manifested their interest in recruiting international students, they still needed to develop more English-teaching programs and the great motivation before this effort lay in the demand from the main stakeholders in the institution. In all, no obvious proactive intention for recruiting international student was manifested in these institutions. However, we still identified some new strategic move in the SSGEA.

C'était avec les lycées : le lycée de Shanghai, pour les étudiants qui ont fini le baccalauréat chinois qui viennent en France, qui rentrent à SSGEA, comme les premières années mais sur un recrutement, sur un autre recrutement comme ce que faisait SP Paris. SP Paris prend de bons étudiants mais c'est sur dossier. Nous, on fait un vrai examen. On essaie de faire des conventions

donc, ça existe avec la Finlande aussi, avec quelques étudiants, pour internationaliser nos promotions. Mais là ce n'est pas la mobilité, c'est vraiment la formation. (SSGEAOR)

The international office director in the SSGEA gave us an example of the on-going collaboration with the international high schools in Shanghai (China) and in Finland. One of the students from China, a former student of an international high school explained how these kinds of international high school functioned and according to her description, these students learned at least two languages during the three years of high school and they were not only good at language learning but also with excellent academic records. Most importantly, these students have already decided to study abroad and their study plan was often made and supported by their families. These students could be considered as the ideal international student population targeted by the foreign institutions for one simple reason: they're both economically and academically ready for study abroad. Thus, in my opinion, the SSGEA might point out a 'new' way for the other French institutions for promoting and recruiting international students, elite ones in particular. Although this kind of measure existed in some French former colonies, it's still new for non-Francophone countries, China in particular. As one of the biggest student-sender countries in the world, more and more Chinese families, particularly comparatively richer ones have had the tendency of sending their children at younger ages in order to get well integrated in the host culture and society. Moreover, behind this strategic move of collaboration, a very important message was sent out that international education was an integrated entity and international student recruitment should not only focus on postgraduate levels.

This chapter started with a description section of how the two groups of institutions recruited international students. On the basis of the actual enrolled students' profiles, the analysis intended to identify the potential applicants in the pool, the selection criteria in the institutions and the service provisions from which the students benefited in a comparative perspective. The second section employed a reverse logic and tries to examine the recruitment process from the admission perspective. Students' institutional experience was the most convincing proof for the institutions to realize their advantages and weakness in the eyes' of international students, which could be helpful for their future amelioration. The last section mainly focused some of the small detailed elements in the interviews that needed more research attention in the future. The case study of the école of agriculture revealed the institutional life for a small group of *grandes écoles* specializing in some fields in France. The re-interpretation of the

international student definition from the researchers showed us both the complexity of hosting international students and the increasing awareness of the different characteristics of international student population from the researchers. The introduction of some strategic moves in the SSGEA pointed out some new methods of developing effective and efficient international student recruitment.

Conclusion

This journey of exploration started with a personal and professional inquiry into the mysterious dual higher education system in France and the study mainly focused on a particular population: international students. In combining the two interests together, we've chosen the central research question: international student recruitment in the *grandes écoles* and the universities in the context of internationalization. International student mobility, both an old and a new subject of research, attracts worldwide researchers' interest. It's old because the phenomenon did exist several hundred years ago and has been analyzed from various perspectives in different fields of study. It's new because the population's profiles are changing and the host countries & institutions' interests and expectations are changing. In this last part of the research presentation, we would like to first answer the questions that we initiated from the very beginning of this study. Then based on our findings, the possible future research needed was also discussed with the potential application of the research findings on international student recruitment and their implication for the French HEI in their future policy-making. The conclusion ended with elaboration of the contribution of our findings to knowledge development of the major theories applied in this study.

