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# Orchestrating French Music Conservatories: European Political Interventions and Local Governance

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**Orchestrating French Music Conservatories:  
European Political Interventions and Local Governance**

Elena Raevskikh

### Abstract

Supported by the omnipresent State in the past, French music education leans increasingly towards a more liberal and competitive model. In the current context of a decentralized economy and European integration, music conservatories are called upon to contribute to regional and municipal development and enhance European student mobility. How do conservatories react to the restructuring of the competitive field? How do they affect European territorial cohesion? Are they managing adaptive or hybrid strategies with new conceptions of music education? Alternatively, do they gradually move away from the marketplace and become an obsolete and difficult heritage to maintain? To answer these questions, it is necessary to analyze the current balance of power among the different elements of the French multi-level system of conservatories, including communal, inter-communal, departmental, regional, national and European institutions. By combining different sources of spatial and statistical data, this paper contributes to constructing a comparative institutional geography of French multi-level territorial divisions. Extraction and treatment of the *small data* with SPSS statistical software allowed us to build a number of small-scale datasets that were merged to broader geographical databases from the French National Institute of Statistics and Economic Studies (INSEE). The geographical units that structure the INSEE databases (the zip and district codes, codes of regions, departments, GPS coordinates) made possible the location of each conservatory within municipal, departmental, regional and national spaces. A cartographic approach to studying music conservatories allows the identification of problems that deserve further detailed qualitative and statistical study in the future.

**Keywords:** cultural policies; music education; cultural institutions; European integration; territorial administration; institutional geography.



## Introduction

French multi-level territorial divisions – regions, departments (counties) and communes (districts) – are both administrative channels for central government and decentralized territorial units. The hierarchy of the French music education system formally corresponds to this territorial division, and includes National Conservatories, Regional Conservatories, Departmental Conservatories, Inter-communal and Communal Conservatories.

Since the period of “Cultural Democratization” – the cultural policy launched by the French Minister of Culture André Malraux in the 1960s – regional conservatories have become the major territorial instances of music education. The Ministry of Culture assigned the “Regional” label to the most competitive institutions, promoted by local authorities and strongly involved in territorial competition. Since their creation in 1967, regional conservatories have been subsidized not by the regions themselves, but mainly by the central state and cities.

The political and artistic networks were mobilized to spread the elitist and selective pedagogical approach to orchestral musical disciplines and solfeggio over the country. Well-known pianists, violinists, and conductors were appointed directors of regional conservatories. The regional conservatories played the role of “selection agencies” (Boudon, 1979) that regulated the access for the best students from provinces to the National Superior Conservatory of Paris. Low enrollment fees and scholarships for the best students were established by the State to guarantee democratic access to high-level music education.

In early 1980s, the socialist government and the new Minister of Culture, Jack Lang, criticized the “Democratization of Culture”, as a “top-down” elitist homogenizing approach to culture that ignored cultural expression and practices outside the mainstream canon. As an alternative, Jack Lang launched a new inclusive policy called “Cultural Democracy” that enlarged the notion of “culture” and promoted ordinary cultural practices. Typically situated in cities’ downtowns, the conservatories had to find the new inscriptions in the local and urban realities and attract populations that were previously poorly integrated into local cultural life.

Newly created peripheral annexes of conservatories were dedicated to teaching improvised and “popular” music (rap, rock, etc.) that should be accessible to every music lover, regardless of age and musical capacity. At the same time, the old “central” annexes of conservatories maintained their role as “selection agencies” for the National Superior Conservatory of Paris and the National Superior Conservatory of Lyon (founded in 1980), that maintained the national monopoly on professional music education. Students from provinces who wished to pursue their musical education in these institutions were required to train in regional conservatories according to the nationwide standard and the curriculum established by the State.

The nationwide standard of music education, because of its rigidity, allows an accurate transmission of traditional musical values and skills. By contrast, the relative flexibility of contemporary and improvised musical forms question the institutional legitimacy of conservatories that seek to preserve their traditional values. The nationwide standard of jazz, rock, and contemporary music education has not yet been established. Moreover, the French political vision that associates contemporary music expression with popular values and peripheral neighborhoods creates new obstacles for its integration in the performance-oriented conservatories. Consequently, conservatories have interpreted “cultural democracy” differently, according to the local authorities and musical networks involved in the functioning

of each institution.

Contradictory political interests and ideological debates divide cultural policy-makers (as well as musicians, directors of conservatories and instructors), and place the conservatories between two competing forces: (1) the “centripetal” legitimacy of the National Superior Conservatories focused on national prestige and pedantic “written music” education, and (2) the “centrifugal” legitimacy of regional and urban needs, typically associated with contemporary music, inclusive cultural policies, and territorial concurrence.

### **The New Decentralized Economy of Music Education**

In the 1960s and 1970s, the state had the means to support its ambitions in the field of music policy. In 1969, the so-called “ten-year plan for music” established by Marcel Landowski transformed the economy of the music profession; state intervention in musical life in France was funded up to 51 million francs. In 1974, the state budget dedicated to the musical institutions reached 162 million. The conservatories were subsidized according to their formal territorial ranking. For instance, government endowments for Regional Conservatories varied in different years from 12% to 20% of participation in the budget of each institution.<sup>1</sup> Regular ministerial inspections of the provincial conservatories were organized to evaluate their performance, and guarantee their strong “centripetal” links with the National Superior Conservatories of Paris and Lyon as well as their curriculum.

During this period, the music education system was in tune with the marketplace, strongly supported (and partly created) by the government itself. The “ten-year plan for music” expanded the number of ensembles subsidized by the State. France was divided into ten “music regions” each of which had at least one symphony or chamber orchestra in addition to a lyric ensemble or opera troupe. The main effect of this “ten-year plan for music” was to promote cultural decentralization and secure employment opportunities for musicians (Drott, 2011).

We are currently faced with a different situation. The central state has devolved the management of cultural institutions to the territorial authorities and the State-based music marketplace has been liberalized. Since 2008, the government has been entirely disengaged from the management of communal and inter-communal conservatories that became entirely endowed to territorial authorities. In 2015, the central state was almost completely disengaged from the funding of regional and departmental conservatories. Following the acute public debates provoked by this decision, in 2006, €13.5 m was allocated to the conservatories with the best “institution projects”, regardless of their formal territorial ranking.<sup>2</sup>

The “institution projects” of conservatories are, in theory, based on State cultural policies of youth inclusion, territorial equality and cultural diversity. Each conservatory is expected to justify its focus on the marketplace and establish a durable cooperation with local cultural and educative organizations and associations. This approach, based on selection of the most competitive structures, has replaced the previous distributive model based on territorial ranking, and weakened hierarchical links among national, regional, departmental, inter-communal and communal conservatories.

