

LINGUISTIC FOCUS : special attention to translation (see underlined phrases to be put into French. Beware of prepositions as well as their omission sometimes shown in the text with Ø)

http://www.carnetatlantique.com/app/html;jsessionid=208BE28C18E8133CD0B7D2C8790DCFC8?page=articles/article_PAIGE_AARHUS_12

French Brain Drain

by [PAIGE AARHUS](#)

Published: [April 2, 2011](#) in [France](#)

When we think "globalization" we hardly* think David Beckham.

We think of millions of Chinese toiling* 15 hours a day, 6 days a week in miserable factories making t-shirts and iPhones, jobs lost to low-wage Asia.

Think again: David Beckham has been lured* to high-wage.

PHILIPPE ROUX

For Philippe Roux, the decision was easy.

The French oceanographer was working on his PhD in physical science at the Sorbonne in Paris in the 1990s; his research was going well. But it wasn't until he was approached by the Scripps Institution of Oceanography at the University of California in San Diego that he realized his theories could be put to practice elsewhere.

Superstars, be they footballers or PhDs, are hot global properties.

Athletes, presumably drawn* by money and celebrity, and PhDs drawn* by generously endowed* and equipped laboratories in an agglomeration of first-rank* science, are leaving their home countries for friendlier shores* Ø the world over*.

XU TIAN

Consider Xu Tian, a **Chinese scientist** profiled by the *New York Times* in January 2011. One of 340 scientists endowed by* the Howard Hughes Medical Institute, Dr. Xu is a world-class* geneticist and Yale professor.

Born to a well-educated family but persecuted for his educated status throughout the Cultural Revolution, Xu eventually enrolled* at Fudan University's then-obscure faculty of genetics to avoid labels of elitism. He left for the U.S. 27 years ago on a scholarship* to New York's City College, hoping to find opportunities to complete expensive and ambitious research projects- opportunities his home country couldn't offer him.

But New York City College, too, lacked* the funding* to finance Xu's research. Ambition drove* the young researcher to win a fellowship degree* at Yale, going on to complete post-doctoral work on fruit-fly genetics at the University of California, Berkeley.

Xu returned to Yale, where he pitched* a radical project about mouse genome mapping* to the Hughes Institute in 1996. His research eventually* landed* him the cover of Cell Magazine, the first time a Chinese national had done so, and he became famous in the scientific community.

So where's Dr. Xu now? At the Fudan University in Shanghai.

He returned to Fudan University for two reasons-to **show other Chinese students that the research they want to do can be done** in China, and drawn by* a co-director position at the massive new Fudan Institute of Developmental Biology and Molecular Medicine, recently built by the Chinese government.

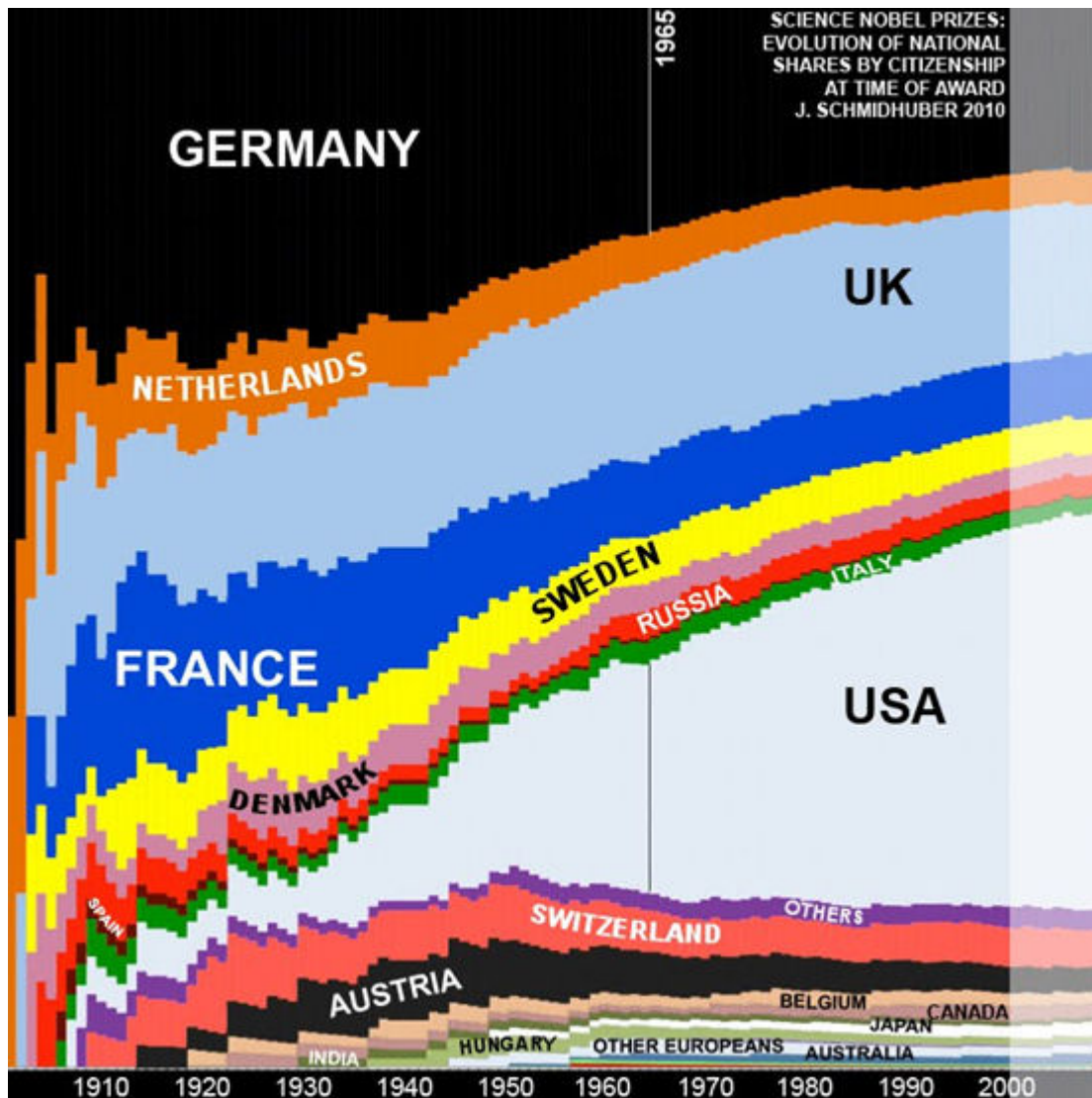
"This has made students realize it's possible to do first-class research in China. That's a very important change in the mind-set*. It makes them more willing to take on high-risk projects and ask big questions," he told the Times.

