The university on your doorstep: A misplaced utopia? The Université du Littoral Côte d’Opale case

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Abstract — The European university system, in the last decades, has changed significantly. One of the most important processing lines, has seen governments committed to make universities more accessible. The main objectives were both to “democratize” the access to culture and education, and to facilitate access to higher education for young people living in small towns or in rural areas, far from the major metropolitan universities. The aim of our paper is to describe, after many years, how the student population has changed, and which are the main criticalities that came into conflict with the original objectives of the university’s reforms. Our paper will focus on the case of the University of the Littoral Opal Coast, established in 1991 and based in Dunkerque, Calais, Boulogne-sur-Mer and Saint-Omer (Nord-Pas de Calais, France). We referred mostly to the data collected during the “Universanté” research, started in 2008 and including an observatory monitoring students’ health, both from a medical, socio-cultural and psychological perspective. Our analysis has been carried out on a sample of approximately 3000 students, both at regional, inter-regional and international level. The data collected shows clearly the socio-demographic profile of the Nord-Pas de Calais Universities’ students, and allows us to focus on the main criticalities that limit the realization of the “university on your doorstep” utopia: public transport limits, economic insecurity and all that goes against the Social and Emotional Aspect of Learning (SEAL). This allowed us to propose some solutions to try to save some of this utopia’s features.

Keywords — University, Higher Education, Youth, Social and Emotional Aspect of Learning (SEAL)

1. Introduction

The European university system, in the last decades, has changed significantly. One of the most important processing lines has seen governments committed to make universities more accessible. The main objectives of the university’s reforms were to “democratize” access to culture and education, and to facilitate access to higher education for people living in small towns or in rural areas, far from the major cities’ universities.

The issue of access to educational services has often been debated by the policy makers. Recently, in France, this discussion focused on higher education: it seemed that—for example—the inequalities related to the prosecution and the successful completion of studies weren’t influenced only by some social determinants. They were influenced also by some spatial ones” (Beaud, 2003; Convert, 2003; Féhouzis, 2003; Faure, 2009).

In the 1990s, in particular, access to education becomes a characteristic challenge for the policy makers, because it is perceived as a “new social mandate”. This new mandate consists also of some important missions that universities must complete: the initial and continuing education, scientific and technological research, results sharing, guidance and employability, dissemination of culture and scientific information among population, international cooperation, and so on (Payeur, 2008).

Starting from this premise, in a perspective of democratization of higher education, the French government encouraged the spread of universities in the territory: the number of universities increased, from 40 in 1968 to 73 today. We must add to these 73 institutions two “Grands Etablissements” (University of Lorraine and Paris-Dauphine University), a National Polytechnic Institute, and three technological universities, which act in the territory exactly as the other universities. In the aggregate, in France there are 79 scientific, cultural and professional public higher education’s institutions.

The French Council of Ministers adopted on 23 May 1990 a plan (“Université 2000”), with an initial funding of 32 billion of French francs (5 billions of Euros circa) over five years (1991-1995). Subsequently the final funding reached the quota of 40 billion francs (6.1 billions of Euros circa). Its early objective was to increase the number of sites, as a consequence of the rising of the number of students. In 1994, operations were paid via the “Contrat de projets État-région” (State-region project contract). This strategy helped to build 3.5 million square meters of new buildings for higher education and research, including eight new universities, 196 departments of UIT (University Institutes of Technology), 24 full UIT establishments, 7 European centers, that will then become “Poles de Recherche et d’Enseignement Supérieur” (PRES).

The transformation of the French education system is the consequence of a public policy, which main objectives were the democratization of university access and the decongesting of the massive influx of students in major cities’ universities. This process has been supported also by some local policy
makers, who wished to promote the establishment of a university campus in their territories (Filatre, 2003). This process of interaction between universities and local policy makers was encouraged by the Act on Freedom and Responsibility of Universities ("Loi relative aux libertés et responsabilités des universités", n°2007-1199, August the 10th, 2007 - LRU), framed in the wider Bologna Process. The aim of this law was to strengthen the link between universities and local actors, expanding their mutual jurisdictions. With some difficulty, in the course of time, these skills - although rather complex to define - emerged, and universities and local actors started working together with some degree of autonomy.

