

The French Educative System Corrupted

By Benjamin Wagener on December 1st, 2013.

The french educative system has been created by Napoleon Bonaparte, it was founded on the idea that France needed a upper society to become an elite. I argue here strongly that the french system is nowadays deeply corrupted and that the competitive structure it may represent is broken. This elites are the group represented by a very special system of higher education that are called in France the »Classes Préparatoires« (Preparatory Schools) and the »Grandes Ecoles« (Great Schools). This represent a minority of students while we still have Universities in France but those are considered in France as secondary and of low level.

The corruption is indeed very deep. By example it is quite usually peoples from the higher society that access those »Grandes Ecoles«. It was different in France just five or six decades ago but now it seems that it does not work anymore. The symbolism of this system is such that peoples of such schools are selected mainly on diplomas that say mainly that they come from such or such school, while once entered it is quite easy to get such diploma and while it does not depend on their real abilities or potential. In counter part we can see in french Universities that the majority of students are going quite depressed by studies that are inadapted and by a future with no promise.

There is moreover a huge investment in such schools that is really unreasonable. The consequences of this is that our Universities are going quite bad and this goes with the french research. Really, appart from a strong minority of researchers that are promised very early to the pantheon of research, the french research is indeed going bad and with very few credits agreed to various parts of sciences that should indeed be important.

It is quite certainly the only place in the World where a doctoralship, a person with the level of a Ph.D., is so badly considered. A Ph.D. in France may be granted with 8 years of higher education while a person coming from a »Grande Ecole« is granted a diploma at the Master level but it represents in France much more than a Ph.D., this especially from an economy point of view.

The corruption has gone so far that many young persons in France are completely disgusted by this system and we could see in French newspapers a few months ago that there are about 900000 young persons in France that are just out of any educative or labor system and this is much more than the number of peoples in the »Grandes Ecoles«.

From my own point of view it may be due to a kind of madness to continue and to insist this way. Because moreover the system of elites is deeply sustained by various structures whereas we can say very clearly that nowadays it causes more damages to France that it does for it.

For a student of almost any University in France it is very hard and very difficult anyway even for an excellent student. His/Her diplomas have only a small value on the french labour market.

Whereas for a student of a »Grande Ecole« life can be often quite easy even for very bad students and there are. His/Her diplomas can grant a lot of different things on this market.

Nevertheless the difference between their respective value may not be large, the main difference is that in the »Grandes Ecoles« the students are very well prepared because there is such a competitive situation between those »Grandes Ecoles« themselves and also with respect to french »Universities« just to say as a real propaganda that they are the bests.

Notice that such a situation can only be bad for France because a good and healthy competitive situation with respect to the real level, skills and potential of young persons is dramatically missing.

Moreover, even if this situation begins to be known and recognize it also appears to be very difficult to change mainly because the lobby of »Classes Préparatoires« and »Grandes Ecoles« is still very influent in France but also because this situation is deeply rooted in France and in french History.

We can only hope for France that somehow reason will come back in the field... I mean that this situation is very bad for France and somehow can not reasonably continue this way. A good competitive system would require at least to not discard directly a student of the potential it may have for the french Society just because he/she is not in the right place.

If we look at numbers: it is a few hundred thousands of persons that are in the »Classes Préparatoires« and »Grandes Ecoles« while it is a few millions and almost all the french youth that is diseredited. It is the major part of the young peoples in France that for such a symbolism due to Napoleon is directly discarded from all what they could do as good for the french state and society and mentalities evolve very very slowly... But demography has changed...

For an important part of the youngests french persons moreover it is very difficult. There are very young persons that would not anyway access to the »Grandes Ecoles« and that are by the way hurt very early from this system. This are Lives that are completely wasted.

What to say of the 40-50 students in the Ecole Normale Supérieure in Paris each year and of our regular Fields Medal while millions of persons are suffering and while France is deeply impacted at various levels from this situation? Because moreover all the french educative system is sustained in order to train finally a few students. Nowadays we can see that all our educative system is impacted and it becomes more and more difficult to find very young persons that are able to count normally as they should do.