In this study, the inquiry began with a most general question of the challenges facing the *grandes écoles* and universities in internationalization. In responding to this question, we referred to the previous studies on the two groups of institutions, including the historical studies on the development of the dual system and studies from social, political and economic perspectives on the on-going reforms in the *grandes écoles* and universities. These studies have provided us with the basic knowledge of the different contexts. However, to analyze the context in details, we needed more tools to do the anatomy. In the construction of a conceptual framework, the theory of institution was applied as the fundamental and starting point to understand how the institution functions. The theory of institutional transformation showed us the change that the institution could have during the interactivity with the external incentives, which explained why the new institutional approach was used to interpret this transformation from economic, sociological and historical perspectives. With the introduction of the marketization of higher education in the global context and the development of the referencing systems, we revealed the triangle relationship among the nations, the market and HEIs. In order to justify the impact of the market on French HEIs, we summarized the recent reforms in both *grandes écoles* and universities. Guided by the framework, our findings responded to this question from two aspects: internal and external. On the one hand, the

institution actors in these two groups of institutions considered internationalization as a norm to be followed and the development of programs of courses in English and international student recruitment were two important elements of internationalization in the institutions. From a comparative plan, we found lots of similarities in the forms of internationalization in the four institutions based on the responses of the participants and the official institutional documents of international policies. Nevertheless, we still identified divergence related to the institutional actors' difficulties in practicing English in the comparison, which resulted from researchers' lack of confidence, local students' insufficient English skills and the particularity of certain disciplines. In general, considering that the students in the *grandes écoles* had a better language level than those in the universities, it could be easier for the *grandes écoles* to develop courses in English for their local students. Moreover, with regards to the exportation of the programs and creation of offshore campuses, which have been widely developed in the two universities, the two *grandes écoles* held very strong oppositions. In spite of all the awareness of the necessity and practice of internationalization, the institutionalization of internationalization hasn't been formed yet. On the other hand, the two groups of institutions needed to face the challenge from the external. At the global level, the four institutions in this study were confronting the same problem of invisibility, which partially resulted from the global ranking systems and resulted in the on-going merging reforms. From a comparative perspective, the two *grandes écoles* showed more preference to be an ally with the members in their group. Moreover, the invisibility also came from the lack of knowledge of the *grandes écoles* in the international education market. Thus, the two *grandes écoles* were dealing with two problems: how to make themselves known and extend their national privilege to the international level. At the European level, the construction of the EHEA pushed the implementation of the LMD structure in the French HEIs, which was intended to facilitate intra-European student mobility. However, this harmonization of the higher education system still had long way to go, especially its implementation in some engineering schools, which was confirmed by the only Erasmus student hosted in the STGEC. In a word, our response to the challenges of the dual system was categorized into institutional, European and global scales with a new institutional approach to analyze the institutional transformation in the context of internationalization.

Our inquiry continued with the question of French HEIs' rationales for recruiting international students. As noted in the literature review, with regards to international student mobility, numerous studies have been conducted involving study motivations, experience and

employment situations after-study, and etc., mostly in the English-speaking countries. The development of the study on this subject seemed a little behind in France, especially qualitative studies on the international student mobility in the *grandes écoles*. This question of inquiry was mainly interested in the roles of international students in the host institutions. In the era of the knowledge economy, hunting for talents has evolved into a worldwide war and demographic development also has an impact on the country's immigration policies. Meanwhile, with the marketization of higher education, the economic profits behind international student recruitment have also become more and more attractive. In this study, international student population was identified as infinite resources for the institutions, its researcher and local students and their roles were consensually considered as brainpower, media for internationalization at home and beneficiaries of French social welfare. In the interviews, most of the academic respondents in the universities had a reserved attitude of the cash cow role of the international students in their institutions. We also identified a new role attribution to some international students funded by their government in the engineering school and the trainer-trainee relationship could possibly enrich the studies on the talent flow in the global context.

The third inquiry was also the central research questions in this study and we employed mixed theories in analyzing the data of institutional branding in the global context and the international student recruitment process from pooling of resources to admission and service provision in the two groups of host institutions. In the construction of a conceptual framework, we introduced the theory of branding in higher education. Considering that on the one hand, the branding strategies have already been frequently used in the major English-speaking countries in recruiting international students and the reserve might be produced by the application of marketing in education on the other hand, we intended to explore the feasibility of branding in French HEIs by concentrating on three major steps of operation: positioning, targeting and operating both in the national and international context. Moreover, the world system theory and the theory of international academic relations were also employed to better understand the brain circulation and the international collaboration between the institutions. The former showed us the power hierarchy in the world which has influenced the circulation of the physical, human and virtual resources, which created more inequality between nations or institutions. The latter presented the logic of the mutuality and partnership model in the international academic collaboration, which could bring the institutions and nations more benefits.