Some other reforms concerning the “license” university degree went in the same direction. The “license plan” has been established in 2008: its aim was to fight against university dropouts, and thus to preserve the democratization process. Without going into more specific aspects of the plan, it is also a means to assess the educational features of the universities basing on the success and the employment rate of graduates. Basing on this plan, the Universities which have the best success rate will be “rewarded” economically. The other ones, considered non-performing, will be “penalized”. This system too poses some new interrogatives: what's the point of measuring the performances through the analysis of the success rates, without taking into account the inequality between universities, the socio-cultural characteristics of students, and some other significant indicators (Garcia, 2009; Faure, 2009)?

The current situation reflects a radical reorientation of the French educational policies: after a phase of decentralization and regionalization, we can observe a new period of centralization, starting with the creation of some PRES. This process encourages us to reconsider the role and premises of the reforms that we just introduced: the democratization of universities. The creation of some new sites led to an important transformation of higher education, which changed the research and education environment of the country during the second half of the twentieth century. This also led to the formulation of some relatively new issues of Sociology of Education. For example, about the effects of the better coverage of the territory by the universities: does the multiplication of university sites bring to some sort of trivialization of the idea of university (Laurent, Ardent, De Boishue, 1995)? Does this “democratization” contribute to the reduction of inequalities, or does it create some new ones?

Starting from this last question, the aim of this paper is to describe how, after many years, the student population has changed, and which are the main critical aspects that came into conflict with the original objectives of the transformation of the higher education environment. We would like to capture the impact of current reforms and evaluate the results to - eventually - help the decision makers to elaborate a strategy to optimize the current condition**.

This paper will focus on the case of the Nord-Pas de Calais Region, and in particular on the Université du Littoral Côte d'Opale (ULCO), established in 1991 and based in Dunkerque, Calais, Boulogne-sur-Mer and Saint-Omer, and on a couple of higher education paramedical training sites, in the same area.

2. Methodology and case study

2.1. The method

This paper is framed within the wider research “Universanté”, started in 2008, including an observatory monitoring students’ health and promoting healthy behaviors. This research is led by the URePSSS (Unité de Recherche Pluridisciplinaire Sport, Santé, Société”) Laboratory of the University of Lille Nord de France.

The object of study of the URePSSS laboratory concerns the three following areas: sports, health and society. In particular, the aim of Universanté is to define a “global health” profile through the analysis of some usual determinants (biomedical, social, psychological, etc.). In line with the main research paradigms of French epidemiology (Peretti-Watel, 2004), the definition of “health” to which the URePSSS refers is the one proposed by the World Health Organization in 1946 (entered into force in 1948): «Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity» (World Health Organization, 1946).

At this moment, Universanté has been carried out on a wider sample of approximately 3000 students, both at regional (Nord-Pas de Calais: Université du Littoral Côte d’Opale, Université d’Artois), inter-regional (University of Rouen) and international level (University of Chicoutimi, Canada and University of Balamand, Lebanon). As concerns the aim of this paper, we will refer primarily to the data that have been collected within the Opal Coast area. This area counts more or less 850000 residents. It is located in the Nord-Pas de Calais region (France), overlooking to the English Channel, from the Belgium border to the Berck and Le Crottoy areas. In this area are located both the ULCO, a multi-site university of around 10000 students, and the 5 paramedical training sites (1800 students) that have been involved in Universanté. Regarding the present paper, we will refer to a minor sample of 812 students, aged 17-35 years, studying at ULCO and at some paramedical training sites.

The Opal Coast’s population is particularly sensitive, both from a socio-economic point of view and in terms of sociology of deviance: in addition to an overall critical rate of unemployment (14 %, compared to 10,5 % of metropolitan France, INSEE, 2013) and a rate of suicide attempts higher than the national average (6 % vs. 5 % in 2010 for the 15 to 30 year olds, Beck, Richard, 2013 : 243), our first analysis identified a proportion of individuals who engage in binge drinking much higher than the rest of the French population (Beck, Richard 2013 : 113-144). These issues clearly indicate the presence of a complex condition of malaise and anomaly (see Le Breton, 2007).

___ This is one the missions of Universanté too: to organize periodically some conferences and workshops to share knowledge and discuss the most important criticalities with local decision makers. The last one was held on April the 4th 2014, in Dunkerque: « La santé des étudiants du Littoral ».