Roux's story is similar: "The lab in San Diego," Roux explains "at the time of my PhD, was planning to do the same experiments I was doing, but at the scale of the ocean. It was quite a complicated experiment, they had plenty of work for me, and it was the first time I could see that what I was doing in a lab could be done on a true* scale."

Roux and his family left for San Diego in 1997, and spent the next decade hopping back and forth* between France and the United States.

"When you look at the life conditions in terms of the life that you can have in San Diego against Paris, it's very different. So that was the professional challenge, moving between a whole new life far from home, and a place that I found a bit old."

American research universities are the place to be. According to Shanghai's Jiao Tong University, 17 of the world's leading* 20 universities are American. Schools like MIT, Harvard and Columbia are rich, boast* dozens of world leader alumni*, and win a disproportionate share of Nobel Prizes. Consider: with 30 Nobel laureates in science, France ranks behind* the U.S., Germany and Britain-and even behind Harvard University!



Source: http://arxiv.org/PS_cache/arxiv/pdf/1009/1009.2634v1.pdf

No wonder* French academics are lured* to the U.S.

A November, 2010 report by French think-tank* Institut Montaigne found that the proportion of academics in the French expatriate community jumped to 27 per cent between 1996 and 2006, compared to eight per cent between 1971 and 1980.

"This alarming figure is part of a broader decline in the performance of the French academic sector. In terms of the placement of articles in international scholarly* journals, France's ranking in 2007 had fallen to sixth place, with 4.3 per cent of the total articles published, down from 5.4 per cent in 1995 (Germany in 2007 was at 5.9 per cent and the United Kingdom at 6.1 per cent)."

Ioanna Kohler, director of policy programs at the French American Foundation, United States, and author of the think-tank Institut Montaigne report, interviewed 80 academics in her research. Surprisingly, she concludes that their reasons for leaving France aren't what one might expect:

"The money is always put forward, but that's not what I was told. The majority told me that the most appealing* aspect about the American system is that you have real recognition of academic status. There is respect. Academics are valued for what they do, and they are taken seriously," she said.

It's a sentiment Roux agrees with. After two years in San Diego, his contract expired and he returned to work in France, where he found himself* dissatisfied and frustrated. **"There are really two different experiences about the place of science in society. Definitely, scientists are really given a very good opinion in America. In France, in general, they are viewed a fonctionnaire: a government employee and no more than that,"** he said.

Part of the problem could be chalked up to* the quality of respective work environments: Kohler said American laboratories and research facilities are state-of-the-art and **attract top talent from around the world, in part due to partnerships between the institutes and private sectors.** But in recent years, new French initiatives have begun to tackle* that problem.

A recent report published by the Agence d'évaluation* de la recherche et de l'enseignement supérieur, Aeres, found that French universities are on the rise* after the Universities' Freedoms and Responsibilities law was passed by President Nicolas Sarkozy in 2007. Under the new law, universities became more autonomous, with unprecedented authority over budgets, hiring* staff and salaries, ownership of university buildings, research strategies, and partnerships with other institutions and industries. A separate measure, Operation Campus, has pledged* to invest more than 5 billion euros to create 10 centres of excellence of higher education and research, with the goal of attracting the best researchers and students the world over. According to the Aeres report, 73 universities or nearly 90 per cent of the country's total, have attained autonomous status as a result.

Like Xu Tian, Philippe Roux still divides his time between the U.S. and his home country. But he moved back to France permanently in 2005, lured by* bigger, better, bolder* facilities and assuming the role of Chargé de Recherche for a brand new lab at the Université Joseph Fourier in Grenoble. His reasons for returning, apart from a desire to be closer to his family, were simple.

"For me the decision was made based on the challenge to start a new lab. I was 35, and you begin to be really independent in your research at that age, so starting a new lab was challenging, it was interesting. When you start something in the U.S., you start your own empire, that was the world of my boss. You have to do your own stuff, you should not be below somebody or in a team of somebody," he said.

Vocabulary

Hardly : (here) almost not = scarcely, barely / with difficulty or effort

To toil : to give one's best at work, grinding, to make an all-out effort, to struggle, to strive, to sweat /
ANTONYMS : to be idle, inactive, lazy, a sloth / nouns : idleness, inactivity, laziness

To be lured to (! **False friend word** : it is deceptive, misleading. It can lead sb astray so that you may be mistaken), to equivocate, to be evasive : to be attracted by, to entice : to tempt by the promise of some type of reward ≠ to be deluded : deceived (leurrer)

PhD : degree (Doctor of Philosophy) of a doctorate awarded for original research in any subject except law, medicine and theology/ the person : a doctorate / PhD thesis / PhD student (un thésard, un doctorant) / pre-PhD : un 3ème cycle .