In this study, corporate branding and product branding were both employed to analyze how the two groups of institutions created their niche in the international promotion, either for the *grandes écoles* to internationalize their national privilege relative to education and employment; or for the universities to become more visible in the international ranking systems. Furthermore, the networking was also a common strategy for the two groups of institutions in the international context and the profiles of their allies in the network also facilitate the institutions' image building. In terms of targeting the population and the market, the two groups of institutions have employed different approaches by taking account of the offers they could provide in terms of education programs, training objectives and institution networks. A more proactive utilitarian oriented method has been developed in the *grandes écoles*, compared to a more ideological and reactive approach in the universities. In the operation phase, both groups have followed the logic of developing international student recruitment from the international research collaboration, and the only difference lay in the forms of collaborations between the institutions and their foreign peers. The criteria of reciprocity and excellence were well implicated in this process of collaboration with degrees of nuances in the two groups of institutions. With regard to international advertising, the *grandes écoles* were more engaged in terms of administration management and mobility funds.

The institution branding strategies and activities reflected how the institutions envisaged themselves to be viewed in the international context. The analysis of the actual international student population helped us to better describe their profiles, and the confrontation of their feedback with the strategies implemented in the branding system allows the institutions to identify their strength and weakness for future promotion. On the one hand, in the two *grandes écoles*, the international students' profiles were very consistent with their local peers, with very good academic records and comparatively better family situations in their home countries. Due to the recruitment model in these *grandes écoles*, individual mobility was highly selected by the host institutions through entrance exams and a few of them could be accepted by document application. Moreover, the program students were often pre-selected by the sending institution and the host institution often approved a diplomatic admission. On the other hand, in the two universities, the international students' profiles were more diversified with different academic performances. Compared to the *grandes écoles*, the international students in the universities were recruited by document application and the free-movers have represented the majority of the population. Meanwhile, there was tendency to developing the

international master programs which could attract more international students with academic merits; however, the tuition fees for these programs were far more expensive than the national registration fees. By comparing the administration and pedagogical service provided by the institution with the international students' institutional integration experience, a contradictory phenomenon was revealed related to the marginalized group of free-movers, the majority in the international student population. The free-movers have benefited from different levels of service in the two groups of institutions from the program students. The process of pooling resources to service provision explained how the two groups of institutions have recruited the international students and the process from admission to recruitment helped the institutions to better understand their enrolled population and ameliorate their future practices.

The last inquiry was interested in the impact of the coexistence of *grandes écoles* and universities in international student recruitment and the good practices that the two groups of institutions could learn from each other in this process. In this study, on the basis of both the references of previous studies and our field research, we could conclude that the coexistence of *grandes écoles* and universities is a historical product based on the social and economic demand at that time and even if the dual system is facing some serious challenges nowadays, its existence is still useful and meaningful. In a more conclusive way, we could say that the dual system of higher education is both a constraint and a complementarity. On the one hand, as noted before, the problem of visibility has been a major concern for the higher education ministry in recent years and that explained the merging reforms. It's quite understandable that if the institution's reputation is not recognized, the international students couldn't even add it to their list of choices. From this perspective, to be known has to be the top priority, but however, in the knowledge economy era, there is more than one way to be recognized. The ranking system was seriously criticized in the interviews of the research and we agreed the existence of inadequacy of all the referencing systems. To make a smart move in branding strategies by identifying its own niche could be the only choice for the *grandes écoles*, which should maximize the professionalism of their education programs and the networking. On the other hand, size was not the only concern for the universities to explain their places in the ranking systems. In the interviews, the academic respondents mentioned the '*système titulaire*' of the academy and the complex research affiliation, which revealed a double problem: international academic recruitment and international data collection for scientific publications. Thus, a deep reform of the dual research system needs to be accomplished. On the other hand, the coexistence of these two groups of institutions shows the complementarity