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<sup>1</sup> Rapport d'information n° 458 (2007-2008). *Décentralisation des enseignements artistiques : des préconisations pour orchestrer la sortie de crise*. URL : [https://www.senat.fr/rap/r07-458/r07-458\\_mono.html](https://www.senat.fr/rap/r07-458/r07-458_mono.html)

<sup>2</sup> Projet de loi de finances pour 2016 : Culture. URL : <http://www.senat.fr/rap/115-164-37/115-164-378.html>

## Innovations Induced by the Bologna Process

The selective approach to the attribution of static endowments was established in the particular context of inscription of the French conservatories in the Bologna Process, designed to ensure comparability of the standards and quality of higher education qualifications.

Until now, French conservatories could not afford to offer a general education, and took the cultural values of music for granted. The student, therefore, was expected to possess a general education or to acquire one at an institution best suited for this purpose. That was simply not feasible for most people (Sorce Keller, 1984). In consequence, regional conservatories turned out trained technicians who did not have an intellectual understanding of what they were performing. The major opportunity for these technicians was to succeed in auditioning for the highly selective National Superior Conservatories of Paris and Lyon. However, the number of places in the National Superior Conservatories is strictly limited and disproportioned compared to the number of potential candidates. The growing number of unemployed Regional Conservatories' alumni questions both the monopoly of the National Superior Conservatories and nationwide music education standards. The equivalency of the French music diploma with European counterparts has also been compromised.

This systemic inconsistency has been resolved through the creation of new decentralized Superior Conservatories of Performing Arts (“Superior Poles”) that reunite the departments of music, dance and theatre studies. The Superior Poles are founded based on the most competitive regional and departmental conservatories. In 2016, €5.8 m was allocated to these Superior Poles. Another €4.4 m<sup>3</sup> was attributed to the “clusters of artistic education” – regional and departmental conservatories associated to the Superior Poles and engaged in their institutionalization. The Superior Poles are typically installed in contemporary buildings that contrast with the classical aesthetics of the old Regional conservatories (see Photo 1).



Photo 1: The premises of the Regional Conservatory of Versailles (since 1951) and the new building of the Superior Pole of Nantes (inaugurated in 2016)

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<sup>3</sup> Stroesser, N. (2015). *Financement des établissements d'enseignement artistique par l'Etat : chronique d'un retour annoncé et attendu, mais...?* <http://conservatoires-de-france.com/blog/2015/12/03/financement-des-etablissements-denseignement-artistique-par-letat-chronique-dun-retour-annonce-et-attendu-mais>

The Superior Poles deliver, in collaboration with universities, the new diploma: National Superior Professional Diploma of Musician (DNSPM) equal to a *License* (bachelor) level (1<sup>st</sup> cycle). The “hybridization” of the conservatory and university curriculum is innovative for the French music education system. The university is called upon to fill the gap in the “general education” of musicians, as well as to give knowledge in the theory of music making and practice, historical and aesthetic doctrines, etc. Practice-oriented academic courses such as arts management or music pedagogy are geared to keep young musicians in tune with society and job market.

The European standard of the Superior Poles’ curriculum facilitates the enrollment of French students in foreign conservatories at a Master’s (2nd cycle) or Ph.D. (3<sup>rd</sup> cycle) levels. In France, not only The National Superior Conservatories of Paris and Lyon, but also the Superior Poles of Poitiers and Strasbourg deliver Master diplomas. The Ph.D. in Music is delivered exclusively by the National Superior Conservatories.

### **Analyzing the Territorial Dynamics of Music Education**

In the current context of the decentralized economy of music education, French conservatories are called upon to strengthen regional and municipal development and enhance European student mobility. Analyzing the differences between American and European visions of music education, Marcello Sorce Keller observes:

Schools must survive economically, and if they fail to attract students, they may have to close down. While it is at times regrettable that education be linked to mercantile considerations, there is little doubt that total independence from the marketplace generates isolation and estrangement from the real world. The Italian case shows it very clearly. There is a need for scientific research, especially where technological breakthroughs are feasible, and colleges are unable to fulfill that need. There is a need for a variety of music, and conservatory graduates can provide only one kind. It would indeed be marvelous if we could have the best of both worlds (Sorce Keller, 1984).

Supported by the omnipresent State in the past, French music education leans increasingly towards a more liberal and competitive model. How do conservatories react to this restructuring of the competitive field? How do they affect European territorial cohesion? Are they managing adaptive or hybrid strategies with new conceptions of music education? Alternatively, do they gradually move away from the marketplace and become an obsolete and difficult heritage to maintain?