To be drawn by : (to draw out) to be dragged by , pulled out, to take out from / to be encouraged, to be fostered by, to be spurred to do sth / to look drawn : to look tired, strained, stressed, tense, taut, worn, pinched, harassed, fraught, sapped, harrowed / sth drawn-out : prolonged, protracted, lengthy, overextended, dragged out, spun out (when it lasts longer than you would like it to)

To be endowed : well-endowed : to be given, to be provided with what you need = opportunities are likely to be better, greater there

First-rank ... : which is ranked first = a world class ... : one of the best in the world, the world's leading ... ≠ to rank behind

Shores : abroad, new borders, unknown places

The world over : all over the world

A scholarship (holder or student) : to get a scholarship in a school or at university means studies are free : a grant is given : you are entitled with a grant if you fulfill the requirements. / a scholarship is also a word to say how much you are a skilled learners, how much knowledge you got.

To lack the funding : not to have the financing, the money to ...

A fellowship (degree) : he applied for a fellowship which is another kind of scholarship. (here) to work as a research fellowship (poste de chercheur ... associé ???) or a teaching fellowship (poste d'attaché d'enseignement)

Ambition drove him : to drive (here) : to lead-led-led, to make sb do sth, to urge sb to do sth

To be likely to do sth : to be set to do sth, to be expected to do sth

Eventually : finally, ultimately / ended up + V + ing

Fruit-fly (genetics) : to study the genetics of a fly that feeds on and lay its eggs in plant tissues

To pitch (a project) : to launch

Mapping : to get a map of sth or sb's names and make them fit / to put sb, sth or a place on the map = you approve of the fact that they made it become well-known and important

To land a cover in a magazine :to obtain, to get

A change in the mind-set : the state of mind

On a true scale : on a real scale

To hop back and forth : to go and return constantly, to keep going and returning from

To boast : to be proud of, to pride oneself on, to show off, to flatter oneself

Alumni : latin word for student

No wonder : it's not surprising that

A think tank (institute) : a group of specialists organized by a business enterprise or a governmental body, ... and commissioned to undertake intensive study and research into specified problems.

Might : (here) = could : to express probability with higher uncertainty than could (could \approx 50% yes or no)

The most appealing aspect : the most striking aspect, the aspect that strikes you the most, the aspect you are the most stricken or struck / the most attractive aspect

To find oneself : to feel

To be chalked up to : to be seen or to be referred to as ...

To tackle the problem : to do one's best to stop or solve the problem

Evaluation : assessment / to assess

On the rise (= a rise **in** ...) : on the increase : to go upward / a bull (Stock Exchange)

To hire: to engage new staff, to employ, to sign up, to take on

To pledge : to promise

Bolder (facilities or equipments) : audacious / daring, fearless

! from school \neq a scholar : people of extensive knowledge : a scientist or an expert / a scholarly knowledge

TO BE DEBATED :

The notion of competition, the acceptance of competition is more in harmony with the American culture than the French and Latin one

In France PhD thesis is less valued than in the US.

LEVEL : pre-intermediate / GRAMMAR FOCUS : EXPRESSING PROBABILITY (risk)

<http://www.nytimes.com/2010/11/22/world/europe/22france.html? r=1>

The New York Times

French Fear ‘Brain Drain’ to the U.S.

By MAÏA de la BAUME

Published: November 21, 2010

PARIS — Academics are increasingly leaving [France](#) for the United States, which carries the risk of a “brain drain” in France, according to a report this month by an independent study group*.

The group, the Institut Montaigne, found that **academics constitute a much larger percentage of French émigrés* to the United States today than 30 years ago**. It found that between 1971 and 1980, academics represented just 8 percent of the departing population* ; between 1996 and 2006, they represented 27 percent.

“The acceleration of French scientific emigration to the United States is recent and worrisome*,” said the report, called “Gone for Good? The Expatriates of French Higher Education in the United States.”

Of the 2,745 French citizens who obtained a doctorate in the United States from 1985 to 2008, 70 percent settled* there, the study found.

The number of French scientists who leave France for the United States **remains limited, but** the exodus of the most talented scientists **could* hurt the economy**, the report suggested.

“Those who leave France are the best, the most prolific and the best integrated on an international scale,” said the report, which surveyed* about a hundred French researchers and professors who studied in France’s top universities and elite schools.

Many of France's best biologists and economists are now in the United States. According to a study in 2007 by **the École des Mines**, four of the six top* French researchers in economics had left for the United States.

“Biology and economics are **poorly recognized in France**,” said Thomas Philippon, a French economist who began teaching finance at [New York University](#) Stern School of Business in 2003.

Two of France's best-known economists teach at the [Massachusetts Institute of Technology](#) and obtained their doctorates there. One, Olivier Blanchard, is also the chief economist at the [International Monetary Fund](#). The other, Esther Duflo, this year received the John Bates Clark Medal, one of most prestigious awards in economics.

Vocabulary

Émigrés : expatriates leave their country to go abroad, to cross borders, to live in a foreign land becoming foreigners or immigrants

Departing population : those to the point of leaving, to be about to leave, those on the leave or leaving soon

Worrisome (adj) : to bring worries (noun), concern or trouble / to worry about (verb)

To settle down in order to live in the new place = to dwell, to inhabit, to make one's home/ settlers are not natives of a country / settlement follows immigrants' arrival

To be surveyed : to be examined carefully to appraise value / a survey : a comprehensive or general view , an inquiry

Top researchers : best researcher , first class or elite researcher, first-ranked researchers

Could : a modal to express probability.

LINGUISTIC INTEREST : Expressing characterization through comparison between the American research culture system and the French one/ A comprehension exercise : pick up phrases in the text to show the differences within both academic systems.

French Professors Find Life in U.S. Hard to Resist

By MAÏA DE LA BAUME

Published: November 21, 2010

PARIS — Academics are increasingly leaving France for the United States, which carries the risk of a “brain drain” in France, according to a report this month by an independent study group.

