TOWARDS A TERRITORIALISED PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY: THE CASE OF TEACHING STAFF IN RURAL SCHOOLS IN FRANCE, SPAIN, CHILE AND URUGUAY

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ABSTRACT

Rural schools have constituted a renewed subject of research since the 1980s, at both national and international levels. Small rural schools in France, Spain, Chile and Uruguay have points in common in terms of their organization (multi-year) and the implication of local participants. The immersion of teachers in the rural territory and their confrontation with a multi-year structure tend to upset their professional identity and often damage their «capacity system» (Costalat-Founeau, 1997). This study shows that teachers engage in numerous professional and personal activities both directed at the territory on a quest of social validation by the latter. By re-balancing their capacity system, they modify their representation of their own profession and thus their whole professional development. They gradually construct a territorialized professional identity and educational offer.

KEY WORDS

Professional identity; Primary level; Rural school; Territoriality; Territory.

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INTRODUCTION

Amongst the various changes that occur in the careers of primary-school teachers, it is relocations in particular—be they chosen or imposed—that set in motion identity-forming processes. The posting of teachers to small rural schools consisting of one or two classes represents an event in their professional trajectory for several reasons: because they are immersed in a specific rural territory; because they teach several year-groups at once; and because of the lack of a teaching team within the school. One aspect rural schools have in common is that they are frequently run with a high level of involvement by local actors (especially parents), and the teachers very often have the duties of school head as well. Whilst the «rural» character of rural territories is defined fairly homogenously by population density, they do differ in their histories, actors, territorialities (Aldhuy, 2008), social composition and intercultural make-up. Teachers thus work in both a unique territory and a unique school structure.

The international research programme on rural schools (2009-2012)[2] involving Spain, Portugal, Chile, Uruguay and France, and coordinated by

the University of Barcelona, was interested in the teaching practices of teachers in rural schools. But what about their identity? How do today's French, Spanish, Chilean and Uruguayan primary-school teachers experience their encounter with rural schools? Whether this area of practice occurs at the beginning of their professional careers or later, it disrupts their representations of their own profession and their professional practices in several ways. What processes of identity-formation do these disruptions set off for teachers in rural areas of these four countries? What convergences, and what divergences, can be brought to light in the way in which teachers in French, Spanish, Chilean and Uruguayan rural areas construct their professional identity?

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Contemporary geographers agree on the definition of the concept of territory as summarised by Guy Di Méo: «A construct produced by history, which each social actor reconstitutes and deforms through his practices and representations. It is often abstract, ideational, lived and felt, rather than identified visually» (2009, p. 23). The term 'territoriality' is used to describe «the whole set of existential and social relationships that individuals within a group have with the space that they produce and reproduce on a daily basis through figures, images, categories and geographical objects, which they mobilise for their project to produce a society that is more or less intentional and made explicit.» (Aldhuy, 2008, p. 4). Thus territorialities «produce» the territory, a fact which shifts our initial understanding of territory as space to that of territory as social construct. «Territoriality enables us to go beyond the sole issue of how societies' space is organised and move towards understanding the spatial condition of individuals living in society» (Aldhuy, 2008). Taking into account territoriality also allows us to view territory from the angle of the social or cultural balance of power, and the latent territorial conflicts which undeniably enter into schools. If territoriality is shared between the territory's actors, then the connection that individuals maintain with the place where they live or work depend on those individuals' history. People who have always lived in the same place are less likely to feel that they are emotionally attached to those places, «ordinary places, places of everyday life, which one no longer sees by dint of frequenting them too much» (de la Soudière, 2007, quoted by Guérin-Pace & Filippova, 2008, p. 16). People who

are attached to their territory (Sencébé, 2004) develop in their rootedness a feeling of loneliness and of fear of newcomers settling in the territory. Their children, even young ones (i.e. of primary-school age), thus carry a double burden of family pressure: the fear of the stranger and the filial duty of staying on to work their father's land. The attachment that inhabitants of Chiloé Island in Chile feel to their territory, and the island's powerful territoriality, leave them with the impression that they could not be happy off the island.