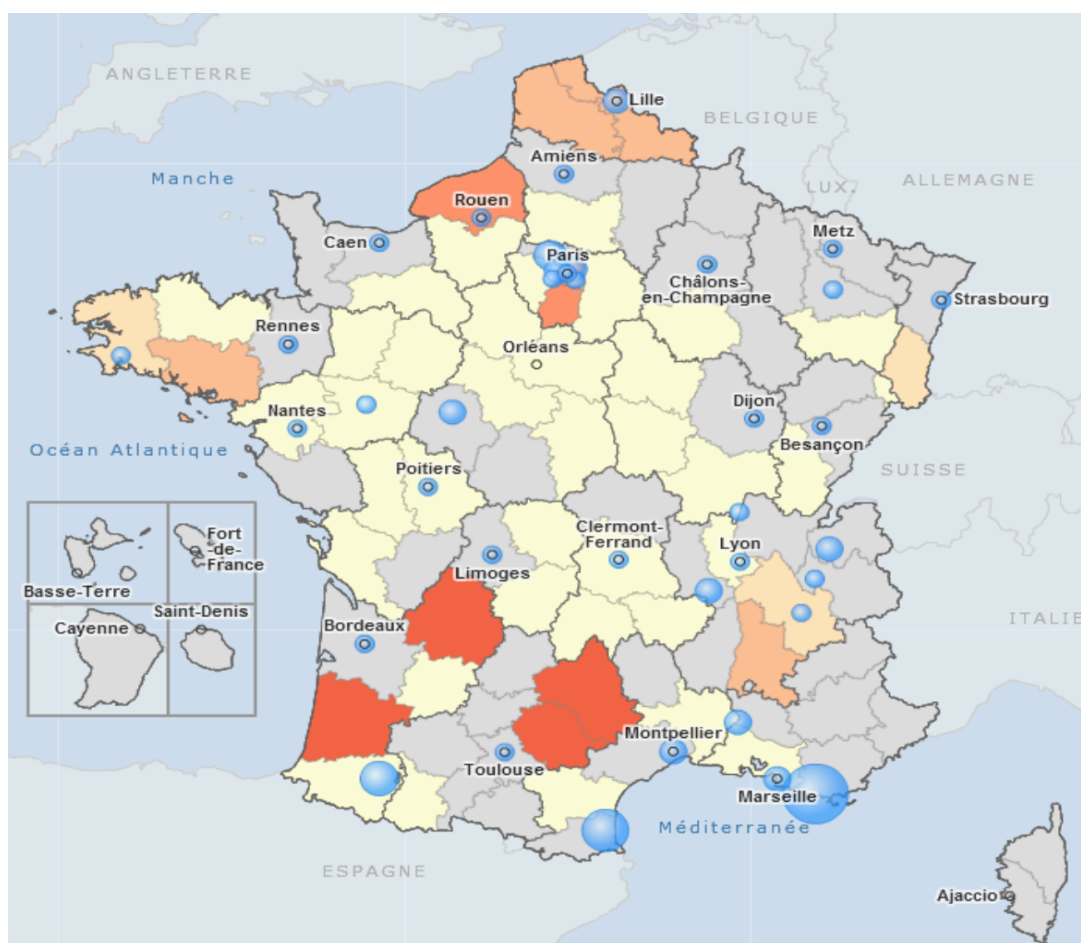
To answer these questions, it is necessary to analyze the current balance of power among the different elements of the French multi-level system of conservatories. However, the absence of coherent national or regional statistics prevents a quantitative analysis measuring the overall territorial impacts of the cultural and educational policies.

Several sources of *small data* – for instance, forms filled by administrators of each conservatory containing data on the taught disciplines, territorial ranking, addresses, management and equipment of each conservatory – can be found on specialized open source websites, such as *lalettredumusicien.fr*. Data concerning the conservatories recognized by the European instances can be found on the site of European Association of Conservatories (AEC): *www.aec-music.eu*.

## Methodology

By extraction and treatment of this *small data* with SPSS statistical software, we were able to build a number of small-scale datasets that were merged to broader geographical databases from the French National Institute of Statistics and Economic Studies (INSEE). The geographical units that structure the INSEE databases (the zip and district codes, codes of regions, departments, GPS coordinates) allow for the location of each conservatory within municipal, departmental, regional and national spaces.

A combination of spatial and statistical data allows us to build tailor-made institutional comparative cartography of these territorial levels. The Map 1 below is an example of a two-dimensional cartography that combines (1) territorial indications and (2) the proportion meaning of regional and departmental conservatories. Obviously, we observe a low cohesion between the two territorial levels: (a) the departments with the highest density of departmental conservatories (in red), and (b) the regional metro-areas with a strong presence of regional conservatories and their peripheral annexes (in blue).



Map 1: Graduated symbol map of the Regional conservatories and their peripheral annexes (in blue) and Departmental conservatories (in red)

A cartographic approach to analyzing music conservatories allows us to identify the problems that deserve further detailed qualitative and statistical study in the future. In the present paper, we focus on three main questions:

- (1) Could the Superior Poles be *a priori* qualified as “European conservatories”? Which French conservatories are recognized by the European instances?
- (2) Music education and decentralization: How has the recent reform and mergers of French regions affected the territorial balance of music education?
- (3) Analyzing the effects of « Cultural Democracy »: How baroque and contemporary music are taught in Regional and Departmental conservatories?

## Results

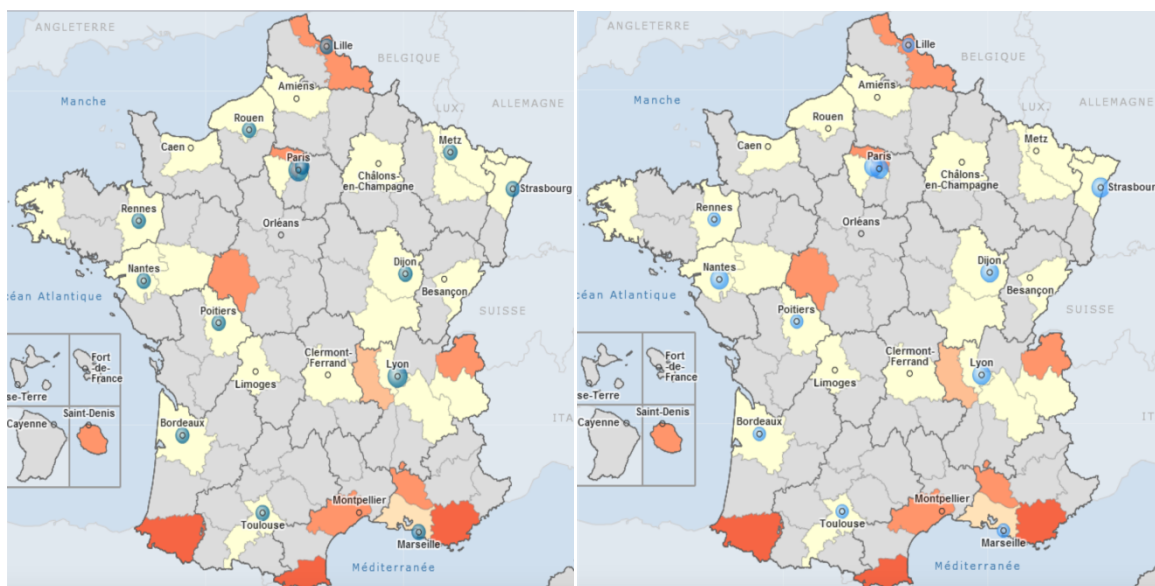
1. Could the Superior Poles be *a priori* qualified as “European conservatories”? Which French conservatories are recognized by the European instances?

What makes a conservatory “European”? Is the “European” administrative status capable of amplifying the real international influence of an institution? Is this status as important as the orientation of musical and political networks that aim for international cooperation – or avoid it? Or maybe the transversal “European” curriculum of music education is essential - even if the perfectly balanced compromise between the national traditions of music education seems to be unfeasible?

From the administrative viewpoint, the success of a Europe-oriented superior conservatory is measured by the relative concordance of its curriculum at the European level, augmented European mobility of students, and the creation of new European networks of artistic cooperation. The European Association of Conservatories (AEC) and the Erasmus network for music “Polifonia” are two European organizations that address the European higher music education issues.