in the French higher education system. By analyzing the students' profiles in the *grandes écoles* and the universities and comparing their educational programs and objectives, we felt that different institutions are designed for different populations, and if the students have good knowledge of their competences and future plans, they could certainly choose the right institution. Meanwhile, the two groups of institutions have already chosen their groups of candidates even before they launch the branding activities and their problem is how to enlarge their candidates' pool. Compared with the *grandes écoles*, the universities recruit a more diversified group of students and with the development of international or European programs, they are competing with the *grandes écoles* for the candidate pools. Nevertheless, they are preparing a more academic path for their candidates than the *grandes écoles*. This complementarity of training programs and orientation could work harmoniously in both national and international contexts. In this study, we identified some practices that distinguished the *grandes écoles* and the universities in terms of recruiting activities and service provision, as noted in responding to the previous questions. To be more proactive and utilitarian in promoting and serving the international students should be an important demand of change for the universities. As the respondents in the universities elaborated, the lack of funds and human resources was the key excuse for some unsatisfactory facts. However, we considered the fundamental problem came from their lack of awareness and willingness to institutionalizing the internationalization, which existed in both groups of institutions more or less.

At the end of the last chapter, some 'special' elements have been discussed and due to their 'unexpectedness', it might deserve more reflection in future research and give more implication for institutional or national foreign policies. Firstly, the general impression related to international student recruitment in this study is that no evident proactive strategic moves have been implemented in any of the institutions. In our opinion, the lack of incentives in the institutions could be the key problem. On the one hand, we observed the impact of the international marketization of higher education on French HEIs, reflected by the on-going reforms of autonomy fights for universities and merging moves of the HEIs. On the other hand, marketization has played a very limited role in French HEIs, in international student recruitment in particular. The Anglo-American model couldn't work in the French context and the major explanation is related to the different profiles of international student groups recruited in French HEIs. Secondly, considering the comparative perspective in this study, we noticed the dual system didn't create a duel in the international student market and the

recruited student groups in the *grandes écoles* and universities did show some obvious differences. More importantly, for the *grandes écoles*, their applicant pools were highly dependent on the institution's networks. Furthermore, with more bridges constructed between the universities and *grandes écoles* both for research and education and with the appearance of merged HEIs, the aspects such as institution's network management, education program provision etc., would definitely influence international student recruitment. Thirdly, the whole education system should be considered as organic, which means we could not only concentrate on certain level of international student recruitment in the *grandes écoles* and universities, but just as in the on-going collaboration between the SSGEA and one international high school in Shanghai, the French HEIs should form a developmental perspective on this recruitment process and put more attention on sustaining the already existing collaborations while developing new ones in order to open more direct doors for the recruitment. Fourthly, for *grandes écoles* and universities, benchmarking is inevitable and branding isn't a bad thing to do. The competition for talents both at the national and international level will not stop whether or not the institutions want to participate. Thus, learning how to create a distinctive self-image and develop adapted branding strategies for both education and research in the international context could be challenging; however, the process will be interesting to observe and analyze. Finally, the special case study also showed us what's happening in very small *grandes écoles* with special majors traditionally nationalized. How should they internationalize their educational programs, Do they need to recruit more international students, why and how? How should they position themselves in the international context? All these questions are worth being studied.

All research is expected to produce something which will contribute to the development of the study field. This study was constructed on the basis of a local field research and although it might not be representative, which is not our objective either, we still identified some new interesting elements. As regards the international academic relations, we found three levels of relationship in the institutional collaborations: individual, bilateral and institutional in seven types. The profiles of collaborative partners were classified into three categories: traditional, new emerging exotic and frenemies based on cultural-linguistic aspects and four categories: family, competitor, cash and human partners on the basis of geopolitical and economic relationships. Behind all these types of partnerships, we could feel a cautious change in French higher education institutions' posture from simply fulfilling the partners' demands to creating certain partnership based on their own needs. We found more proof of this change in

