

Academic freedom in research : the role of public sector for a social effectivity

Denis Jouan (France)

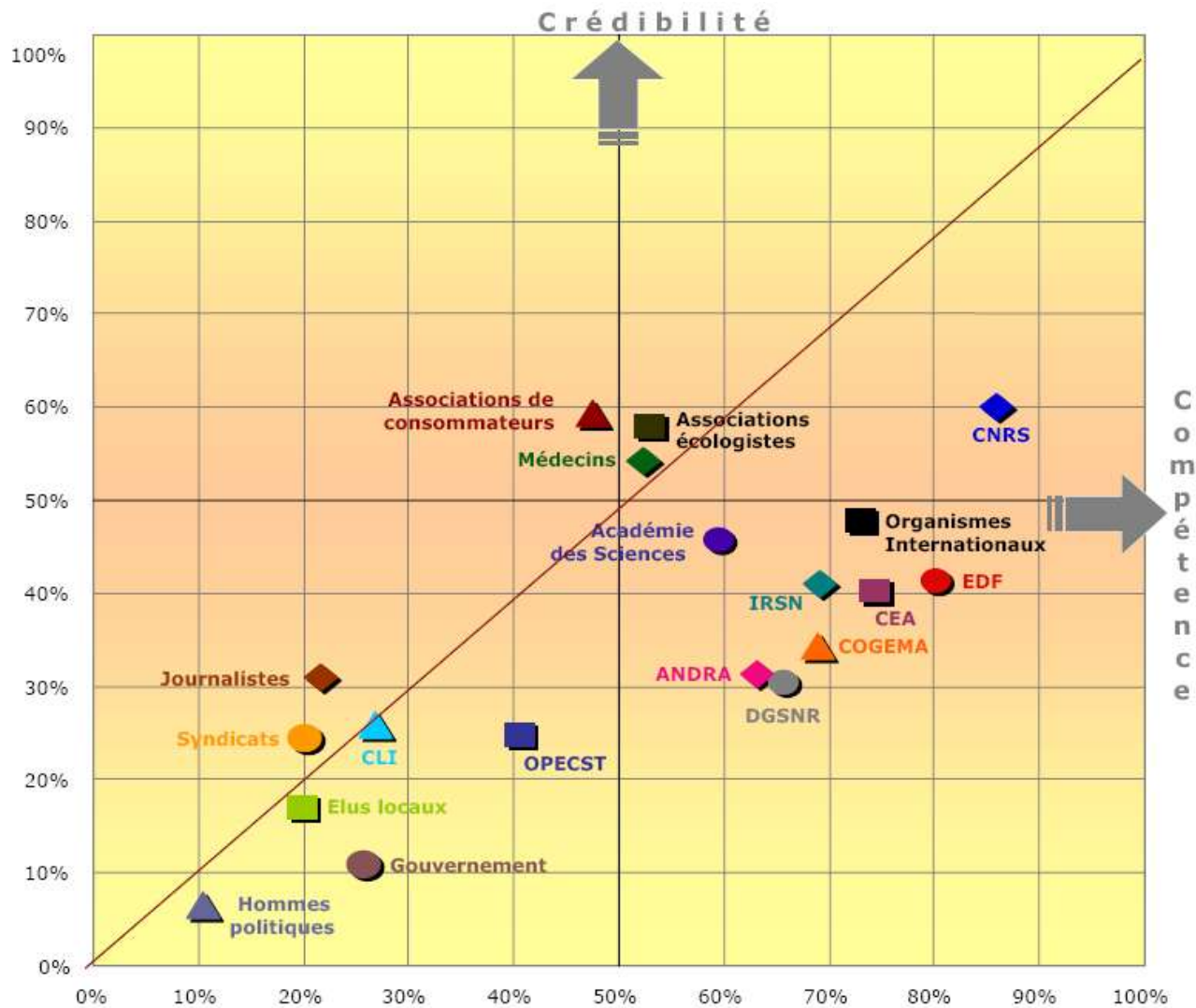
SNCS national scientific researchers trade union

Beside knowledge progress,

Research and high education public sectors can play a role not only for innovation and education, but also as a tank of expertise for civil society, or in a direct partnership with it.