The European Association of Conservatories (AEC) was created in 1953, and was initially based in Utrecht, Holland. Now, the AEC has moved to Brussels, and has been empowered by European political instances as the representative of the EU in the area of music education. AEC experts are engaged in the “Quality Enhancement Process” that elaborates the insights and recommendations for European conservatories. Three European countries are the most represented among the members of AEC: Italy (55 music schools), Germany (24 music schools) and France (20 music schools).

The blue circles on the maps below show the proportion meaning of the Superior Poles and other institutions that deliver the DNSPM in France (Map 2), but also point out the French members of the AEC (Map 3). Both of the maps indicate the proportion meaning of regional conservatories and their annexes at the departmental level (in red).



Map 2:

Proportion meaning of the Superior Poles and other institutions that deliver the DNSPM (in blue)

Proportion meaning of Regional conservatories and their annexes at the departmental level

(in red)

Map 3:

Proportion meaning of the French institutions recognized by the European Association of Conservatories (in blue)

Proportion meaning of regional conservatories and their annexes at the departmental level

(in red)

As we see, the two maps are similar. However, the list of French conservatories recognized by the AEC as “European” (Map 3), includes not only 7 Superior Poles, but also 10 regional conservatories, 2 national conservatories (Paris, Lyon) and 1 National Centre of Education of Music Pedagogues (CEFEDM).

Most of these heterogeneous institutions are situated in the same cities as the Superior Poles (Map 2). Whereas some of the newly created Superior Poles are still not recognized by the AEC, the spatial proximity between the Superior Poles and previously existing territorial institutions recognized by the AEC (i.e. the Regional Conservatories of Strasbourg, Nantes, etc.) creates the illusion of the almost identical appearance of the two maps. The only exceptions are the institutions based in the metro-areas of Rouen and Metz: neither the Regional Conservatories nor the Superior Poles are recognized by the AEC.

Obviously, most of the Superior Poles were created based on previously existing clusters of music education that have been often recognized by the AEC *before* the equivalency of French music diploma with its European counterparts. At this level, top-down European policies have met pre-existing bottom-up dynamics of the territorial political and musical networks strongly implicated in territorial concurrence.

The other visible particularity consists in the low correlation between (1) territories with a higher proportion of regional conservatories and their annexes (in red) and (2) territories with a higher proportion of Superior Poles and the other institutions recognized by the AEC (in blue). Indeed, most Superior Poles are currently based in departments with one centralized Regional Conservatory (in yellow).

Obstacles to the creation of new Superior Poles based on the strongly decentralized Regional Conservatories with several peripheral annexes (such as the institutions situated in the Atlantic Pyrenees, Oriental Pyrenees and Var (in red)) deserve more detailed ethnographical and historical study in the future.

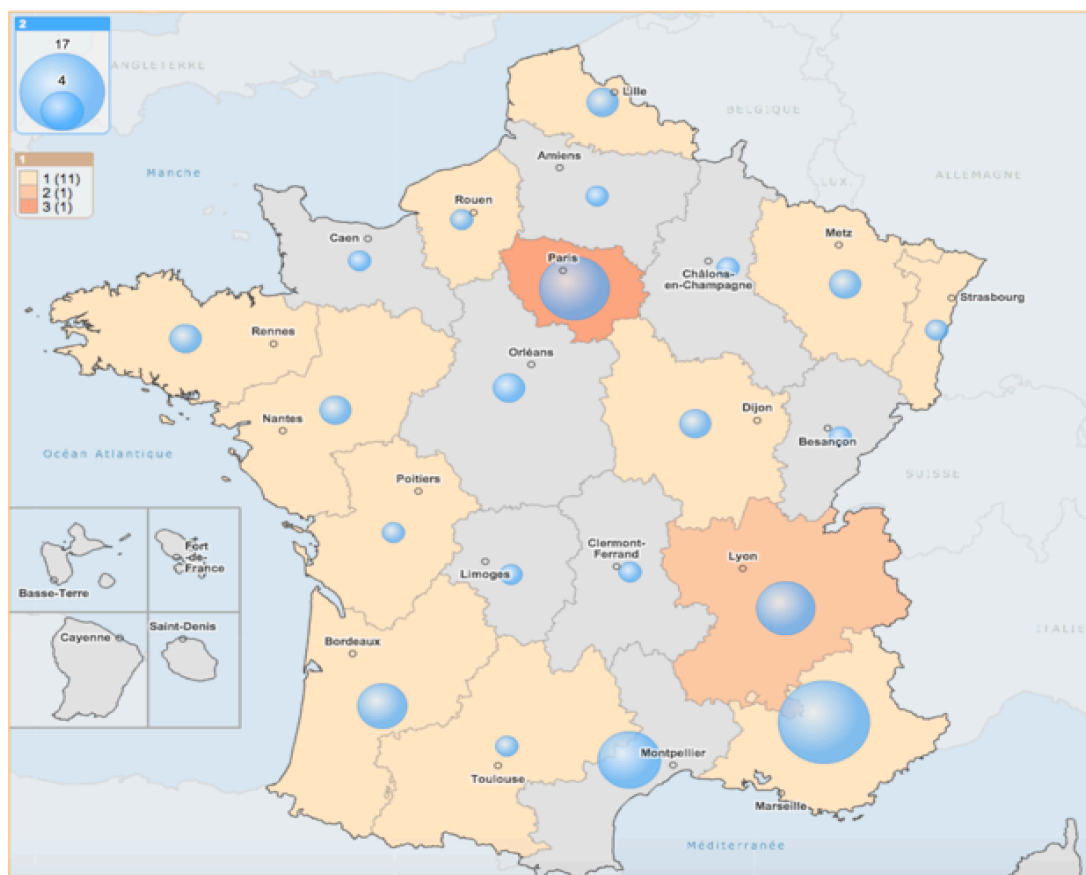
## 2. Music education and decentralization: How has the recent reform and mergers of French regions influenced the territorial balance of music education?

Encouraged by the European Union, regions become the frame of reference for European regional politics, aiming to promote the development of competitive territories. Since 2016, the number of French regions has decreased from 22 to 13. This territorial reform aimed to accelerate the decentralization process and empower the regional metropolis (Marseille, Bordeaux, Toulouse, Nantes, Nice, Rouen, Grenoble, Montpellier, Rennes and Brest), as well as cities ranked as “European metropolis” (Lille, Strasbourg). The initial project of decentralization reform also provided the erasure of departments. Although growing conflicts between regional and departmental competencies are still being debated, the final decision on this question has been delayed until 2020.