the *grandes écoles* and they intentionally pushed their students' international education and enlarged their future employment fields by developing some collaboration with certain institutions. One more important element that we noticed in the collaborative process is that the French academic community put some effort into understanding the dimension of interculturality and started to be aware of the mutual benefits in this kind of partnership. As regards the international student recruitment, on the basis of data analysis, we considered it both as an opportunity and obligation for French HEIs. Unlike the economic profits produced by international education in the UK, the USA and Australia, we think French HEIs have comparatively more diverse offerings for international students and the soft power of French higher education, which used to function with former French colonies, is now expanding its influence in other parts of the world. Furthermore, with the development of ICT and worldwide interconnectedness, student mobility has been more frequent and comparatively easier to realize and international students' profiles also showed some differences related to their future professional plan: traditionalists, strategists and internationalists. In a long-term vision, the three groups of students have broken the simple brain drain or brain gain theories and provided more possibilities for both their home and host countries. The new trainer-trainee relationship between international students and their host institutions in France is an example of the practice of the developmental-state theory which pushed some emerging countries, such as China and Brazil, to invest in their talents' training in French institutions. This serves to make good use of the advanced French technologies for the home countries' nation-building on the one hand and on the other hand, it's also an extended form of soft power of French education on these talents and their home countries. Besides, the questioning of the definition of international students in the study showed us that it's more than a technical definition given only for the international statistics collection's sake, and this group of population needs more attention from the academic community for distinction and differentiation. Last but not least, the study could help the readers to understand more about the dual system and the international student population in the *grandes écoles* and universities. As revealed in the data analysis, the norms of the internationalization deeply influenced the French HEIs, and we observed the normalization of this process and the pain and conflicts accompanied in these institutions. As the whole academic world is overwhelmed by the performance of Anglo-American universities, we are profoundly aware of the fact that it's not the future for French HEIs which are so rich in their academic tradition and cultures. They need more effort to make it known in the world.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Information Letter for Interview Participants

Research Project: A study of institutional strategies for the development of international student mobility

Researcher:

Cui BIAN –PhD student, Education Sciences, University of Bordeaux Segalen

3 ter Place de la Victoire

Bordeaux, 33076, France

Tel: 0623589262

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Supervisor: Prof. Régis Malet (IUFM, University of Bordeaux IV)

Prof. Ruth Hayhoe (University of Toronto)

Dear _____

You are being asked to participate in a qualitative study of the institutional strategies for the development of international student mobility. From this study, I hope to explore the international dimensions practiced in French higher education institutions in the context of internationalization for developing the international student mobility.

I am asking you to participate in a 45-60 minutes' interview, which will be tape-recorded and then transcribed. Any references and quotations that might identify you or your institution will be removed. Once I have completed the transcription of interview, you will have the opportunity to review it to ensure it accurately reflect the interview and you are comfortable with what has been included.

This study is completely voluntary and you will be free to withdraw from the interview at any point you wish. Your identity will remain as confidential as possible. I will use a pseudonym; and will leave out any details that might identify you. When you review my transcription, you can remove any points you do not wish to be made public. Information of our interview will be used for research purpose only and the tape recordings will be destroyed after my thesis is submitted.

If you are willing to participate, or have further questions, please contact me at the above number or by email.

Sincerely,

Cui BIAN

Please complete the information below if you agree to participate

A study of institutional strategies for the development of international student mobility

Researcher: Cui BIAN –PhD student, Education Sciences, University of Bordeaux Segalen

Email: bianbiencui@yahoo.fr

Name:

I agree to be audio-taped: Yes No

Signature:

Date:

Contact information:

Thank you very much – your participation is greatly appreciated!

Appendix B: Interview Guide

Interview Questions for International Office Directors/Personnel

Part 1 Internationalization of higher education

1. Could you please tell me the missions of international office and your responsibilities here in this office?
2. Is there only one office at institutional level in charge of international relations or there are still some branch offices at departmental level? What's the relationship between the main office and branches? How are the missions divided and how do you collaborate with each other?
3. During the last twenty years, two terms "internationalization" and "internationalization of higher education" have been mentioned and discussed in different research fields. What's your understanding of them?
4. What are the challenges that the institution meet during the process of internationalization and how did it respond?
5. Could we consider them as the common strategies? How do you define "strategy"?
6. Some researchers mentioned that university education could also be traded and someone also practiced the branding theory in higher education. What's your opinion? How did you or will you create the brand of your institution?