Olivier Blanchard, one of France’s best-known economists, teaches in the United States at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

1ST PART OF THIS ARTICLE (UP TO DOTS) IS THE SAME AS PREVIOUS ARTICLE (See vocabulary in previous article)

- Mixed Reviews for Indonesia’s Private Universities (November 22, 2010)
- India Agrees to U.S.-Style Credit-Hours (November 22, 2010)

The report, by the Institut Montaigne, a leading independent research group in Paris, found that academics constitute a much larger percentage of French émigrés to the United States today than 30 years ago. According to the report, between 1971 and 1980, academics represented just 8 percent of the departing population; between 1996 and 2006, they represented 27 percent of the departing population.

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Of the 2,745 French citizens who obtained a doctorate in the United States from 1985 to 2008, 70 percent settled there, the study found.

The number of French scientists who leave France for the United States remains limited, but the exodus of the country’s most talented scientists could hurt the economy, the report suggested.

“Those who leave France are the best, the most prolific and the best integrated on an international scale,” said the report, which surveyed about a hundred French researchers and professors who studied **in France’s top universities**

and elite schools like the École Normale Supérieure and the École Polytechnique.

Any of France's best biologists and economists can now be found in the United States. According to a study in 2007 by the École des Mines that looked at the 100 best economists in the world, **according to the amount of their work published from 1990 and 2000, four of the six top French researchers in economics had left France for the United States.**

“Biology and economics are poorly recognized in France,” said Thomas Philippon, a French economist who began teaching finance at [New York University Stern School of Business](#) in 2003. **“But the problem also comes from the fact that the French labor market doesn't value Ph.D. theses.”**

The Institut Montaigne study concluded that, for the most talented French economics students, **studies in the United States are an “obligatory step” toward a doctorate.**

Two of France's best-known economists teach in the United States at the [Massachusetts Institute of Technology](#) and obtained their doctorates there. One of them, Olivier Blanchard, is also the chief economist at the [International Monetary Fund](#). The other economist, Esther Duflo, received the John Bates Clark Medal in 2010, which is one of most prestigious awards in economics. Dr. Duflo was granted tenure at 29 years old, making her one of the youngest professors to receive tenure at the university.

The emigrant trend is more recent among French biologists, but their numbers have grown significantly. **“Biology is an extremely competitive field,”** said Gérard Karsenty, a professor of genetics and development at [Columbia University](#) in New York.

The brain drain in French academia has been observed in other arenas, as well. **The field of musical composition,** for example has been **hurt by the trend,** and composers are few, training offers scarce* and jobs rare. **“We are in the process of killing contemporary music in France,”** said an unidentified composer cited in the report.

Today, many French academics working in the United States say their choice to leave their country was largely motivated by **an American system “where universities are larger, richer and more flexible than in France,”** said Dr. Philippon, the professor at New York University.

Mr. Karsenty, the biologist, said: **“Scientific education in the U.S. embraces* the philosophy of science, which is a solitary and competitive field.”**

The French lifestyle, which puts a higher value on quality of living and less emphasis on competition and getting ahead, is no longer sufficient to keep talented researchers in France, many scientists said. In a country where **science is often viewed as cut off from society**, French universities **do little to glorify their researchers**, they said, and offer working conditions that are often mediocre.

“The freedom that academics garner in France is invaluable*,” said Rava da Silveira, a physicist who teaches neuroscience at the École Normale Supérieure and collaborates with researchers at Princeton, [Harvard](#), and Stanford, “but with it comes **a deplorable waste of talent**. People interact much less through informal discussions, and there is **little team spirit** or consultation, in particular between faculty and students.”

Upon moving to* France after nine years in the United States, Dr. da Silveira said, his salary was cut by about two-thirds.

Like many other researchers, he agreed that **the rigidity of the French higher education system and a lack of financing, infrastructure and administrative help have prevented France’s scientific talents from reaching their full potential in France.**

For Pierre-André Chiappori, a professor of economics at Columbia who is mentioned in the report, the American model is unique, and U.S. universities are havens of knowledge, the likes of which cannot be found in France.

“If the United States attracts some of the best researchers in France, it is also true that a lot of them become better in the United States,” Dr. Chiappori was quoted as saying. “My only regret, in that matter, is that I should have come earlier.”

Vocabulary :

to stem brain drain : endiguer

to stem from : provenir de, découler de

to lure (see previous text): to attract, to entice / a lure (contrary : to lure away) = a decoy (for hunting)

training offers are scarce : the possibility to train, to get training is very rare, seldom

to embrace : to include, to overlap with

to be invaluable : inestimable, beyond price, to be priceless / ANTONYMS : valueless, worthless / cheap, rubbishy / ! to be worth : to deserve value

Upon moving to : to get to move, (informal) set about to move, to get down to

LINGUISTIC INTEREST : GIVING PROSPECTS ABOUT FRANCE'S MIND-SET EVOLUTION IN YOUR OPINION

<http://www.nytimes.com/roomfordebate/2010/11/28/why-french-scholars-love-us-colleges/no-rewards-for-ambition-and-creativity>

It Will Get Worse for France

[Jean-Pierre Lehmann](#) is a professor of international political economy at [IMD Business School](#) in Lausanne, Switzerland.

Updated November 25, 2011, 1:41 PM

Shortly after Nicolas Sarkozy's election to president of France in May 2007, I was in Dalian, China, speaking to a Chinese friend of mine who knows France quite well and who argued that **Sarkozy's goal of "rupturing" -- breaking with the past --** would be good for the country. I replied to him, **"Some donkeys, no matter how hard you hit them, they still won't move."**

The French education system is a disaster at every level.

That, in a nutshell*, is France. The recent hysteria and demonstrations over **the proposal to increase the retirement age from 60 to 62 is ample evidence.** France is a **country of rigidities dominated by corporatist vested interests.** The result is a **society that stifles* individuality, creativity and ambition.** It is not only eminent biologists and economists who leave France. There are also masses of talented young people who just can't stand it: some go to the U.S., others to the U.K. and elsewhere.