The new French Regions are highly impacted by the intense development of local smart specialization strategies, based on the assumption of attractiveness to higher social fractions, or the “most educated and talented people”, being able to migrate and reach the most culturally attractive regions and cities. If one believes the scenarios presented, investment in cultural capital in the broadest sense should lead to a concentration of social capital itself. In turn, social capital must generate economic capital for regions practicing the implementation of this new form of cultural policy and promote smart, sustainable and inclusive growth in all EU regions and cities. From this perspective, European conservatories contribute to territorial competition by attracting the young talented people that are potentially able to enhance local cultural and economic dynamics.

Map 4 below shows the distribution of regional conservatories and their annexes (in blue) and the Superior Poles (in red) before the reform of French regions.





Map 4: Graduated symbol map of regional conservatories and their annexes (in blue) and the Superior Poles (in red) before 2016.

In terms of implication in the Bologna process, only 13 among 22 French regions were equipped with Superior Poles, and were ready to integrate into the European marketplace of music education. The Parisian region and Rhône-Alpes – pre-existing centers of music education due to the presence of the National Superior conservatories of Paris and Lyon – were the most saturated in both regional and European conservatories.

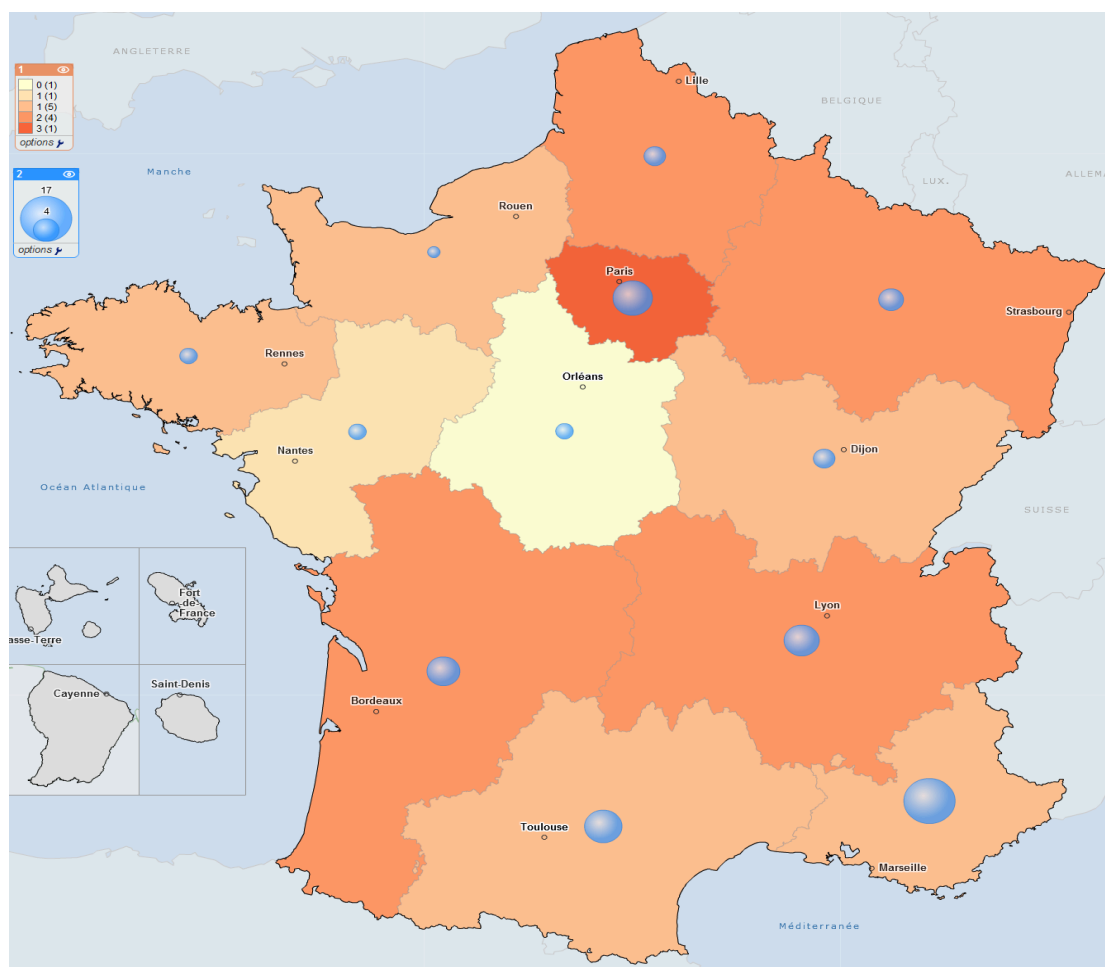
Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur, featuring the biggest Regional Conservatory in France, the Conservatory of Toulon (11 territorial annexes), as well as the regional conservatories of Nice, Marseille, Aix-en-Provence and Avignon, had the only Superior Pole: the National Center of Education of Music pedagogues (CEFEDM), based in Aix-en Provence.<sup>4</sup>

Montpellier and Perpignan – the most dynamic cities of Languedoc-Roussillon – featured important regional conservatories that were not implicated in European dynamics. The opposite situation was observed in Midi-Pyrenees: the only regional conservatory in this region, the Conservatory of Toulouse, has become, since 2011, an influential European cluster of music education.

After the mergers of French regions in 2016, the situation changed. Map 5 below shows the

<sup>4</sup> The European conservatory that delivers the DNSPM diploma in music practice has not been installed in the PACA Region because of concurrence issues among the regional conservatories. In-depth interviews with the administrators of the Conservatories of Aix-en-Provence, Avignon and Toulon revealed cleavages of institutional logics and disagreements concerning the installation of a Superior Pole in this Region.

current distribution of regional conservatories and their annexes (in blue) and the Superior Poles (in red).



Map 5: Graduated symbol map of regional conservatories and their annexes (in blue) and the Superior Poles (in red) after 2016.

Mergers of the regions resulted in a consolidation of the macro-regional units that brought together previously existing cultural institutions; and decreased gaps between the different regional structures of music education.

Although the Parisian Region is still the most concentrated of the Europe-oriented conservatory regions in France, the new macro-regions have reinforced their positions by uniting territorial institutional resources. Areas previously poorly integrated in the new European dynamics of music education have joined regions with the pre-existing Superior Poles.