Part 2 Dual system

7. Do you know Shanghai Ranking System? What do you think of it?
8. We know that French higher education institutions don't perform very well in the ranking system and part of the reason could be retraced from the existence of universities and grandes écoles. What do you think of this dual system? What are its challenges and opportunities in the context of internationalization?

Part 3 International student recruitment

9. What's your definition of "international student"? Could you describe a bit the international student population here on your campus? What are the top nationalities among them? Do you have any idea why it happened?
10. How many methods do you use here to recruit international students? What're the differences between different categories?
11. What are institutional objectives to recruit international students? What's the role of French language in this recruitment?
12. Does the presence of increasing number of international students influence the curricula reform or pedagogical reform here?

13. How does the institution initiate a student exchange program and make it sustainable?
How does the institution select a collaborative partner?
14. Does the institution have some geographical preferences or priorities for the recruitment of international students? For what reasons?
15. What's the scholarship policy for international students? How's the situation of professional orientation for the international students?
16. As a university/grande école, compared with grande école/university, what advantages do you have in recruiting international students?
17. What are the institution's future moves in order to attract more international students and ameliorate its international visibility?

Interview Questions for International students

1. Could you please introduce yourself a little bit?
2. What's your program here (with detailed information)?
3. How do you get informed of this program? Could you please describe the process of being recruited here?
4. What's your French level? What's the importance of French in your program?
5. What kind of information have you had of this institution before you coming here? Is the information consistent with the reality?
6. Have you ever considered the financial aspect before your registration?
7. What are you expecting in this experience abroad (personal & professional)? Is it related to your future career?
8. If you are asked to do an advertisement for your institution, what will be it? Could you please show me some examples?
9. Do you like Bordeaux?
10. What do you think of infrastructure and equipment here in this institution?
11. Do you have some international student colleagues or friends in your class? What kind of similarities do you find in your experiences? (study and daily life)
12. What do you think of your curriculum and professors' teaching?
13. What interests and benefits you most in this institution?
14. What have you learned since your arrival?
15. Do you have knowledge of the dual system in French higher education? What do you think of it?
16. If you are asked to give some suggestions to the institution for attracting more international students in the future, what will they be?

Interview Questions for Researcher-Teacher or Researcher

Part 1 Internationalization of higher education

1. As a researcher, what are your major responsibilities in this institution?
2. Except for being a researcher, do you have other missions here?
3. During the last twenty years, two terms “internationalization” and “internationalization of higher education” have been mentioned and discussed in different research fields. What’s your understanding of them?
4. What are the challenges and opportunities created by this process in your career?
5. Some researchers mentioned that university education could also be traded and someone also practiced the branding theory in higher education. What’s your opinion? How did you or will you create the brand of your institution? What’s your role in the process of internationalization in your institution?

Part 2 Dual system

6. Do you know Shanghai Ranking System? What do you think of it?
7. We know that French higher education institution doesn’t perform very well in the ranking system and part of the reason could be retraced from the existence of universities and grandes écoles. What do you think of this dual system? What are its challenges and opportunities in the context of internationalization?

Part 3 International student recruitment

8. What’s your definition of “international student”? Could you describe a bit the international student population here on your campus? What are the top nationalities among them? Do you have any idea why it happened?
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11. Does the presence of increasing number of international students influence the curricula reform or pedagogical reform here?
12. How does the institution initiate a student exchange program and make it sustainable? How does the institution select a collaborative partner?
13. Does the institution have some geographical preferences or priorities for the recruitment of international students? For what reasons?

14. What's the scholarship policy for international students? How's the situation of professional orientation for the international students?
15. As a university/grande école, compared with grande école/university, what advantages do you have in recruiting international students?
16. What are the institution's future moves in order to attract more international students and ameliorate its international visibility?