



OXFORD ETHNOGRAPHY AND EDUCATION CONFERENCE

Monday 9th to Wednesday 11th September 2019

An Ethnographic Study of Education:

Employing a researcher's mastery in management while observing and working within a French distance learning institution

Presented By:

Dr Olivier Marty (*University of Rouen, EU*)

Dr Ray J. Amirault (*Illinois State University, USA*)

Introduction to Today's Presentation

(Ray Amirault)

- Introducing today's speakers:
 - Dr. Olivier Marty (University of Rouen, France)
 - Dr Ray J. Amirault (Illinois State University, USA)
- Introducing the research itself
 - Scope of the presentation
 - How this fits within the Ethnography Conference

Order of Today's Presentation

- Presentation of the fieldwork: distance education in France
- Conditions of the inquiry
- Ethnographical field data
 - On commodification
 - About monetization
 - Controversies about the value(s) of education
- Results
 - The Distance Analysis model
 - Management sciences as an “indigenous language”
- Conclusion: tips for future research

French Higher Education

(Olivier Marty)

- A European and medieval definition of the “uni-versity”
 - A conception of the universe as rotating around a single point
 - Corporations (France) and system of knowledge (Germany)
 - About the “multiverse”: the polycentrism of towns
- The French Republican system: *education as a public good*
 - 1789: The French Revolution after the European Enlightenment (e.g., Condorcet...)
 - Building a democratic state with “Grandes Écoles” (e.g., ENS, Cnam, X,...)

Towards Industrial Education

- The rise of industry and private business schools:
 - The 19th century Chambers of Commerce and their institutions
 - The influence of the Anglo-American world after 1945
 - On monetization of higher education: is education a *public* or *private* good ?
- The case of distance education in France:
 - “**Cned**” (*The National Centre for Distance Education*)
 - A mega-university with some 200.000 learners
 - Equivalent to an Open University
 - Founded in 1939 as a public institution
 - The industrialization of distance education in France: from EPA to EPIC

Conditions of the Inquiry

- Status of the researcher
 - A curriculum designer or a manager?
 - An official position.
 - Located within the the pedagogical office (teachers' management): resides across both printing services (where courses are produced) and the registration offices (tuition services)
 - A researcher? After working at "**Cnam**" (*The National Conservatory of Arts and Crafts*):
 - A series of activities conducted in the postdoc period: results in awarding of an **HDR** (or *Habilitation à diriger des recherches*, an accreditation to supervise research)
 - Courses, conferences, publications, etc.
- Extended period of fieldwork, as recommended by Ethnography and Education
 - Hired fulltime for three years
 - Returned with a student of Lille to verify and re-check the collected data

Ethnographic Data: on the *Commodification of Information*

- Selling what to whom?
 - Method vs pedagogy : courses vs guidance
 - A special intervention of Ray J. Amirault
- Designing the learner's experience
 - A website to sell distance education with original curricula for surfers, sailors, and other non-traditional learner groups
- The new market for lifelong learning
 - Created in France in 1971, enforced and regulated by the French State
 - A multi-billion Euro market that continues to grow today