The Superior Poles, formally attributed to a city, have an impact on the entire region, and even beyond national borders. For instance, the Superior Pole of the Region Picardy-Nord Pas de Calais is based in Euro metropolis Lille-Kortrijk-Tournai that reunites several French and Belgian cities. “New horizontal” relations between French and other European conservatories promote new musical networks dissociated from former administrative and symbolic hierarchy between Paris and the provinces.

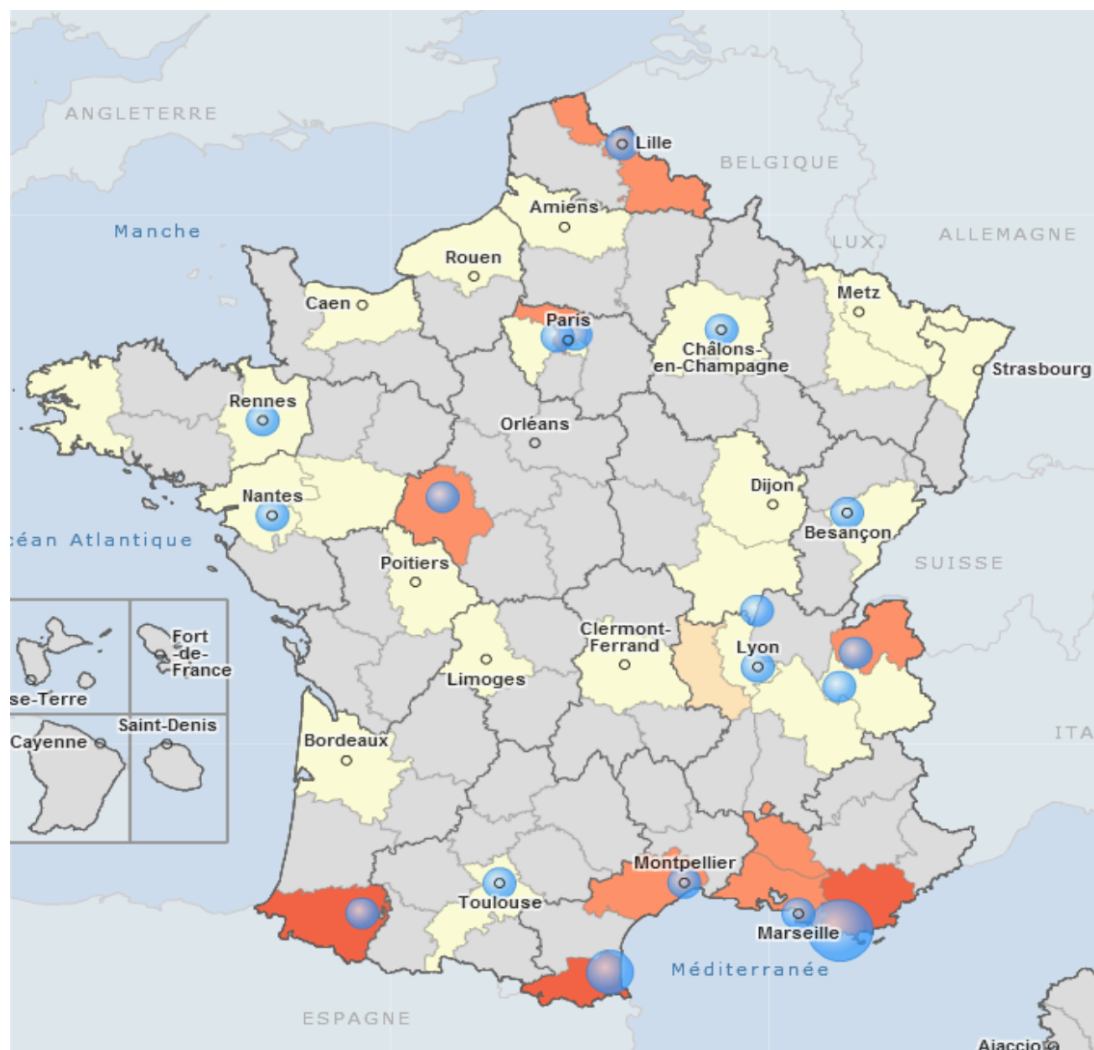
### 3. Analyzing the effects of “Cultural Democracy”: teaching of baroque and contemporary music in Regional and Departmental conservatories

Since 1980s, the French conservatories have been strongly impacted by Jack Lang’s “Cultural Democracy” political program. European inclusive policies strengthen and support a similar approach to music practice open to everyone; regardless of income, cultural origins, age, and education level. Contemporary disciplines (rock, rap, hip-hop, etc.), as well as disciplines that historically existed outside conservatory frameworks (flamenco, baroque music, ancient music, etc.) have been integrated in the curriculum of the most regional and departmental conservatories.

However, regardless of the “Cultural Democracy” program’s long-term implementation, the institutional geography of concerned institutions is far from homogeneous. In this paper, we reflect upon the teaching of (1) baroque music and (2) contemporary music. How are the conservatories that teach these disciplines distributed at the regional and departmental levels? The lack of official statistics to answer this question leads us to data available from specialized directories, such as *lalettredumusicien.fr*, containing information communicated by the administration of each conservatory on the disciplines taught in each institution. Here we will present the results of the cartographical analysis of these data.

#### a. Regional level

According to the directory, only 29 Regional Conservatories among 71 (40.8%) integrate baroque music into their curriculum. Map 6 below shows the overall proportional meaning of regional conservatories and their annexes (in red), and the regional conservatories that teach baroque music (in blue.)