For those who have been more geographically mobile, feeling anchored (Sencébé, 2004, p. 25) is the positive outcome of a residential and/or professional strategy. They feel that they have a stake in the territory without being entirely dependent on it. Many inhabitants of the Ardèche in France or Cerdagne in Catalonia have left behind urban areas to build themselves a new life, in a place of which they feel stakeholders, especially through their professional activity. The territory enables them both to construct themselves and to flourish in relationship to others; and it also commits them to getting personally and professionally involved, so as to express their creativity and competences. This type of connection to territory is much more pronounced in Europe than in Latin America, even though a new mobility towards the countryside also exists in Chile or Uruguay. However, in these countries such mobility is not accompanied by involvement in the territory. Here, it is more a question of a relationship of externality. This relationship has been described by Y. Sencébé, for whom it is characterised by «being strongly anchored in a circumscribed place» (Sencébé, 2004, p. 25). People settle in a place that shelters them from the constraints of the urban world, a place set in a decorative landscape to which they feel no attachment or commitment. In Chile, the children of these families do not frequent state schools but urban private schools. Finally, in rural territories in Chile and Uruguay, a number of people, despite being strongly attached to their territory, think that it has «no future», especially for their children or pupils. They want a different and less difficult life for them, and strive to make them able to adapt to other territories, especially urban territories, whilst also remaining emotionally attached to their territory of origin. Sencébé considers this type of connection «dissociated», referring to the dissociation between their attachment to their place of origin, their territoriality and their place of daily life (Sencébé, 2004). Individuals' relationships with territory are therefore complex: at once collective and unique; endured on the one hand, chosen on the other. «Everyone has at his disposal a palette of practices, be it large or small, which

depend on his socio-spatial origins, social position, family status and age, and which profoundly shape his relationships with places, roots, and any new layout of the space he frequents.» (Tison, as cited in Di Méo, 2009, p. 25).

Psycho-sociologists see social identity as being inextricably linked to the social world. «Identity is constructed, defined, and studied within the relationship to the other» (Baugnet, 2005, p.10). It is therefore unstable, and continually being redefined and reaffirmed. The process of identity-formation is characterised by a trajectory that is at once personal and social. This process is constructed in tension with the past, present and future: «with *inherited identity*, which comes to us with birth and our social origins, *acquired identity*, strongly linked to our socio-professional situation, and *hoped-for identity*, to which we aspire so as to gain recognition» (Gauléjac, 2002, as cited in Marc, 2005, p. 4). Personal history, being socially constructed and interpreted by the individual, is the trajectory during which identity-formation unfolds. Studying identity-construction processes using the capacity model proposed by Anne-Marie Costalat-Founeau (1997) underlines the importance of capacity effects in the construction of social identity. «I call these effects capacity effects: on the one hand, subjective capacity (I can), which confers on the subject a capacity to act in that he understands the stakes and means, and defines the objectives; on the other hand, normative capacity, linked to social validation, which brings about forms of social approval or disapproval. These capacities are closely interdependent and make up the capacity system, which has a fundamental role in the intention, realisation and ultimate aim of the action» (Costalat-Founeau, 2008, p. 70). Normative capacity is constructed through social validation—it is the image reflected in the «social mirror»—and is in synergy with subjective capacity, that is to say, with the fact of feeling oneself capable, which is linked to self-esteem and self-efficacy. Capacity effects have both emotional and cognitive foundations: the person's history (where he comes from, his perspective on the rural environment, previous experience, and emotional attachment to a place) will be very important in balancing his capacity system, but so will the entirety of small signs, small gestures and words that the territory might use to communicate with him. Some personal scars and some extremely negative feelings may be effaced by positive experiences. Alternatively, they may solidify and remain a permanent obstacle to personal and professional fulfilment. The capacity system finds its equilibrium in the coherence between normative and subjective capacity. This coherence may be put in tension when, for example, the envi-

ronment (in our case, the territory) does not send out the signs of recognition that the teacher expects. Such tensions within the capacity system will lead the individual to instigate actions aiming to rebalance the system. Through such actions, the individual puts his competence into practice, which enables him to construct his own experience within the context. Such public action-taking bolsters the individual's sense of self-efficacy and of competence, but also makes it possible for him to receive positive emotional signals, which in turn strengthen his motivation to act. This motivation is equally linked to the pleasure that the individual may feel in discovering his environment and local events, and in locating himself within that environment. These actions aimed at capacity-strengthening differ depending on the individual, since they are realised by people having different histories and different representations (or stereotypes). Teachers in rural environments, however, have in common that they bring into play the territory: it is through actions that are visible to the territory that the teachers balance their capacity systems and reinforce their feeling of self-efficacy. Such actions may be directly linked to the teacher's profession, but can also be much more personal and social. The social legitimisation of an individual as «this territory's teacher» helps to anchor him in the territory and to territorialise him.

