



HAL
open science

Travellers as an Object of Geography Teaching

Aurore Lecomte

► **To cite this version:**

Aurore Lecomte. Travellers as an Object of Geography Teaching. Emerging's researchers's conference. European Educational Research Association, EERA ECER, Sep 2021, Geneve, Switzerland. halshs-04241650

HAL Id: halshs-04241650

<https://shs.hal.science/halshs-04241650>

Submitted on 13 Oct 2023

HAL is a multi-disciplinary open access archive for the deposit and dissemination of scientific research documents, whether they are published or not. The documents may come from teaching and research institutions in France or abroad, or from public or private research centers.

L'archive ouverte pluridisciplinaire **HAL**, est destinée au dépôt et à la diffusion de documents scientifiques de niveau recherche, publiés ou non, émanant des établissements d'enseignement et de recherche français ou étrangers, des laboratoires publics ou privés.



Distributed under a Creative Commons Attribution - NonCommercial - NoDerivatives 4.0 International License

Proposal EERA- ECER Geneva 2021

Emerging researcher's

Paper

Name : Lecomte

Surname: Aurore

University : Université de Paris -LDAR (laboratoire de didactique André Revuz) ED623

Mots clés-Keywords

Anchoring - Travellers-social issues-justice-geography-citizenship

Title : Travellers: an object of geography teaching

Abstract

This thesis proposes, through collaborative research (Anadón, 2007; Considère & Liénart, 2016; Desgagné et al, 2001; Pelt & Poncelet, 2011; Sanchez & Monod-Ansaldi, 2015) to take an interest in the issue of the mobility and anchoring of Travellers in Geography at vocational high school.

The term 'Voyageurs' refers to people from the French Traveller community. They are also called Manouche , Gens du Voyage or Gypsy. In this thesis, the term Traveller is used rather than Gens du Voyage because it questions the way in which the concerned people call themselves, with reference to their spatial anchorage and attachment to the mobile habitat.

In France, Travellers are subject to prejudice and a policy of managing their movements. The law provides for municipalities with more than 5,000 inhabitants to have a space adapted for Travellers. However, this law is little respected. Travellers find it increasingly difficult to find dedicated areas, which reduces their mobility (Bergeon, 2011, 2014; Bettendorff, 2017; Clavé-Mercier dir & Cossée, 2019; Dukic & Dhume, 2011; Humeau, 1995),

The presence of this community in the neighbourhoods and the schooling of Traveller children brings reactions at school. This issue has a strong social stake, by the omnipresence of a political-mediatic vocabulary to characterise these populations and by the spread of depreciative prejudices. Added to this are educational issues: how to teach alterity? How do schools and curricula grant (or not) a place to Travelling students?

This research proposes to take up the question of Travellers in the classroom through the prism of the ordinary social question (Vergnolle-Mainar, 2020). It can be defined as a questioning on the relationship between social knowledge, such as the media, and school knowledge (Simonneaux & Legardez, 2006). It questions the territory close to the pupil and aims to address the commitment of actors within territories from a citizen perspective. The question arises in class, when pupils express themselves. The territory and the stakes of the presence of Travellers thus burst into the classroom, questioning the relationship between the school and its territories.

The research involves teachers of Literature-History-Geography in Essonne and aims to develop didactic approaches to enable pupils to understand the mobility of Travellers, to go beyond their representations and to develop a critical questioning of the world.

It is based on a qualitative research methodology, one aspect of which is the construction of teaching methods (field trips, interviews). "Experiential geography" thus thinks of a renewal of teaching situations by questioning the passage from experience to knowledge. A course scenario is therefore based on 4 phases: Immersion, Investigation, Institutionalisation, Implementation (Leininger-Frézal, 2019). It is a question of articulating the knowledge derived from this experience with school knowledge through the concrete experience of the pupils. With regard to the Travellers' theme, the field trip may be part of the experiential approach.

The objective is that the material designed should allow the pupils to go beyond the representations of the Travellers and to question the world.

Method section (400 words)

Working on an ordinary social issue in geography leads to the development of a particular methodology.

It is a collaborative research involving teachers of Literature-History-Geography who teach in territories that are in touch with the question. This methodological choice stems from my identity - my grandparents have been sedentary travellers since 1997 - my professional status (teacher in a vocational high school) and the desire to develop a pedagogical approach that is as close as possible to reality. The research is carried out through participant observation (Platt, 1983; Soulé, 2007). My posture is that of a practitioner-researcher (Gaujal, 2016; Schön, 1994).

The research field and subject can be described as sensitive (Bouillon et al., 2005; de Sardan, 2004). The objectives are to grasp the question as an object to be taught and to understand the anchoring processes of the Travellers.

Semi-directive observations and interviews were therefore carried out with different actors at local level (teachers, politicians, associations) as well as informal interviews with the inhabitants of the reception areas.

The survey resulted in a diagnostic of the situation of Travellers in two Essonne municipalities from the point of view of the school systems and links with the local area.

The research is oriented towards action and the design of courses aimed at working on the representations of pupils and their spatial practices. This didactic engineering deployed (Artigue, 2002) is based on the following hypothesis: approaching the question of the Travellers through the prism of their anchorage allows to pass from representations to geographical knowledge.

The courses have been developed in an experiential approach.

The pupils drew up an interview guide which aimed to understand the way of life of the inhabitants of this particular territory (Immersion). Then the students met and interviewed two women living in a reception area in the local area of the vocational school (Investigation). When they returned to class, they recounted what they had experienced, which allowed the teacher to work on the concepts at work (Institutionalisation). Finally, they made a sketch showing an ideal reception area, thus integrating the Travellers into the neighbourhood in which they lived and presented their work to an elected representative.