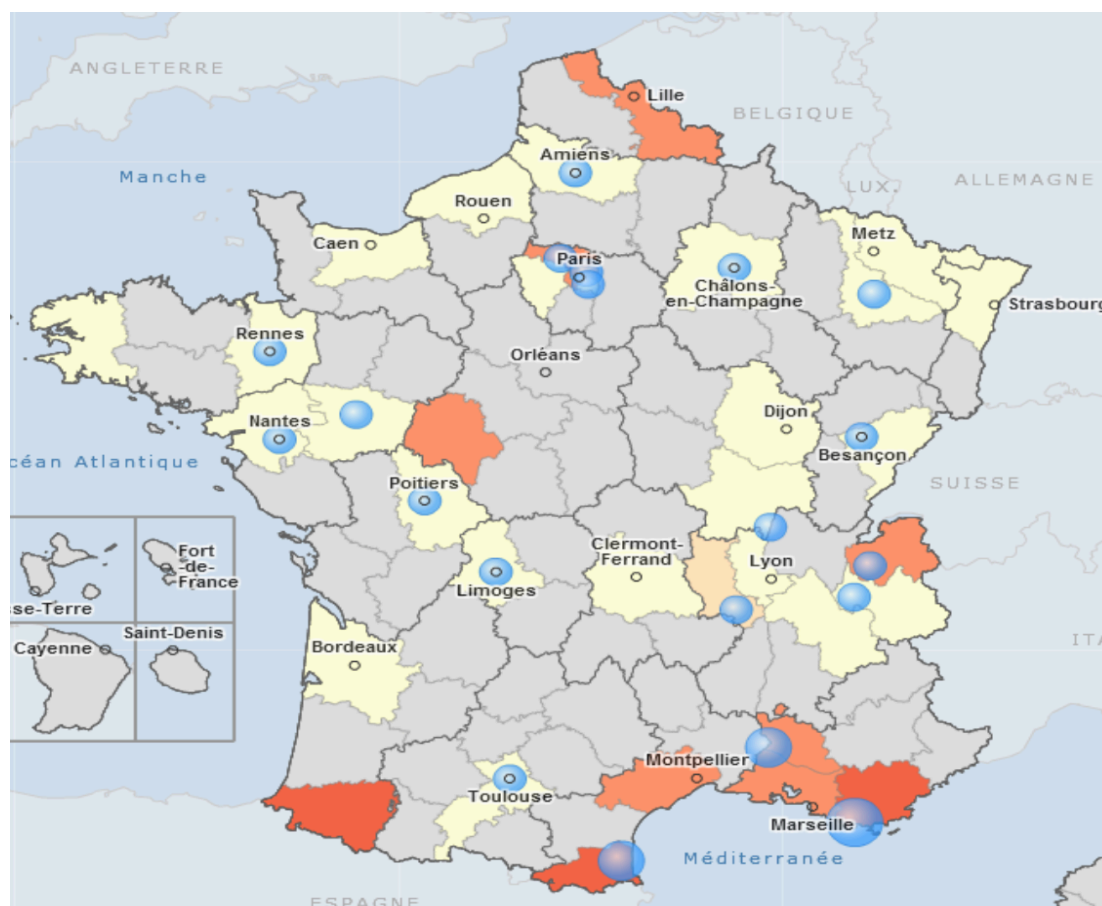
Map 6: Graduated symbol map of regional conservatories that teach baroque music

Most conservatories that teach baroque music are situated in the following regions: Parisian Region (6 institutions), Provence-Alpes-Côte d’Azur Region (3 institutions based in Marseille, Nice and Toulon, but also several territorial annexes of Toulon Regional Conservatory), the new macro-Regions of Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes (3 conservatories based in Annecy, Chambéry and Saint-Etienne) and Languedoc-Roussillon-Midi-Pyrenees (3 conservatories based in Toulouse, Montpellier and Perpignan).

Concerning the teaching of contemporary music, only 26 regional conservatories among 71 referenced in the directory (36.6%) have included this discipline in their educational program. Most of these institutions are based in the same regions as regional conservatories opened to baroque music. However, there are some particular exceptions. For instance, the Regional Conservatory of Marseille teaches baroque music, but is still resistant to the teaching of the contemporary music.<sup>5</sup> Several institutions that teach contemporary music are also gathered in Pays de la Loire (Conservatories of Nantes and Angers), as well as in the new macro-region of Aquitaine Limousin Poitou-Charentes (Conservatories of Poitiers and Bordeaux).

<sup>5</sup> Raevskikh, E. (2014), *Genèse et renouvellements des formes institutionnelles de la culture: une étude des conservatoires de musique et de leurs ancrages territoriaux*. Doctoral dissertation, EHESS-Marseille.

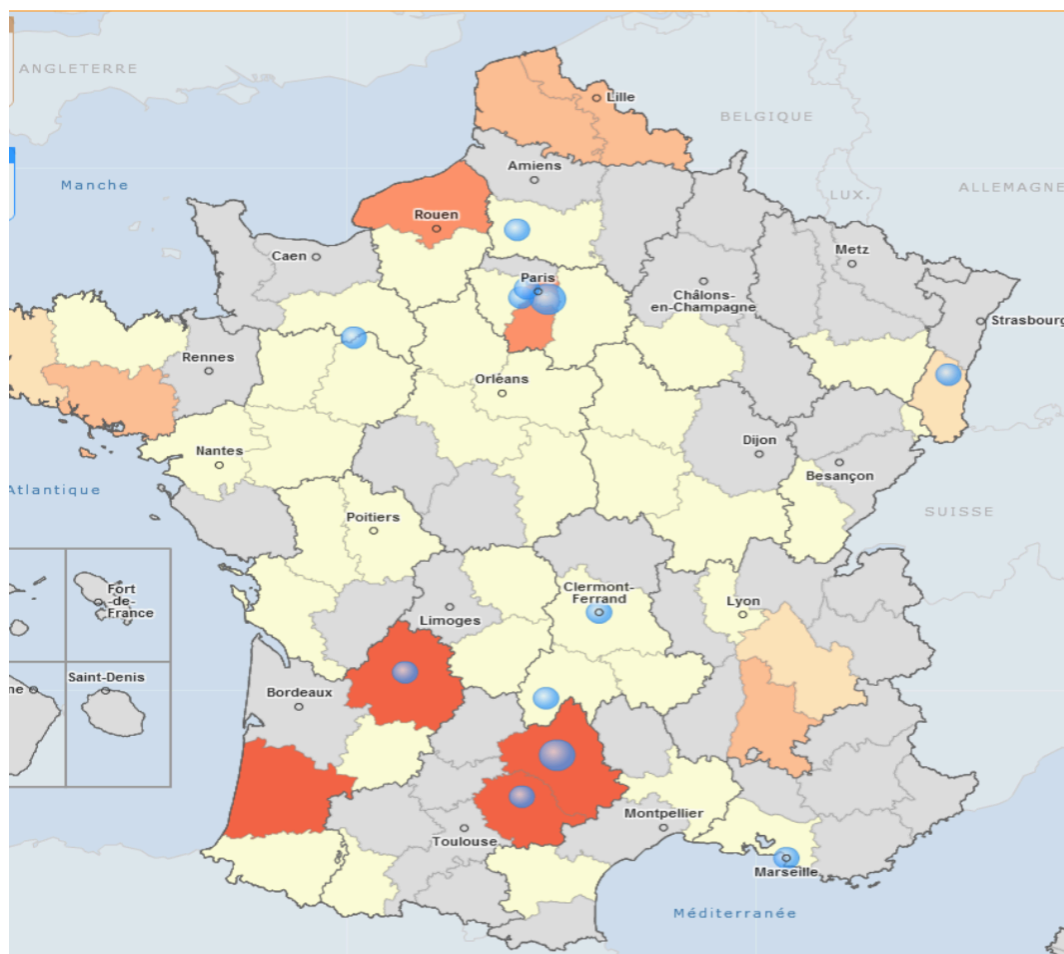
Map 7 below shows the overall proportional meaning of regional conservatories and their annexes (in red), and the regional conservatories that teach contemporary music (in blue).



