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The pitfalls of signature - Questioning affiliation in French higher education institutions

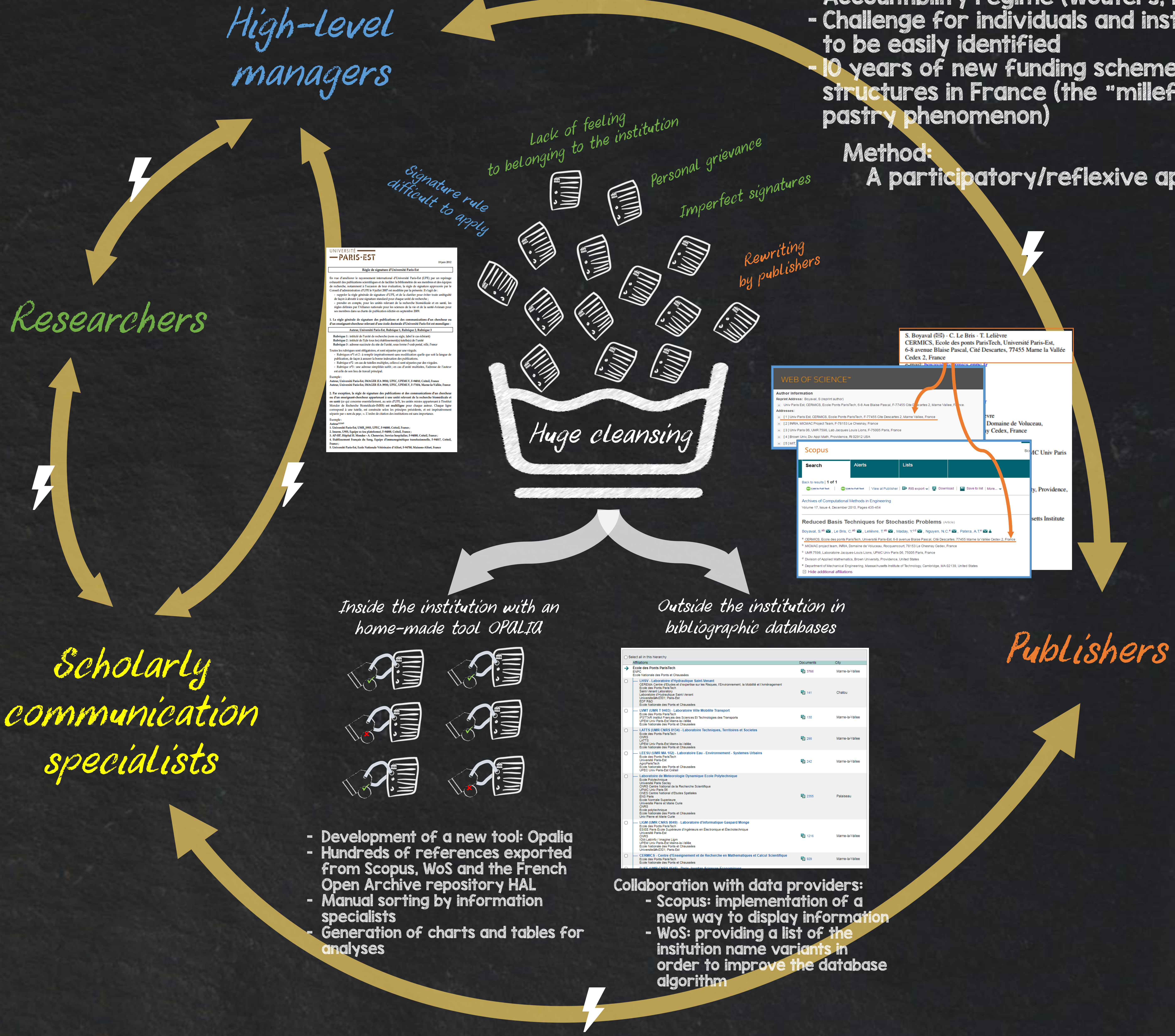
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Background and context:

- Accountability regime (Wouters, 1999)
- Challenge for individuals and institutions to be easily identified
- 10 years of new funding schemes and structures in France (the "millefeuilles" pastry phenomenon)

Method:

A participatory/reflexive approach



Case study: A prestigious school of engineering set up for 20 years in a large university campus
 Injunctions, paradoxes, unexpected facts, incongruities...

Actors are pulled back and forth between conflicting and non-coordinated demands and emphasize unintended effects of the tagging/tracking activities.

- Researchers:** a confusing situation due to multi-affiliations status; uncomfortable feeling with the signature that should be technical and not personal; affiliations reflect multiple socialities.
- Scholarly communication specialists:** job profile moving to "data scientist" (from library to bibliometrics); necessity to collaborate with publishers (Elsevier) despite disagreement upon Open Access.
- Publishers:** selling products in a more competitive landscape in the frame of public procurements.
- High-level managers:** key issues at stake like increasing visibility, reliability of benchmarkings and better self-understanding.



Unexpected effect: Analyses reveal that, despite *Civil engineering* being the main activity of the institution, it is not the most important domain where researchers publish their work in. It has consequences on its position in international rankings.

Perspectives: Work in progress...
 Recommendations and efforts are quite ineffective. Is it specific to the French case?