METHODOLOGY

Pursuing comparative research on an international scale creates a number of methodological problems. Indeed, the construction of a teacher's identity is the result of the culture and the national tradition of the educational system within which that teacher works. This educational system has developed within a specific history and context that must be taken into account. The issue of «conceptual equivalence» (Osborn, 2001) is also fundamental. «One of the major challenges in comparative research is to supply conceptual definitions that have an equivalent, though not necessarily an identical, meaning in different cultures» (Osborn, 2001, p. 6). I have therefore considered it appropriate to have sociologists and psycho-sociologists of each of the countries concerned validate the theoretical framework of this research.

My research is clearly qualitative in methodology. I worked on the verbal communications of teachers who were, at the time, employed in rural schools of one or two classes. These communications were collected during

comprehensive interviews (Kaufmann, 1996). Interviews were conducted with 43 teachers, spread over five territories: the area of Les Boutières in Ardèche; Cerdagne in Catalonia; the Dalcahue coast of Chiloé Island in Chile; the Villarica-Pucon area in Araucanía in Chile; and a part of the Flores Department in Uruguay. The two European territories are mountain territories which have experienced strong social change since the 1970s, with a growing number of inhabitants of urban origins. These new rural populations, as described by Hervieu and Viard (2001), are motivated by a certain type of place to live and commit to a personal life project there. Chiloé Island is in the south of Chile. Its traditional activity was subsistence agriculture complemented by fishing. In the past decade or so, big foreign companies have opened salmon-farming operations here. Locals have abandoned their traditional activities and opted for salaried work within these companies. Araucanía is the Mapuche area of Chile, which is characterised by conflicts over land ownership and by intercultural troubles. Its Mapuche indigenous inhabitants are strongly attached to their traditions, which clash with the «Chilean» vision of development. Finally, the Flores Department in Uruguay is an area whose traditional agricultural activity is extensive sheep and cattle farming, but which has in the past twenty or so years shifted towards large-scale crop farming run by big farming companies (wheat, genetically-modified soya, forestry), as well as towards intensified production in those zones where livestock continues to be raised. Land ownership is increasingly concentrated, and land purchases by foreign companies continue to rise. The portion of salaried agricultural workers has risen sharply, at the expense of family farming, which rural youth no longer consider to have a future. In the three South-American territories, the rate of rural flight remains high.

Samples within each territory were taken according to territorial criteria: teachers of the same territory, in a small rural school (one or two classes). Criteria such as age or gender were not taken into account. In the interviews, teachers were asked to describe their personal trajectory linked to their professional activities and the rural territory. It was suggested to them that they evoke their past and present representations of rural environments and rural schools, their professional and territorial choices, and their perception of their own professional evolution. An analysis of these samples brought to light particularities for each territory. The French and Catalan subsamples are comparatively young, very largely drawn from urban origins, and have chosen to live in a rural area in the mountains. The Chiloé Island subsample

is characterised by the great number of people of Chiloé origins. In Araucanía, the great majority of the subsample were relatively old men (over 55 years of age) of urban origin, who were not Mapuche, and who had settled down in a rural school where they had in many cases taught for at least 20 years. The respondents in Flores Department in Uruguay were all female, and all stemmed from within the Department, often from the small town (and state capital) of Trinidad. Teaching was not initially the profession of choice for any of these women; it was a geographical constraint. No other training was offered in Flores Department, and higher education in Montevideo, the country's capital, was largely reserved for boys rather than girls. The characteristics of each subsample were thus strongly linked to the historical, social and cultural specifics of its territory.