Map 7: Graduated symbol map of regional conservatories that teach contemporary music

#### b. Department level

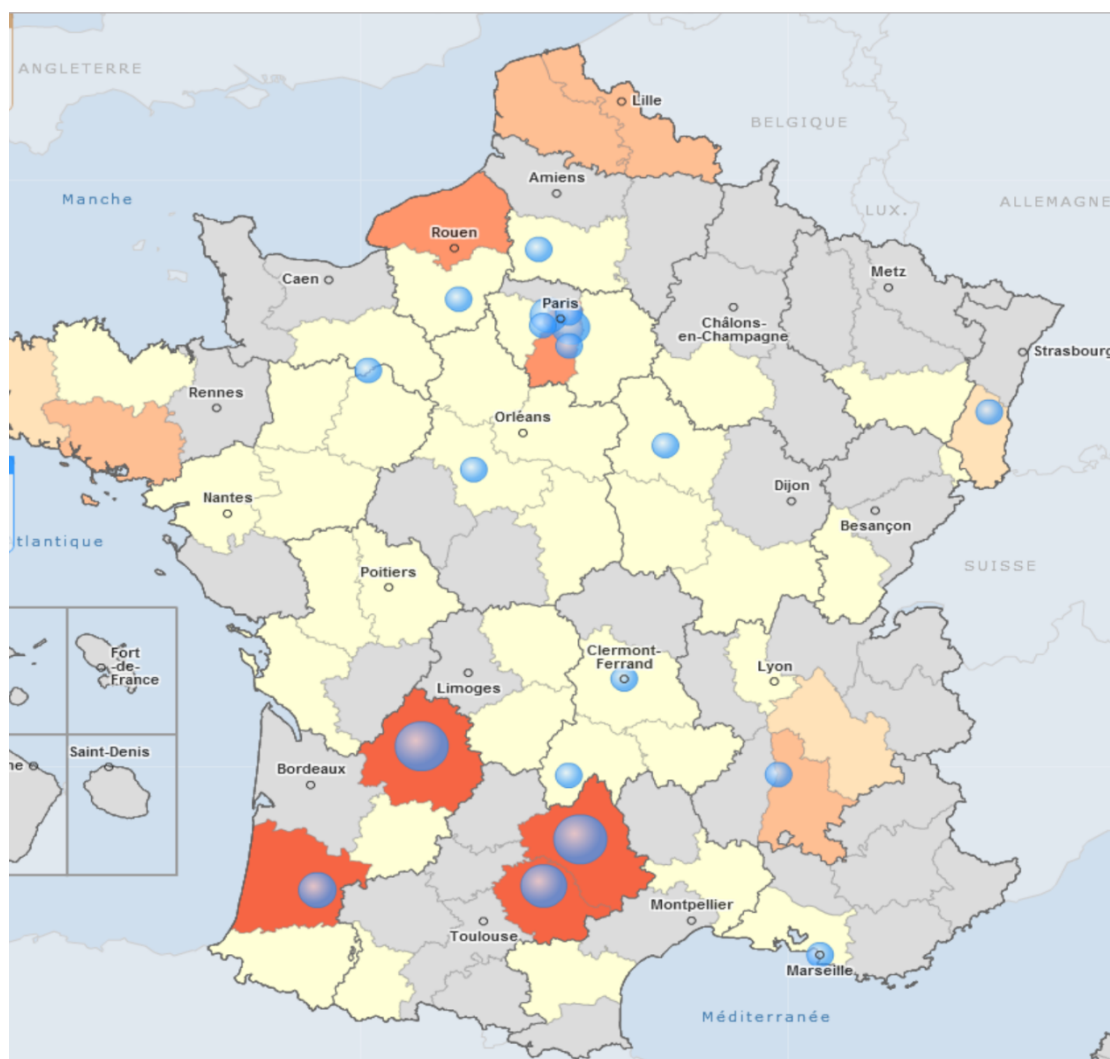
At the departmental level, baroque music is taught in 40 departmental conservatories among 179 referenced in the directory (22.3%). Map 8 below shows the overall proportional meaning of departmental conservatories and their annexes (in red), and the departmental conservatories that teach baroque music (in blue).



Map 8: Graduated symbol map of departmental conservatories that teach baroque music

The departments in the Parisian area (Seine-et-Marne (77), Yvelines (78), Essonne (91), Hauts-de-Seine (92), Seine-Saint-Denis (93), Val-de-Marne (94) house 10 institutions. Important centers of baroque music teaching are also based in the Departments of Tarn (81), Aveyron (12) and Haute-Vienne (87), which are also strongly saturated with the territorial annexes of local department conservatories (marked in deep red).

Contemporary music is taught in 76 departmental conservatories among 179 (42.4%). Map 9 below shows the overall proportional meaning of departmental conservatories and their annexes (in red), and departmental conservatories that teach contemporary music (in blue.) Although contemporary music is more widely disseminated at the departmental level than the baroque music, we can observe the concentration of both disciplines in Parisian area, as well as in the departments of Tarn (81), Aveyron (12) and Haute-Vienne (87) (in deep red).



Map 9: Graduated symbol map of departmental conservatories that teach contemporary music

### Conclusion

In the current context of the decentralized economy and European integration, French music conservatories are called upon to contribute to regional and municipal development and enhance the European student mobility. Previously existing territorial clusters of music education have become a moving force for the equivalency of the French music diploma with its European counterparts. Although the formal European compatibility of the new French diploma (DNSPM) itself does not give an immediate increase in European mobility, conservatories become gradually engaged in territorial concurrence between the regional metropolises, which seek to define their *smart specialization* strategies. New “horizontal” relations between French and other European conservatories promote new musical networks dissociated from the former administrative and symbolic hierarchy between Paris and the provinces. We expect to witness, in the upcoming decades, considerable changes in the way we conceive and understand the French music education system.

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