Of course France has its assets*. Lots of good cheeses and good wine – though on average French wines are slipping* below those from Chile, Argentina, South Africa and Australia. Many foreigners come to live in France. **The big bulk*, however, are retired people. So they bring money, but they do not bring energy.**

I am French, currently based in Switzerland. **(There are no strikes here!)** I have a house in France and will eventually retire there. But I would never contemplate going back to France to work and especially not to French academe.

The French education system is a national catastrophe at every level. At the higher education level, the "grandes écoles" dominate and produce clones. **The rest of the system is pretty chaotic. At the primary and secondary levels a neo-Darwinian system rewards the survival of those most capable of regurgitating what they have been forced to ingurgitate.**

The problem of brain drain to the U.S. is **not limited to France but is true of much of Europe.** In the case of France, however, it is especially acute. On the basis of current trends, things in France are **likely to deteriorate further and the brain drain will increase.**

Vocabulary

In a nutshell : briefly, to indicate that you are saying sth in a very brief way, using few words

To stifle : to asphyxiate, to smother, to suffocate / (here) to extinguish, to repress, to restrain, to prevent, to silent

Assets : resources, key points

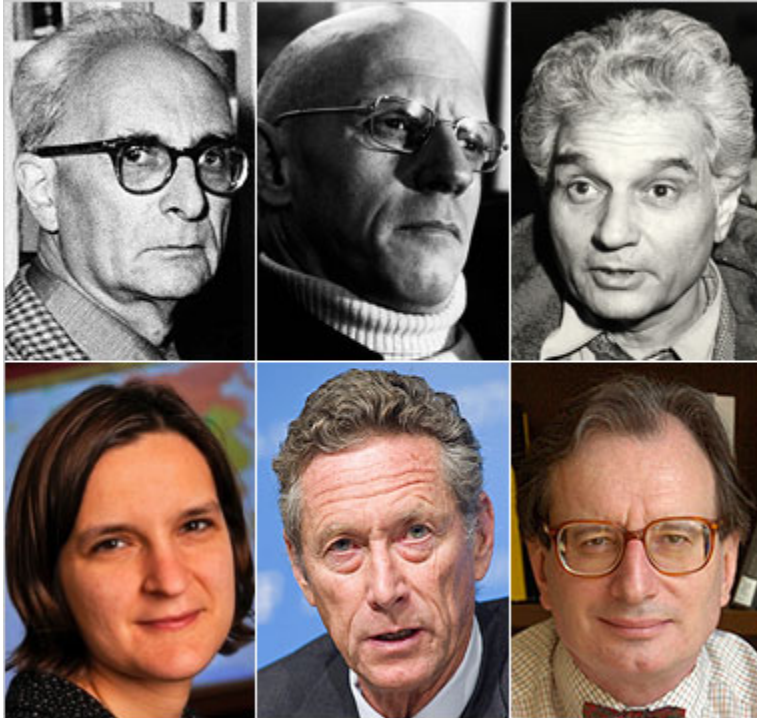
To slip below : to decrease

The big bulk : the big burden, load

November 28, 2010

Why French Scholars Love U.S. Colleges

Introduction



Clockwise from top left:

Associated Press, Agence France-Presse — Getty Images, Alexis Duclos/Associated Press, University of Chicago, Eugene Salazar/European Pressphoto Agency and M.I.T. They've all come to the U.S., **from top left***: Claude Lévi-Strauss, Michel Foucault, Jacques Derrida, Jean-Luc Marion, Olivier Blanchard and Esther Duflo.

A recent article in [The Times](#) described the fears in France of a brain drain to the United States, as top French scholars move to American universities to teach and do research.

A study by the Institut Montaigne found that academics constitute a much larger percentage of French émigrés to the United States today than 30 years ago: 27 percent of the total from 1996 to 2006, compared with 8 percent from 1971 and 1980. In particular, many of France's best biologists and economists are now in the United States.

Why would France's leading scholars and researchers want to leave a place that reveres* intellectuals? More money, more freedom, more competitive energy -- **what really drives the global academic marketplace?**

VOCABULAY

From top to left = clockwise : in the direction that the hands of a clock rotate

To revere : to be in awe and that respects deeply, to have a high opinion of, to honour, to reverence, to defer to

THIS TEXT TO BE USED PERSONALLY TO HELP COMMENT OTHER ARTICLES

<http://www.nytimes.com/roomfordebate/2010/11/28/why-french-scholars-love-us-colleges/the-academic-highway-runs-both-ways>

This Highway Runs Both Ways

Peter Baldwin is a professor of history at University of California, Los Angeles, and the author, most recently, of "The Narcissism of Minor Differences: How America and Europe Are Alike."

Updated December 1, 2010, 12:24 PM

Steady now, let's resist being overwhelmed* by smugness*. **Brain drains to U.S. universities are nothing new.**

The globalization of universities means there is **intellectual motion in many directions, most recently toward China.**

The French have been coming for a long time: Michel Foucault, who did stints* at U.C. Berkeley in the 80's, Jacques Derrida, who pontificated* at U.C. Irvine for years before his death, and Olivier Zunz, firmly ensconced* at Virginia for decades.

But it goes the other way too. Berkeley has just lost the Nobel prize-winning* astrophysicist George Smoot to Paris; my brother, an eminent biochemist, is at Jena; Lorraine Daston, a historian of science, runs an institute in Berlin; Peter Mandler – erstwhile Californian – is at Cambridge. Richard Sennett decamped* from New York to London.

And within Europe, British universities have long been soaking up* all the talented*, English-proficient, but domestically* unemployable products of German universities. The faculty of the ETH Zurich (Europe's M.I.T.) is well over half foreign-born*, while only 5 percent of Stanford's is. So let's not exaggerate the direction of the flows*.