THE RESULTS

THE TEACHERS' REPRESENTATIONS OF THE RURAL WORLD

The representations of the rural world and rural schools that the teachers had before starting work there were linked to their prior knowledge (hence the importance of each person's cognitive and emotional memory); to their beliefs; and to a form of idealisation of rural territories and schools, which were seen as protected spaces. The teachers in the European subsample favoured a view of the rural world as a «natural space».

> At the time, we were looking for an isolated territory, with all the fantasies that go with that. In other words, a world with more flexibility, more freedom. (E., Ardèche)

The teachers of the South-American subsample tended to view the rural world in terms of a strongly idealised «social space» instead.

> People who live in the countryside, I thought their values were rooted in solidarity… I also expected people to value equality… (L., Flores)

Some teachers also had a devalued representation of the rural world. They talked of its «cultural poverty», and foresaw that this would be an obstacle—but an obstacle for which they believed a solution must be found.

When the teachers talked of their encounter with the school territory, they expressed feelings first of all, and strong feelings. They often mixed impressions linked to their personal life in the territory with impressions associated with their professional activity. These first impressions gained during their beginnings in rural schools and in their encounter with the rural territory determined the teachers' identity-forming processes.

After a phase of idealisation, which had vindicated their decision to settle in the rural territory, daily life brought its share of disappointments.

> I encountered local culture by living here, and it was a shock. In other words, in the villages, that way of being very closed-off… (I., Cerdagne)

These disappointments were expressed not only by those people who had moved from urban areas, and cannot be explained solely by ignorance of the territory. Some Chiloé Islanders returning to their island were also disillusioned.

For many teachers—whether they started out living in their school or not—the initial feeling of isolation remained painful. In the Ardèche, for instance, teachers explained this feeling of isolation not as a personal difficulty, but as a professional one, especially when they were faced with children or families that put them in an awkward position. They felt abandoned by the school system and said so.

In Flores Department or Araucanía, teachers over 40 years of age had necessarily started out in rural schools, often in very cut-off schools. Their reminiscences showed how acute those feelings were.

> I passed my exam, and started in a rural school. That was my first experience. At the rural school where I started out, there was nobody around, I found myself completely alone. I liked the rural world as such, my work at school as well, my work with the community was good, the children too. But the loneliness! […] I really suffered with loneliness, I was very sad, I remember going back on Sunday evenings crying! (O., Flores)

The welcome given by the neighbours and parents also contributed much to the teacher's impressions.

I went there and far from feeling bad, it all went off great, I liked it a lot, I was enchanted. People were very kind, they brought me bags of chestnuts, pinecones, fruit all the time... People were very affectionate. (J., Araucanía)

The small gestures and small attentions shown by local actors towards the teachers—the «existential welcome»—contributed to making teachers want to stay in their school, to communicate with parents, children and neighbours. These gestures might be made intentionally by local actors because they needed a teacher to commit to the territory, and so aimed to charm him. In all cases, they generated positive emotions in the teachers.

PROFESSIONAL DIFFICULTIES

Despite the varied school locations, and the diversity of educational and training systems, all the teachers mentioned a number of professional difficulties:

I tried for a whole year, and I have to admit that I didn't really get the class to gel, I didn't! I don't know if the pupils learned anything, I don't think so, I didn't want to be there, and on top of that, I didn't feel well at all. I just wanted to get away from that school. I was in total despair. (F., Araucanía).

These difficulties were brought about by the format of multiple year-groups; parents' presence at the school; the school's history; the weight of the previous teacher; local culture; and local conflicts, and jeopardised the teachers' feeling of self-efficacy, while leading them to «mark out their own territory». Even for those originating from the school territory or from another rural territory it was no easier to shape their places as teachers. For some, these difficulties led to a form of withdrawal into themselves: a «closing the door» on the territory while strongly deprecating it and expressing a keen desire to change (a desire that may have been strengthened by the potential instability of the post they occupy).

«LEARNING» THE TERRITORY AND
SOCIAL VALIDATION BY THE TERRITORY

For a number of other people, whose posts were more stable, especially school heads, having their capacity tested had a very different impact as long as it

occurred alongside a positive general impression of the territory. At times it led them to undertake actions aimed both at a better understanding of the territory and also, unconsciously, at socially validation by it. The teacher portrayed himself as a learner vis-à-vis the territory and in exchange «expected» a form of recognition.