Questionnaires were distributed in order to identify the pupils' representations. Their productions were compiled and analysed and interviews were conducted with the volunteer students. The corpus of this research is therefore made up of data from classes observation : questionnaires from the pupils, their work (writings, sketches, sound recordings) and interviews conducted with teachers and local actors.

Conclusions (300 words)

.Interviews with teachers show a willingness to change practices and the way pupils look at alterity. The main purpose of geography are both civic: open-mindedness and openness to other ways of living, and intellectual: understanding the spatialities of Travellers and the organisation of their living places (Barthes, Champollion, et al., 2019;; Reuter, et al., 2013).

The questionnaires distributed to the students show that we are dealing with an ordinary social question whose liveliness is obvious from the point of view of representations. For them, Travellers are a category that is subject to wandering and whose symbol is the caravan. The Travellers are a category of people who are forced to wander around, whose symbol is the caravan, "with no fixed abode", "who travel in a caravan", "who go from town to town".

The pupils' productions show limited spatial practices: the territory of proximity is perceived in a fragmented way: during the field trip, the pupils are aware of the high school but not of the Travellers' reception area, which is right across the street. The encounter with the inhabitants of this area made them understand that the Other was present. However, the mobile habitat is also a source of incomprehension. The pupils approach the mobile habitat through the prism of sedentary life.

They imagine a neighbourhood specific to the Travellers, reproducing what they see among themselves, a neighbourhood that must be protected from nuisances and incivilities.

References (400 words)

- Anadón, M. (2007). *Recherche participative : Multiples regards*. PUQ.
- Artigue, M. (2002). Ingénierie didactique : Quel rôle dans la recherche didactique aujourd'hui ? *Les Dossiers des Sciences de l'Éducation*, 8(1), 59- 72.
- Barthes, A., Champollion, P., & Alpes, Y. (2019). *Permanences et évolutions des relations complexes entre éducations et territoires - : Vol. Volume 1*.
- Barthes, A., Lange, J.-M., & Tutiaux-Guillon, N. (2019). *Dictionnaire critique des enjeux et concepts des « Éducatons à »*. L'Harmattan.
- Bergeon, C. (2010). Roms et gens du voyage : L'histoire d'une persécution transnationale. *Le Monde diplomatique*.
- Bettendorff, F. (2017). Une recherche sur la scolarité des enfants du voyage ou quelques conditions de transformations de pratiques institutionnelles par la recherche. *Revue française de pédagogie. Recherches en éducation*, 200, 81- 87.
- Bouillon, F., Tallio, V., & Fresia, M. (2005). *Terrains sensibles : Expériences actuelles de l'anthropologie*, (dossiers africains), Paris
- Champollion, P. (2019). *Etat de la question « Education et territoire » Analyse à partir de territoires ruraux et montagnards* (p. 17).
- Clavé-Mercier dir, & Cossée, C. (2019). *Scolarisation des enfants « du voyage »*. *Des politiques aux pratiques*.
- Considère, S., & Liénart, O. (2016). Recherche collaborative, quelles postures ? L'exemple des représentations de l'argumentation en Géographie en lycée professionnel. *Les Sciences de l'éducation - Pour l'Ere nouvelle*, Vol. 49(4), 67- 92.
- Desgagné, S., Bednarz, N., Lebus, P., Poirier, L., & Couture, C. (2001). L'approche collaborative de recherche en éducation : Un rapport nouveau à établir entre recherche et formation. *Revue des sciences de l'éducation*, 27(1), 33- 64.
- Dukic, S., & Dhume, F. (s. d.). ' « Scolarisation des enfants tsiganes » ' : *Les ambiguïtés d'une notion*. 5.
- Girault, Y., & Barthes, A. (2016). Postures épistémologiques et cadres théoriques des principaux courants de l'éducation aux territoires. *Éducation relative à l'environnement : regards - Recherches - Réflexions*, 13(2).
- Humeau, J.-B. (1995). *Tsiganes en France de l'assignation au droit d'habiter*. L'Harmattan.
- Olivier de Sardan, J.-P. (2004). La rigueur du qualitatif. L'anthropologie comme science empirique. *Espace Temps*, 84(1), 38- 50.
- Pelt, V., & Poncelet, D. (2011). *Une recherche-action. Connaître, accompagner et provoquer le changement en sciences de l'éducation*. 17.

Platt, J. (1983). The development of the “participant observation” method in sociology : Origin myth and history -. *Journal of the History of the Behavioral Sciences*.

Reuter, Y., Cohen-Azria, C., Daunay, B., Delcambre, I., & Lahanier-Reuter, D. (2013). *Dictionnaire des concepts fondamentaux des didactiques*. De Boeck Supérieur.

Sanchez, É., & Monod-Ansaldi, R. (2015). Recherche collaborative orientée par la conception. Un paradigme méthodologique pour prendre en compte la complexité des situations d’enseignement-apprentissage. *Éducation et didactique*, 9(vol. 9, n°2), 73- 94.

Schön, D. (1994). *Le praticien réflexif. A la recherche du savoir caché dans l’agir professionnel* (Logiques).

Simonneaux, L., & Legardez, A. (2006). *L’école à l’épreuve de l’actualité, enseigner les questions vives* (ESF Editeur).

Soulé, B. (2007). Observation participante ou participation observante ? Usages et justifications de la notion de participation observante en sciences sociales. *Recherches qualitatives*, 27 (1), 14.