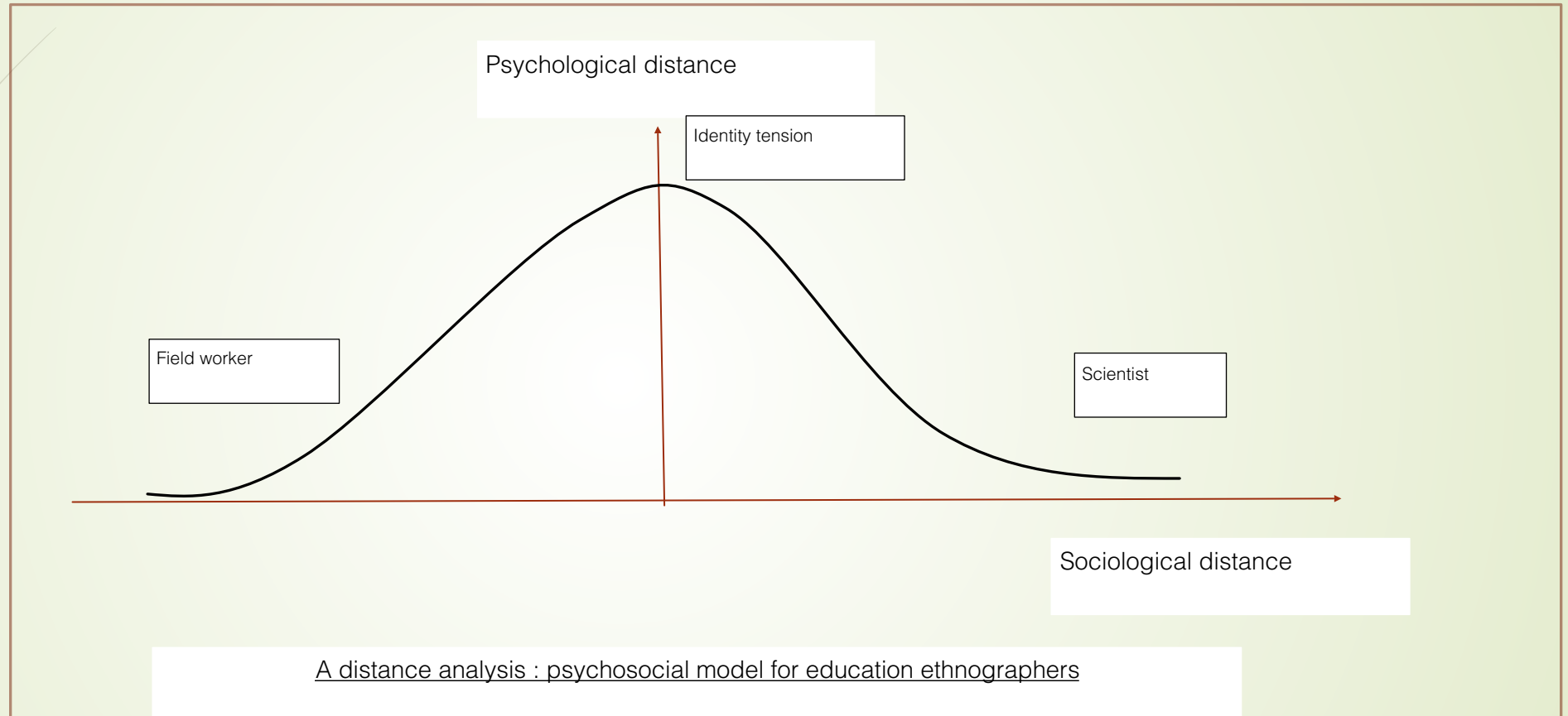
Ethnographic Data: on the *Monetization of Information*

- The mutation of human resources within the observed institution:
 - Witnessed in the changes to wages, clothes
 - Workers now trained in business schools rather than traditional educational institutions
 - Workers coming in with experience in private companies
- From mature teachers to young managers:
 - A clash of cultures and generations?
 - Are learners *students, learners or clients*?

Ethnographic Data : A controversy about education value(s)

- The marketing of education:
 - The size of the targeted market
 - Pricing
 - Product management: designing curricula (bachelor degrees, etc.)
- Accounting and finance:
 - Measuring the investments, the ROI and profitability
 - What is the monetary value of a curriculum?
- Politics, Economics and Pedagogy, value(s) discussed:
 - By-law non profitable curriculum: an English course
 - What about the pedagogical values (i.e., the quality of service to learners, progression, orientation, etc.)

Results: the Distance Analysis Model



- First draft published in *Ethnography and Education* in 2014
- Positioning one's researches on the bell curve and understanding one's evolution

Results: Management as an “indigenous language”

- Learning management sciences can open doors within higher education institutions
- It is like learning an indigenous language when one wants to study ethnographically higher education

Conclusion of the Research: “Tips and Tricks”

- The use of knowledge
- When learning management sciences as an indigenous language, *focus on the usable vocabulary and the simple structures*
- This leads to the employability of knowledge: what is best used in a learning institution evolving into a work organization, or from a work organization to another form of work organization

Thank You for Your Attention!

- Discussion: please feel free to ask any questions!