> In those schools, I learned to fish, go to the beach and find shellfish. I'd put on my rubber boots, and people were often very surprised by my attitude. The teacher was their equal, that's what allowed me to get so close to them, and made them respect me… It was important for me that I too should learn something from them, and with them, that we did things together. That made them accept me much more. It helped me a lot with my work. (M., Chiloé)

Such learning came from different «sources» and took on different shapes, and depended on the relationship with knowledge that the teachers had constructed during their initial training or through past experiences. Thus the teachers of the European subsample were more likely to seek out scientific knowledge of the natural world, either in books or from local experts.

> I quickly went and bought a book. I told myself: I can't be totally ridiculous either, totally silly, and know nothing! There was a bit of pride involved, too! After all, I'm the teacher! (D., Ardèche)

Other teachers, especially from the South-American subsample, got involved in social, athletic or cultural activities that had no direct link to their classroom activities and learned about local practices, community knowledge, and the territory's problems from local actors.

> There are two neighbours next to the school and we often talk. They explain to me what is happening in this area, that it is Argentines who are buying all the land in this countryside. That they buy the land to plant it, but that they have no interest in the families that live on it, and if those families have to leave, they don't care. So there are fewer and fewer families, and the families are more and more isolated from one another. (A., Flores)

In the whole sample, this learning frequently occurred within educational activities aimed at pupils and families: teachers realised that a large number

of «teaching projects» also had a learning function for them. In all cases, these activities became visible to the territory and modified the teachers' view and position vis-à-vis local actors. They became aware of the territory's cultural assets, and of the pupils' knowledge and capacities.

> The children lack knowledge compared to the syllabus, yes. But they have a wealth of knowledge in other areas, about their environment, farming, everything to do with daily life. Oh yes, here they had a huge amount of knowledge! And what they knew, they knew because they did it. Of course, if you only talk about maths… But *they* taught *me* about agronomy and nature, not the other way round! They taught me all that. The other part, the school part, that was me, it was a sort of mutual teaching, everyone did his bit! I arrived here as a teacher, but in reality they taught me! (S., Flores)

Such teachers shared a common language with local actors. Their original preoccupation with «marking out their own territory» lost its importance. Because they had «learnt» the territory, they were able to construct their position as teacher in the territory, with an open-mindedness towards the territory and a form of shared territoriality.

> I made my life in the countryside with the people from there, playing football! When you work in a rural school, bit by bit you construct a sort of belonging to the territory. It happens day by day, year by year. (J., Araucanía)

However, whilst the interviews brought to light some homogeneity in this area, one can also distinguish more subtle differences in the positions of teachers within the territory. Some teachers positioned themselves in the territory with a view to continuity. They talked about habits, traditions, etc., with which they could not imagine breaking.

> They do things together, like the village fête, which had been going on for decades. Everyone helps out, and your involvement is compulsory! You don't have a choice, you jump on the moving train, so of course I was among the organisers! (D., Ardèche)

Through their territorialisation, some teachers implicitly shared in the social balance of power at the heart of the territory, and found themselves reproducing social or cultural conflicts without meaning to.

About a pupil:

> He doesn't trust the knowledge that I can bring him in the sense that he has his own culture, which is based on beliefs… He'll get annoyed, get angry, his thing is to grumble in his corner. And I can't bear that. It always ends badly. (D., Ardèche)

A NEW VIEW OF THE PROFESSION

As they became increasingly territorialised, teachers distanced themselves from institutional dictates and from their syllabi, but continued to respect the legitimacy that their affiliation to the institution conferred on them. They were thus in a situation of double affiliation, to the territory and to the institution. Some institutional demands lost all meaning in rural schools.

> They [the inspectors] want a timetable like this: break, then Catalan, maths… And what's more, they want one per year group. They want one, so I make one, and I can show it to them. It can't be applied in a rural school where all year groups are taught together, but they ask us to do it! They want to see one, so I show it to them, and afterwards I explain that it's impossible to work like that. (M., Cerdagne)

To compensate for the absence of a team of teachers within the school, there were teacher networks, which could be formal or informal, and allowed teachers to overcome their feelings of isolation; talk about teaching practices; and construct common projects; but also to assist new teachers in the territory through a form of tutelage. This organisation by network also allowed teachers to keep a certain distance, to stay «each in his own school», a distance that mattered to them.