___ It can be translated as "Pluridisciplinary Research Unit Sport, Health, Society"
Universanté’s data were collected transversally: the URePSSS laboratory organized some “Journées Universanté” (Universanté days) at the beginning of each academic year (October-November), from 2008 to the present day. Participation was optional, but the students were strongly encouraged to give their contribution. The participants completed, in the same unit of time and place, a self-administered questionnaire and followed a circuit composed of some physical and anthropometrical measurements. The data have been analyzed using R©, after the correction or elimination of incomplete or incorrect dossiers. The significance level adopted was 5 %, (p-value lower than 0.05). The questionnaires were anonymous and contained no information to identify students. Data collection was anonymous and confidential and was the result of a systematic consent of the student. The study design was approved by the “National Commission on Informatics and Liberties”.

The questionnaire is divided into 8 different areas: personal and social data; anthropometric data; nutrition (including the consumption of tobacco, alcohol and psychoactive substances); well-being; physical activity; physical and biological tests; media consumption; sleep; social life. Therefore, the questionnaire is structured into several sections, each of which consists of tools that have been validated internationally, and are ordinarily used in some similar researches. This means that the results of the analysis of the different areas of Universanté are potentially comparable with those of any other research that has made reference to the same indicators.

In this paper we will focus on some parts of the following questionnaires:
- The General Health Questionnaire (GHQ12; Goldberg, Williams 1988), a synthetic indicator of mental health;
- A synthetic questionnaire concerning the individual’s social life, built by some the founder members of Universanté (Philippe Masson, Carl Kuehn and Thierry Pezé);
- The Exercise Dependence Scale-Revised (EDS-R), a synthetic questionnaire on sports addiction (Kern 2007).

The data collected describes clearly the socio-demographic profile of the Nord-Pas de Calais Universities’ students, and allows us to focus on some of the main criticalities that limit the realization of the “university on your doorstep” utopia. Namely, we will focus on some features that go against the Social and Emotional Aspect of Learning (SEAL; Jarvela, 2005): the personal aspect, the environmental one, the feeling toward university.

2.2. Case study: the University of the Littoral Opal Coast

As concerns the Nord-Pas-de-Calais region, the “Université 2000” schema led, in 1991, to the creation of two new “special status” universitie: the Université du Littoral and the Université d’Artois. The Université du Littoral soon became the (Université du Littoral Côte d’Opale - ULCO). Its objective was to unite under a same label a variety of fairly large sites. This lead to some kind of higher Education democratization, for the population of the Opal Coast. The ULCO tried to face the initial geographical dispersion, caused by its dissemination on the territory, through three different strategies.

The first one was based on the identification of a sort of thematic unit: for example the fact that it was settled in a network of medium cities, three of which have a harbour (Boulogne-sur-mer, Calais, Dunkerque and Saint Omer, which is not a port city), with some particular common sub-cultural features and a similar ecological environment.

At the same time, the ULCO tried to face this geographical dispersion through a shift on city centers. This couldn’t be led without a strong collaboration with local policy makers. As concerns Dunkerque and Boulogne-sur-Mer, for example, a policy of urban re-centralization (that goes together with the de-centralization and decongesting of the major cities’ universities) is evident: the ULCO sites are settled in some central urban areas, chosen basing on a re-evaluation strategy. This strategy of re-centralization is evident in the teaching and research programs that are particularly sensitive to the needs of the territory. The formation, for example, in some cases has been planned adapting to the features and the needs coming from the economical crisis of a particular site.

The third one is based on a double movement. On the one hand, the ULCO tries to enforce the “doorstep aspect”, through some policies of proximity (to the territory, to the students, to the local policy makers, to the needs of the territory), and the injunction extended to universal access, as concerns some particular courses. On the other hand, they try to enforce the democratization of university coverage by a strong use of ICT. ICT are employed both for common services (for example, the network of university libraries), and to overcome the problem of the geographical dispersion, for example through the implementation of e-learning systems, podcasts and video-lessons (Sazmand Asfaranjan et al., 2013).

3. Findings

3.1. The personal condition: socio-demographic profile and economic insecurity

Overall, 812 students were involved in the survey, as concerns the Universanté 2013 (67.8 % girls, 32.2 % boys). Their average age was 21.6 ± 5 years. 63.1 % of them were enrolled in the nursing courses (IFSI), 13.2 % in the Sports Sciences ones (STAPS), the rest where coming from the physiotherapy, ergotherapy, law and so on. Some of the main features of our sample can be found on table 1.