But it is not just a question of brain drain, in whatever direction – a kind of great sucking* noise emitted by the chattering* classes. **What is going on here is the increasing globalization of the universities. We are used to it already in the corporate world: careers** start in Delft and end in Delhi without anyone blinking an eye*.

But in the meantime*, the university world too has developed to the point where the nationalist and protectionist instincts of yore* have broken down. Above all, the rise of English as the lingua franca* -- in both research and teaching -- means that

scholars can go anywhere without being burdened by the need to retool* linguistically, or forever be Dr. Strangeloves professing in heavy accents*.

The Scandinavian universities – otherwise cursed* by obscure languages – function in large measure in English at all levels, at least in those fields that are not wholly* Scando-centric*. British historians write books on German history that are best-sellers in the country of their focus.

And, of course, **Chinese scientists are for the first time returning to their own country in massive numbers**, giving up even cushy* jobs in the U.S. for the chance to run* huge institutes with gargantuan* budgets and national importance. Reciprocity is the key concept here, a kind of intellectual Brownian motion across the globe, rather than any unidirectional draining* away.

(SEE COMMENTS)

Vocabulary

Overwhelmed : overburdened

Smuggness : superior, self-satisfied, self-righteousness (la suffisance)

(To do) stints : jobs, tasks, (informal) taffer

To pontificate : to dogmatise, to preach, to lay down the law

A prize-winning ... : who won a prize

UC Berkeley : University of California

Ensnconced somewhere : settled there firmly or comfortably and have no intention of moving or leaving

To decamp : to leave

To soak up all the talented : to absorb, to assimilate

English proficient : capable, competent, skillful, skilled, trained / ANTONYMS : bad, incapable, incompetent, unskilled

Proficiency : If you show proficiency in sth you show ability or skill **at** it

Domestically (! a false friend) : at domestic level = nationally

Half foreign-born : sb whose parents one of whom is a foreigner, stranger

The directions of the flows : of the directions

Sucking noise (informal and rude) : disturbing, annoying noise

Chattering classes = the intellectuals / to chatter : to speak a lot

Blinking an eye : to close one eye quickly

In the meantime : meanwhile

Instincts of yore : of a long time ago, in times past, formerly

Lingua Franca : a language used for communication among people of different mother tongues (langue véhiculaire)

To retool : to replace, to re-equip, to rearrange

Heavy accents : strong accents

Cursed by : damned, doomed by / (maudit)

Wholly Scando-centric

Cushy jobs : easy, comfortable, that can allow have spare time, undemanding job, a jammy job

To run huge institutes : to lead

Gargantuan budget : massive, huge budget

Draining away (écouler): to flow out, to leak / to evacuate, to withdraw

<http://www.nytimes.com/roomfordebate/2010/11/28/why-french-scholars-love-us-colleges/the-porosity-of-borders-between-the-us-and-france>

‘Porosity of Borders’*

Annie Cohen-Solal, a former cultural counselor to the French Embassy in the United States, is professeur des universités at the National Center for Scientific Research in Paris and a research fellow* at New York University's Tisch School of the Arts*. She is the author of "Leo Castelli and His Circle" and blogs at "Bridgers."

Updated December 1, 2010, 5:19 PM

The preservation of the past has always played an important role in France's identity, and every single reform to the country's constitution creates a "mini revolution." The same can be said about France's university system, which has been slow to evolve and is in part responsible for why French scholars and researchers have always been drawn to the United States. For instance, the reform of the Ecole des Beaux Arts, initiated by Viollet le Duc under Napoleon III in 1863 was completed after the 1968 students' revolution!

American college libraries are heaven* to any French student who has to fight bureaucrats for days to gain access to a research archive.

When I was a student at the University of Nanterre in 1968, my classmates and I felt that we were being educated in a society that was not welcoming us and in a university that was scandalously deprived. As institutions, French universities seemed unable* to echo the culture of the present.

And it's not just a failure* to evolve, French universities remain extremely bureaucratic. Their libraries are stodgy* and impenetrable. By contrast, American college libraries are heaven to any French student who has had to struggle* with some stubborn* bureaucrat for days to gain access to a crucial research document or archive.

But there is more: When the anthropologist **Claude Lévi-Strauss** arrived in **New York** in 1941, he was immediately attracted to what he called the **“porosity of borders” in American academia. This porosity of borders among disciplines, he believed, allowed scholars* to evolve, to remain creative, to be challenged by new fields of study and to be supported by a dynamic institution.**

Young French academics have left their country not only because they found the academic system in France archaic and rigid, but also because some resented* French society as a whole for not embracing* risk takers* or entrepreneurs.

But things are changing and today many initiatives, especially those promoted by the French Embassy in the United States, like the Partner University Fund, can help modify those trends and create interesting cross-fertilizations across the Atlantic.

Vocabulary

“Porosity of borders” : Read the text to find out author of this view and meaning

A research fellow : attachée de recherche

School of the Arts : at a university or college, liberal arts courses are on subjects such as history or literature rather than science, law, medicine, or business

Heaven : Paradise ≠ Hell

Unable : not to be able to, incapable of

A failure : when you have not succeeded in getting sth you wanted, to achieve your goal or aims. The contrary of a success.

Stodgy : Heavy, filling, difficult to digest : sth that makes you feel bloaty, swollen because you ate too much for example. / Sth really boring, pretty tedious, tiresome, dull, uninspired, unexciting / ANTONYMS : inspiring, lively

Scholars : expert

To struggle : to fight against

Stubborn : bullheaded, inflexible, persistent, opinionated, pigheaded, stiff-necked, tenacious, unbending, unmanageable, unyielding, wilful

To resent : to feel

Embracing : including

Risk-takers : people who take risks

LEVEL : FALSE BEGINNERS - PRE INTERMEDIATE (A2-B1) / Life in France as a Chinese student / Comparing both academic systems from a Chinese point of view

http://www.carnetatlantique.com/app/html;jsessionid=208BE28C18E8133CD0B7D2C8790DCFC8?page=articles/article_RACHEL_DARES_44

* See Vocabulary Focus : Try to find equivalent meaning for each word with asterisk

La vie en France. Vue par des étudiants Chinois

by [RACHEL DARES](#)

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Name: Lisha Sun

Age: 24

Hometown: Huangzhou, Hubei

French university: Université de Paris III - Sorbonne Nouvelle

Chinese university: Dalian University of Foreign Languages

Program of study: Master Didactique in French and languages

Why did you choose to study in Paris?