Their view of the profession changed: teachers expressed both the sense of being able to be more creative, but also a sense of having to be more responsible vis-à-vis the territory.

> Personally, I don't work to be noticed, I don't work for a mark, I work because I like it. I try to do what I'm officially asked to do, but frankly it doesn't interest me much! I don't work for the inspector. I feel good here, working with the community. This community is my family. (C., Flores)

In particular, their creativity expressed itself in a sort of curricular liberty, where they adapted the contents and timetabling of the official syllabus to their pupils' culture, with the aim of highlighting the pupils' knowledge and facilitating their learning.

Some teachers also mentioned activities that showed a high degree of local involvement. They had their place within the territory and the territory's issues, and thus had a part to play. While this representation of the rural teacher as committed social actor is widespread in Latin America (without there being any specific training for it), it is much more implicit but nonetheless present in Europe too.

> The relationship with the pupils' parents, where you're a bit of a social worker after all… In a rural village, with people who sometimes find paperwork difficult, you lend a hand, you suggest course choices for their kids when they're older, things like that. (M., Ardèche)

Others were more likely to problematize the territory, and took an active part as teachers in the territory's political issues.

> I realised while I listened to people talk about their boss that the boss is like an all-powerful god to them! And these people, who are the bosses' workers, their cleaning ladies, they don't see themselves as an equal person, as a person who has the right to have a rest… You see, the sheepshearers, for instance, they are people who were born in a rural environment and have learned to shear sheep. They go in teams to farms to do the shearing, and they live in granges without any comforts, without a place to wash. Why should a labourer not have a right to the same conditions as a labourer in town, or a boss, just because he's rural? Why should an agricultural labourer have to live in a grange? Any employee has to have the same level of comfort as anybody else. He's not an animal, he's human. They're not asking for favours, they do their work, they are people who have the same rights, but they themselves don't demand those rights. I've told you that respect for the individual is very

important to me. Being an employee doesn't mean sacrificing your life and accepting everything in someone else's service. And all those injustices you see in a rural environment, yes, I do try to get the parents and the children to realise those. If they study, they'll have more power to make demands. (S., Flores)

CHANGES IN TEACHING PRACTICES

Territorialised teachers, especially those whose capacity systems were in equilibrium, also felt empowered to implement teaching practices that were adapted to rural schools, where those schools were seen as a system located between the school structure, the school format and the territory (Champollion, 2013). For instance, getting pupils to help each other in class, an aspect typically mentioned for classes with multiple year-groups, was a practice mostly used by territorialised teachers. While this practice had, on the face of it, nothing to do with the teachers' relationship to the territory, it did require confidence on their part to let their pupils take on a role other than that of learners. This change in attitude was linked to teachers implementing what they had learned about the territory, especially from pupils. The trust expressed by the territory's inhabitants towards some teachers also gave those teachers the latitude to establish situations in the classroom that broke with traditional practices. Incidentally, pupils' parents were used to teachers taking this sort of approach, and did not criticise them for it. Helping each other then became a part of the practices of those teachers who had constructed a territorialised, rural-school form of «teaching knowledge». This translated into a teacher/taught relationship based on mutual trust.

> It's truly a different way of working, it's no longer the same relationship with the pupils, you feel the teacher/taught thing much less. I'm not sure how to express it, you discover… There are things you discover together. For instance: the computer. Used as we used it, I was learning at the same time as the kids, we're all learning and doing together. And that is pure joy. (M.-P., Ardèche)

This kind of relationship calls to mind the writings of Freire on the teacher/taught relationship. «There no longer exists the educator of the educatee nor the educatee of the educator, but the educator-educatee and the educatee-edu-

cator. This means that no one educates no one, inasmuch as no one is educated alone; people educate one another.» (Freire, 1969)

Because of territorialised practices, the territory, whether as natural space or as social space, became both a learning support and an object of learning.