Some specific characteristics are better

Not all
public
structures
are the
same



The goal and the means

- Globalisation claim: « innovation and fundamental research are the same »
- But knowledge progress (« blue sky research ») remains more general than economical interest
- Knowledge frontier => peer review. Modern reforms: get maximal external control on this, to make it closer to quantitative production process
- But this academic intellectual freedom, inside a genuinely plural and contradictory debate, is also a factor of the social credibility of the « expert », and then one of the social effectivity of public bodies

Note: Knowledge is not the use of it, applied research is not basic research.

Most of the troubles in the last decade are not linked to scientific research but to commercial choices

Some examples

- France: comité national de la recherche scientifique: 2/3 elected (some said « a marxist system »). Deals with CNRS assessment. To be replaced by a structure nominated by the minister, and « private foundations ».
- Universities: president is elected internally, by committees elected. Going to disappear in new president reforms
- UK: going to a fully metric evaluation + ext committees
- Europe: most of the financing concentrated in agencies ? (happened already in Greece during the last 15 years)
- Also: jobs increasingly precarious and « mobile »

Globaly: being more and more dependent, academic freedom disappears, **public service becomes only a resource.**

Innovation = knowledge research

- Global Propaganda: food for mad cow or antibiotic use for chicken are research (even tchernobyl's fools were doing « research »).
- Not at all the same : looking for understanding universe or mankind history or society is very different from these business side activities. It is INDEPENDANT from financial interest
- Global reforms: economy will strictly control all areas of research
 - It will be de facto RESTRICTED to the innovative side
- And the production strictly managed (human ressources, production quantity and content): « culture of PROJECT » !

Administrative versus democratic

Science-society approaches in public research

- There are examples of expertise going wrong because being done inside an **administrative logic** (hierarchy), by lack of plurality and internal contradiction (recently: ~social deviance is an illness)
 - Science-society (cityzen) relationship is becoming a priority. But tend to develop and restrict to an administrative approach (IHEST, CNRS strategy..), in particular « democratic » bodies among research are not recognized
- ➔ Democratic bodies should be a natural support for « free » discussions between public research and citizens

Public service versus private citizens assoc.

- Public service and social regulations are not identically present in all developed countries.
- In particular private structures (foundations, associations) sometimes replace it (maximal market, minimal state, less taxes, more charity)
- Citizenship private structures should not be a way to avoid a social regulation that the state should support (example: poor neighborhoods)

mobility

- **Freedom is good**
- OECD 2003: « there is a correlation between mobility of workers and multifactorial increase of productivity ».... what kind of philosophy is it ? (associated with temporary jobs, supposed to be a positive factor, root of the «management by projects »)
- European comitee livre vert: « a ressource of researchers ready to respond to the needs of the socio-economical structures »
- ➔ future public researcher: temporary worker waiting for filling in a project decided by business or private structures
- Military research model: « technology investment and intellectual capital advantage... attract and retain top-quality scientists in defense programs,... » : this is qualitatively different from what a public service, directed at people, could offer
- **Flexibility-slavery** is bad (for any worker)
- Destroy intellectual freedom in academic public service, Risk of Brain drain
- Solution ? OIT: « create work were people do live »
- Conclusion: beware that mobility as a constraint is not a progress, it can also be a tool for globalisation powership, for instance against intellectual freedom of academic world

Research strategy

- generally speaking, equilibrium between politic and business is endangered by globalisation. Some even claim that market will solve everything.
- Looks like « end of history », inequality is accepted, and no more master-slave problem, juste technical economy in market.
- Public service and social regulations are not present identically in all developed countries. Evolution should be toward an **equilibrium** market/state **business - public service – citizen associations**
- Research: equilibrium applied/basic research, leaving a true public research with sufficient scientific/social independence (=> internal democracy/collegiality), => structure and means

It will be difficult to fight the brain washing:

➔ let's be DINOSAURS of public service against the (monsters of) retro-modernity, aiming at the freedom of mankind through the one of the market/business.