Data elaboration, correction and analysis has been carried by Thierry Pezé.
As concerns their socio-economic characteristics, the students who participated to the Universanté survey come mainly from the middle and working classes (tab.2). As we can see, an important part of the student’s parents are employees (24.2 % of the fathers, 38.7 % of the mothers), intermediary professionals (10.3 % of the fathers, 13.9 % of the mothers) or middle managers / intellectual professionals (22.2 % of the fathers, 14.4 % of the mothers). The most important quota of the fathers comes from the working class (24.8 %), and an important quota of mothers are unemployed (19.2 %). As Moisan’s (2013 : 197) data show clearly, although to some extent data are difficult to compare, it stands to reason that, compared to the overall population of France, our students mostly come from the lower and middle class, and there is an underrepresentation of middle managers, intellectuals and intermediary professions.

Parent’s employment could be an interesting indicator of the socio-economic condition of our sample, but our survey offers us some other opportunities to depict its socio-economic profile. One of the most interesting indicators is the amount of scholarships based on social equity criteria. As explained Thierry Simon, one of the consequences of the democratization of access to university, and the creation of new de-centralized sites, is that “the rate of scholarships based on social equity criteria is higher than the average” (2006 : 7). As concerns our sample, 42.6 % of the students had a scholarship, a figure much higher than that of the whole French students’ population: 35.2 % (Moisan, 2013).

Moisan’s data refer only to the father’s profession.

Unemployed or retired. Moisan’s table: 13.5 %.
Another indicator of the socio-economical condition is the amount of working students: 12 % of the participants had a student job, 25 % of whom declared to do it “from necessity”. The majority of those who have a job (66.66 %) gain less than 400 Euros per month. This data don’t considers students’ summer jobs: 66.26 % of the sample had a student job last summer, and this concerned all the socio-economical categories. As concerns this part of the sample, 20.1 % had a summer job to pay their university studies.

This data should be coupled with those on table 3: in some way 20.93 % of the respondents limit their leisure because of some financial problems. In particular, 9.11 % of the respondents have always to take care of their financial condition.

Table 3. “I limit my leisure for financial problems”. Source: Universanté survey

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Always</th>
<th>From the 10th of the month</th>
<th>From the 20th of the month</th>
<th>Never</th>
<th>Didn’t answer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9.11 %</td>
<td>2.46 %</td>
<td>9.36 %</td>
<td>75.86 %</td>
<td>3.21 %</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This first point provides only a glimpse of the condition of the ULCO students. As we wrote at the end of paragraph 2.1, to evaluate the most important criticalities concerning the transformation of the French university system, we must analyze also some aspects related to the environmental factor and the feeling towards university.

3.2. Environmental aspect: housing and transport problems, students’ external activities

Concerning the environmental aspect, in order to simplify, we can focus on three main aspects: the housing problem, the transport problem and students’ external activities.

As concerns the housing problem, 27.61 % of the participants live alone, 7.72 % live with some people who do not belong to their own family. The remaining part of the sample live with their partner (15.55 %) or with their parents/family (49.12 %). 30.4 % of the sample receives housing assistance from the local government, because of their socio-economical condition. Only 2.7 % live in an university hosting structure (alone or with some other students).

As concerns their general condition, 1.1 % declared to live in a precarious condition, 0.5 % declared to be actually homeless, and so they must find some solutions to their housing situation, which is particularly severe. 4.6 % declare to be unsatisfied of their housing condition.

The housing condition should be coupled with the transport one. 80.66 % of the respondents have a drivers’ license, and 73.76 % have a personal mean of transport. This, of course, doesn’t mean that they (can) use it to go to the university. In the Universanté survey we have another question concerning the areas of housing and transport: “The public transport network allows me to participate in the activities I choose” (tab. 4)

Table 4. “The public transport network allows me to participate in the activities I choose”. Source: Universanté survey

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Absolutely not agree</th>
<th>Don’t agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Absolutely agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>27.83 %</td>
<td>19.7 %</td>
<td>22.53 %</td>
<td>28.44 %</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The data shows clearly that 47.53 % of the respondents are not satisfied of the public transport quality: probably they perceive it as not efficient, and so they must find some different solutions to move to the university, or to participate on the activities they want. More specifically, 47.76 % of those who don’t have a personal mean of transport don’t agree with the sentence “The public transport network allows me to participate in the activities I choose”.