> We make do as much as possible with what we have around us. I let them handle everyday objects a lot to teach them counting: bits of wood… To create texts, we talk about cows and sheep. I use familiar vocabulary to teach them to read as well. You see, if I use a word like «elevator», it has no meaning for the kids. Once a teacher came from Santiago, and we worked on making learning cards for the sounds that are specific to here, based on what the children know. We did that together with the parents, to make cards for school and for their homes. And everyone, here at school and the mothers at home, worked on the sounds, syllables, words… and in three months, all the children had learned to read. They worked on the same thing at home and here at school, in ways that were different but consistent. We had meetings with the mothers, how is it going, what isn't working, how could we improve things, what should we change on the cards—and that's how we progressed through the alphabet. (R., Araucanía)

These territorialised practices did not prevent the teachers from being concerned as well with opening the pupils' minds to environments that they were not familiar with, and helping them approach a more learned culture that they were not necessarily able to access within their families (though without setting out a hierarchy of cultures).

> I also take them to the cinema, and we went to Valdivia so that they could see the ocean. You should have seen them, when they arrived on the beach at Valdivia, they couldn't get over it! They tasted the water, which was salty! We went to see the escalator in the shopping centre, and they didn't know how to get on it! I have more freedom to go on outings with the children, and they really need it. They only know the same things: of course, they can get exercise by climbing trees and jumping into the grass, but it's also good to see other things. (F., Araucanía)

In other words, whilst there was no homogeneity in the teaching practices of teachers in rural schools, there were strong links between, on the one hand,

the teacher's knowledge of the territory and the children's territoriality, his personal and professional involvement in the territory and the social recognition he received, and, on the other hand, his relationship to institutional dictates, the curriculum he derived from them, and the tradition of practices that was either transmitted or imposed within the territory's group of rural teachers. The teachers thus had to confront, often on their own, the multifaceted problems of providing education in the complex, systemic and unique territory of which they were a part. What became evident here was the potential space for creativity available to the teacher, but also the importance of the cluster of influences—or of constraints or pressures—that could limit or even put a stop to his activity.

CONCLUSION

This article has highlighted that for teachers in small rural schools, there were convergent stages in the process of identity-construction, even across different territories and different educational systems:

· The encounter both personal and professional with the territory, and the encounter with rural schools that challenged the teachers' capacity system.
· The pursuit of a congruent capacity system through activity (educational or not), achieved by social validation by the territory's actors. The quest for social validation by the territory went hand in hand with «learning» the territory. The diversity of the territories expressed itself in the different modes of learning the territory, as well as in the purposes underpinning that learning and the knowledge at stake.
· The territorialisation of the teacher's professional identity and the congruence of his capacity system gave meaning to and provided a potential space for creativity in his educational activities, which were integrated into the territory's own dynamic. The teacher's relationship to pupils, to authority, and to knowledge changed. Rural schools thus became an educational space integrated into the territory, and shared in its dynamics, through training, through the validation of local cultures, and by mobilising actors to join in the construction of the territory's future.

- A dual affiliation: with a national educational system and with the territory in which they taught. Teachers did not renounce their affiliation with the national educational system, but adapted it to their affiliation with the territory.
- Professional practices which were territorialised, in that they contributed to local social organisation and the territorial dynamic, and in that they fitted into the territory's own territoriality and knowledge, thus creating unique learning conditions.

This piece of qualitative research has made it possible to locate precisely the part that territory and territoriality play in the educational activities of the small-rural school teachers of the sample, a part which they play through the identity-forming processes both in their consistency and their diversity. The focus now needs to shift onto teacher training: what methodological tools could be offered, what assistance could be envisaged, to make the relationship between teachers and territory both more explicit and more operational? Might it be possible to highlight professional territorial forms of knowledge that could be theorised?

Might it be helpful to use this research for other territories and other territorialities? Would we discover that teachers' professional developments are territorialised in other territories as well? What sort of actions might teachers engage in as part of this process, and to confront what kinds of needs? What influence might a territorialisation of this sort have on professional practices?

One subject that compellingly merits further study is the impact of identity-formation on the pupils' learning and trajectories: might there be a «territorialised-teacher effect»?

Finally, if rural schools partake of the tensions between the local and the global, is it their role to be a form of resistance to the homogeneous education being offered? To what extent, and with what objectives, might it be the role of the rural teacher to participate in preparing the territory's future?

All these areas would reward further research.

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