I applied to the Sorbonne-Nouvelle University to study French and languages and I made the choice to come to France when I was accepted to my university of choice.

What are the biggest differences between student life in France and China?

I find that **student life in France is much less regulated by the university**. In China, the university or campus is not only where classes are held, but also where students live and study. In China, all our dormitories are located on campus, but in France, many students **live and spend time away from the university campus**.

What have been the best and most challenging aspects of your study abroad experience?

For me, the best aspects of living and studying in France have been **the amount of freedom I enjoy** and coming to **understand a different mentality** and outlook on the world by **getting to know French people**. I've had the chance to **participate in a rich cultural exchange** and travel throughout Europe. I also find that **the quality teaching and course material** has been very high. The worst aspect for me is that I lost the desire to learn and practice my English because I'm **immersed in the French language** everyday.

How do you see this experience impacting your future goals?

This experience has made me **more independent and more open to differences** between people in different parts of the world. I have a real sense of freedom, as well as organization and **efficiency in my studies** and life in general.

Name: Yuyu Chen

Age: 24

Hometown: Shanghai

French university: Télécom ParisTech & HEC

Chinese university: Shanghai Jiao Tong University
Program of study: New Technology Management

Why did you choose to study in Paris?

I graduated from Shanghai Jiao Tong University in 2010 and was **accepted for an exchange program at ParisTech**. I started my **engineering program** there in September 2010, **focusing on telecommunications and the Internet**. **The education system, which combines practice and theory**, attracted my attention. This approach provides more **opportunities to enter a range of careers**.

Now I am working as an intern in Orange Group and I will continue to study New Technology Management thanks to a **joint program** between Télécom ParisTech and HEC. **In my spare time**, I participate in an association called AFCP (Association amicale Franco-Chinois de ParisTech), which offers interesting events and **activities for all ParisTech alumni***.

What are the biggest differences between student life in France and China?

The first thing I noticed was **the pace of life**. I have lived in big cities in China and France. In China, people live at a much faster speed than in France. They are always in a hurry. Another difference is **vacation**. In China, employees have an average of 14 days per year paid vacation, whereas in France the number is much higher. In terms of **diversity**, nowadays China is opening itself up to the world and there are more and more international investments and foreigners. Nevertheless, we still have less diversity than in France. Local customs and ideas are rooted in Chinese society and it will take time to understand and integrate the various cultural differences of our newcomers*.

What have been the best and most challenging aspects of your study abroad experience?

For me, the best part has been my ability to **travel around Europe**, enjoy delicious French foods and spend time with my new friends. The biggest **challenges** have been the language and integration. It's really not that easy to integrate into another society with a totally different culture. There are so many customs, ideas and habits to understand and adapt to. Especially when the language leaves a **big communication gap**, it takes a lot of effort to fit in*.

How do you see this experience impacting your future goals?

This experience has broadened* my horizons and offered me more choices for the future. I think I will have more international opportunities thanks to studying abroad. My international education and professional experience will surely **improve my competitive advantage**. My advice to others who want to study here is to learn French well, and go outside often to meet people, get a sense for the city and taste the culture.

Name: Nathalie Chen

Age: 24

Hometown: Guangzhou

French university: Université Paris Sorbonne

Chinese university: Guangzhou University

Program of study: Master in French language studies

Why did you choose to study in Paris?

I've been in Paris for more than a year now. I chose to come here because I wanted to study the

French language and I hope to **pursue* a future career related to French**. I already obtained two bachelor* degrees (= licence ou Master 1 : Bachelor of Arts : en lettres ; Bachelor of Sciences) in management in French and Chinese universities. I came to France to perfect my French language skills and Paris was my first choice.

What are the biggest differences between student life in France and China?

For me, the biggest difference is that here in France, it is **easy to enter school but very hard to graduate**. I would say the opposite is true in China.

What have been the best and most challenging aspects of your study abroad experience?

I've had a lot of troubles this year with getting used to* the French school system and doing* exams, but at the same time, I've had fairly good success so far in my studies. It's been very enjoyable* making friends with people from all different countries. During the week, I go to school and study, but on the weekends, I enjoy museums and flea markets, and on holidays, I travel throughout* Europe. These aspects make my experience very worthwhile*.

How do you see this experience impacting your future goals?

I think my experience in France is invaluable because all the life experiences we have are precious and there is so much to learn from our failures and successes. After my studies in France are finished, I hope to return to China and start a career as* a French teacher there.

Name: Zhang Xinwei

Age: 21

Hometown: Shijiazhuang

French university: Ecole Supérieure du Commerce Extérieur

Chinese university: University of International Business & Economics, Beijing

Program of study: Master of Commerce

Why did you choose to study in Paris?

I chose to study in Paris because I really appreciate French culture. I was able to pursue* a Master in Commerce at a prestigious private French university and experience a **cultural exchange** by living in a new country.

What are the biggest differences between student life in France and China?

The biggest difference is that **French students are not familiar with each other***, even when they are in the same class. In China, the students **interact much more** both within school and outside of the classroom as well.

What have been the best and worst aspects of your study abroad experience?