This leads us directly to the third area, the one of the environmental aspect: the activities outside of the university. As concerns “social life”, as we wrote in the “methodology” part of this paper, some researchers of the URePSSS produced a specific questionnaire, who still has to be validated. In this questionnaire, we can find some questions concerning the perception of some aspects of the respondents’ life. The data analysis of this part of the survey shows that 41.5 % of the sample consider their life mediocre or poor. In particular, 3.45 % consider their life definitely poor. Concerning social life, 24.38 % of the participants meet some people outside their university or job occasionally or less. 5.17 % declare to be are substantially isolated. Only 17 % of the sample practice some activities that make them leave their housing (not considering university lessons or jobs), while 3.94 % never leave their housing for this kind of activity. 10.53 % seldom do it.

This part of the questionnaire leads us to the third aspect of our analysis: the feelings towards university.

3.3. The feelings towards university

An important part of the “social life” part of the Universanté questionnaire is related to the perception and the feelings towards the university environment. Some of the answers are quite interesting, in particular the “negative ones”.

For example, 4.56 % of the respondents declare that they don’t feel secure at the place where they study: this concerns above all law students (7.7 %), while 70.9 % of the sport sciences ones feel absolutely secure. 14.41 % don’t feel listened (10.0 % of the lifelong learning ones, 7.7 % of the law ones) and 8.25 % don’t definitely feel good (again, 7.7 % of the law ones). 25.12 % feel that their institution is not interested in their wellbeing (17.6 % of the economics and managements students, 15.4 % of the law ones), 12.07 % feel that it is not interested in their success (11.8 % of the economics and manage-
ments students, 7.7 % of the law ones). The place in which students study seems to be perceived by an important part of the sample as some kind of impersonal, abstract and anonymous institution completely absent from the world of the respondents, absolutely not interested in their personal life, wellbeing, success and security. We should not forget that in this phase of life university is one of the most important symbolic space in which the individual spends his time. For this reason its role is essential as concerns socialisation and the construction of individual’s identity (Porrovecchio, 2012 and 2013).

4. Discussion: The rising of some (new?) forms of inequalities

Basing on the data introduced in the previous parts of this paper, we can discuss the actual condition of the French “universités de proximité”. The main objective of the higher education reforms were the democratization of university access and the decongesting of the massive influx of students in major cities’ universities: in this last part of the paper we will focus on the main critical aspects that came into conflict with the original objectives of the transformation of the higher educational environment.

The Universanté data show that the early objectives of democratization and popularization seem to be partially reached: in our paper we’ve highlighted the most critical aspects depicted by our data analysis. But the ULCO model seems to encourage the continuation of studies. Its courses seem to be perceived as a valuable alternative to the metropolitan universities. This seems to be in line with the early objective of the reforms: decongesting the massive influx of students in major cities’ universities, democratizing the access to higher education.

Unfortunately, some new kinds of inequalities seem to be rising, in particular the risk of socio-spatial segregation as a result of a sort of “segregationist democratization”.

As observed Laurence Faure in his study on the University of Perpignan (2009), this democratization is partial. The presence of a university near the residence of the parents, in fact, tends to benefit as much, if not more, middle and lower classes. This phenomenon leads to a sort of “averaging” of the access to higher education: our data confirm Faure’s and Merle’s hypothesis of an ongoing “asymmetric democratization” (Merle, 1996; Faure, 2009), which induces some new forms of social segregation.

This observation is linked to a series of family attitudes towards the choice of University. The differences between the students’ socioeconomic profiles, in large and small university cities, are certainly related to the unequal presence of specific training courses. But they also show the importance of this feature: students’ populations from disadvantaged backgrounds are partly captive of their residential location. Their families are often less able to opt for the enrolment in a distant university (Duru-Bellat, Jarousse, Rapiau, 1994). For these students the range of possibilities in terms of further study is restricted to the opportunities offered by the local training provision.

This supply effect is evident in the choice of courses: Convert showed how the creation of the ULCO and the Artois University has influenced course choices orientation (2003). The under-representation of disadvantaged groups among the students of the “universités de proximité” must be read both as a tangible sign of their access, as a strategy of avoidance towards these universities, and as an indicator of the direction in which is going the democratization of access to higher education.

We can suppose that the family strategies that we introduced are likely to increase with the emergence of a competitive logic between institutions, objectified by some possible unfavourable rankings concerning small universities. All these logics contribute to a sort of asymmetric democratization (Merle, 2002), although the Universanté data shows a rather positive attitude of the majority of the students enrolled in the ULCO.

The choice of ULCO can also be interpreted as the expression of a sort of reluctance towards mobility. Mobility could bring fears about de prosecution of studies in an unknown place, for example in a big city located away from the familiar environment: the place in which the student always lives, where family ad friends’ network are and so on. The contrast with the unknown implied by the estrangement from the parental home and the arrival in a large city, with all the more reason in a difficult economic status, strengthen this reluctance towards mobility.

Conclusion: facing the “malaise”, between sports addiction and transport limits

The “université de proximité” contributes to a sort of democratization whose effects are important and complex. The reduction of inequalities seems effective if we take a look at the pursuit of higher education of young people who, without the “universités de proximité”, would not have committed an academic curriculum. It is also relative because it produces some noticeable effects of spatial segregation in career choices and in the strategies of territorial mobility (Beaud, 2003; Faure, 2008). This socio-spatial segregation does not always upward social mobility. Moreover, as we have seen, it does not manifest itself only in the academic choice, but in every day life, leading to some new forms of territorial rooting that could be considered “sociopathic”, and can lead to some (new?) forms of “malaise”.

The territorial rooting is also a symptom of a complex spatial segregation that can occur in a “chosen” form, and is probably due to some sustained forms of segregation and territorial isolation, such as economic constraints to mobility (Duru-Bellat Jarousse, Rapiau, 1994). In this and other cases the local policy makers should intervene: we remind that one of the philosophies in which the Act on Freedom and Responsibility of Universities was rooted, was the interaction with the local policy makers, who wished to promote the establishment of a university campus in their territories (Filatre 2003). This process of interaction between universities and local policy makers worked as far as - for example - the construction of professional profiles to accommodate the needs of the territory, or the upgrading of disused urban areas. But as concerns, for example, public transports, the local limits (transport, economics etc.) don’t encourage geographical mobility and – as we have seen - is likely to contribute to some new forms of “malaise”.

From our data, for example, emerge some alarming situations of isolation, characterizing students who live alone, who consider that the transport network will not let them move properly, and don’t feel good with themselves. They are substantially isolated from a geographical, economical, social and psychological point of view. This condition is not so far from Emile Durkheim’s “anomy” (1897). This sociopathic condition is very complex, and
goes with some particular features concerning, for example, risky and addictive behaviours. We should spend a few words on this. Our analysis shows, for example that 62% of the male population and 33.1 % of the female one declare to drink 6 glasses of alcoholic beverages one time per month or more. This is a population that engages easier in some “risky” behaviours, and that is more likely engaged in some addictive behaviours. For example, if we take a look at the data concerning the Exercise Dependence Scale-Revised (EDS-R) questionnaire (Kern 2007), we can see that the “risky” part of our sample’s overall profile is closer to a condition of addiction to sports. All the 20 items of the EDS-R questionnaire show that the risky sample’s values are significantly higher than those of the non-risky one (p-value = 0.03704). These data don’t say anything as concerns the causes and the implications, namely they don’t say anything as concerns the direction of the correlation. But they highlight an overall condition of malaise that is going towards a precise direction: the risky alcohol consumption profile tends to come in parallel with the one of those presenting a problematic experience towards physical activities (we prefer here not to define those people as “sport addict”), and in some cases with a problematic use of mass media.

This to say that the current situation of young people in the Littoral Opal Coast is particularly complex, and must be addressed considering many factors, involved in the construction of an anomic condition. In this context, the role and the interaction between universities and local policy makers is crucial.

5. Acknowledgements

The Universanté project was built thanks to some private and public funding. In particular, in addition to some of the facilities offered by the University of the Littoral Opal Coast, a portion of the funding was offered by the region Nord Pas de Calais, in which the research is conducted, and by the Mutualité Française (private agency that participates in the French Health System).

6. References

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