The best aspect is my studies and ability to learn another language. The worst is that it's really hard to communicate with others using my oral French. If the person is unfriendly*, it's even worse. Coming to France to live and study at ESCE has not been easy and I have encountered **many difficulties**. But difficulties make me reflect on all the positive aspects of my life.

What advice would you give to other students considering studying abroad in Paris?

My most important piece of advice* for anyone who would like to come to study in France is to try to speak French as much as possible. When it's too difficult, still try to use other ways to

communicate because communication is the key to making **(B2 level)** friends and succeeding in school.

Name: Faith Chang

Age: 24

Hometown: Syosset, NY

French university: Sorbonne Paris IV and Sciences Po

Home university: Columbia University of New York

Program of study: Reid Hall, French and Francophone Studies

Can you tell us a bit about yourself and why you chose to study in Paris?

My parents emigrated from Taiwan and China in the 80s to pursue the "American Dream." They finally settled* in the suburbs* of New York, where a large part of the population speaks Spanish. I actually decided to take French to be a rebel* in school- there were only 12 kids in my French class - and imitate some of the accents I heard in the black-and-white films my mother rented* from the library. Needless to say, I was far from speaking Jules and Jim. But my **French high school teacher (A1 to A2 level)** left a strong impression on me and I graduated with a passion for all things buttery* and Breton* (from Brittany).

I finally decided to study in Paris once I started college. Everyone was doing it, why shouldn't I? Plus, I wanted to travel by myself and explore Europe. So I did, during my **junior year* of college*** (Junior Collège : Institut universitaire de 1er cycle ; Junior High School = le Collège; Junior School : l'école primaire) / , and I absolutely adored it.

What are the biggest differences between student life in France and your home university?

Aside from the different grading system, an emphasis on oral exams and a rather silent classroom (participation is not encouraged in discussion groups or lectures in France), I find that student life in Paris was rather similar to the one in NYC. I encountered the same dilemmas that every student experiences, especially the ever present question of party or study? In Paris, finding time for both is tricky, especially when countless museums, cafés and events beckon at every corner!

What have been the best and worst aspects of your study abroad experience?

After 8 months of study abroad, I finally was able to speak without fear of people mocking my American accent. I think that was the best thing that happened to me. Now, I don't think twice when I speak French.

I think the worst part of my study abroad was hearing the constant racist remarks and stereotypes. Yes, I'm of Chinese origin. No, I do not eat dog. My name is Faith and not Chang. I often heard the "Ni Hao" in the streets and on the metro, I've been insulted many a time as a "Chintok." And at work, there were multiple, politically incorrect jokes uttered at my expense. In New York, I never had this problem. However, I realize that this type of behavior is a reflection of some ignorant French people, and not necessarily a true representation of how the French view the Chinese or immigrants in general.

How do you see this experience impacting your future goals?

Yes, absolutely. I now speak and write French everyday at work. My study abroad experience,

despite the social difficulties, was extremely enlightening in terms of learning to assimilate and adapt to another culture. In retrospect, I would definitely do my semester abroad again.

Name: Jianjun Hong

Age: 22

Hometown: Wuhan, China

French university: Ecole Polytechnique

Home university: Tsinghua University

Program of study: Engineering

Why did you choose to study in Paris?

Paris is in the heart of Europe and there are so many international students studying here so I knew that I would not be alone. Even if I am alone, I can take advantage of many cultural activities, like museums and galleries. I also want to learn French and improve my English too.

What are the biggest differences between student life in France and China?

In China, students focus 100% on academic studies. Everybody cares about grades and doing well on exams. I think that is important, but I also want to take advantage of student life too. In Paris, students here are really involved in extra-curricular activities. I know many people who are part of associations like choir, sports clubs, theater, and so many more. I actually joined a student club for the first time in Paris - the Chinese student association!

What have been the best and worst aspects of your study abroad experience?

The best part has been meeting people from all over the world. My classmates come from Brazil, Canada, South Africa, China and Europe too of course. I have made friendships that I know will last a lifetime. I have also traveled to other parts of France for weekends, which is so much fun! The worst part has been the food. French cuisine is known around the world as being the best, but I don't really like it!

How do you see this experience impacting your future goals?

I think this experience will impact my future goals directly for couple reasons. I am more confident and able to express myself in 3 languages Mandarin, English and French, which is useful in the global job market. I feel much more at ease with people from other cultures and it's no longer a scary idea to step outside of my comfort zone. In the future, I like that I no longer have to limit myself to working at a Chinese organization, I can try to find a job elsewhere in the world using the skills that I developed while studying abroad.

GETTING TO KNOW EDUCATIONAL LEVELS IN ENGLISH

PhD : doctorate

Post-Graduate = pre PhD (3ème cycle Recherche)

Master's degree : Master 1 (4th year of university or college) and Master 2 (5th year)

Bachelor of Arts / of Science : Licence ou Master 1 en lettres ou sciences

HTD : a high technician degree : le BTS

Junior Collège : Institut universitaire de 1er cycle

High School = le lycée

Senior Year (int the USA) **A level** (in GB) : Terminale with the High School diploma (le BAC) in US and the GCE A levels (in GB) in literature, in sciences, in economic and social sciences / bac techno ou pro : vocational high school diploma

Junior High School : Secondary School = Collège

Junior School : Primary School = l'école primaire)

Nursery School (GB) Infant School (US) 1st year or 2nd year : la maternelle

A Nursery : la crèche, la garderie

VERBS

! (*false friend*) A candidate for the baccalaureate means he/she **takes** the high school diploma (=passer)

! (*false friend*) To **pass** an examination : to be successful, to get or receive the diploma or degree, to succeed in getting the diploma, to manage to get it (= être reçu(e) ou réussir)

To fail : rater

To sit an examination or an exam : to attend the exam : to be present at the exam

An early test of a high school diploma : épreuves anticipées

To get on in life : réussir dans la vie

Entrance examination in a prep school

A practice test : un examen blanc