The Centaurs of Law and Order

Vanina Deneux
PhD student in Sociology
Université Paul Valéry, Montpellier III, INRA, UMR Innovation
With the support of the IFCE and the Fonds EPERON
The thesis framework

• Context of reinterrogation and reexamination of human-animal relationships

• Thesis: the horse takes action within the work
  • What does the work do to the horse?
    • What are the work modalities leading the horse to have interest in working with humans or put them in suffering?
  • What does the work do to the professionals?
    • What are the work modalities leading the professional to have an interest in working with horses or put them in suffering?
Collection of data

• To this day 94 semi-directed interviews were conducted:
  • Three main activity sectors: sport / social link / draught
  • Three types of relationship: direct / indirect / without ties
  • Three main themes: nature of the relationship and its daily meaning / horses life and work conditions / perception of animal right organizations

• Non interactive observations and filmed observations

• Two specific research fields
  • Patrol horses
  • Eventing horses
Public security missions research fields

• Specificity: security mission is not repression mission

• French Republican Guard
  • Historic heritage
  • About 530 military men and civilians (450 equestrians) and 460 horses
  • 70% of the time is dedicated to law and order

• Municipal equestrian brigade of Tours
  • Created in 1999
  • 6 agents, 6 horses
Psychodynamics of work

- Prescribed work and real work
The horse: a professional

- Our connections with domestics animals are first of all working relationships

- Recognition of an *Animal Work* (results of the research program ANR COW):
  - Animals are involved in work « *This investment has nothing natural nor spontaneous, it is built thanks to learning, communication, affects and by animals’ intelligence and competences* » (J. Porcher).
  - Highlighted difference: affective relationship is crucial in order for animals to cooperate with humans (contrarily to human work relationship)
  - Animal takes initiative in work and is not an object constrained by domination or conditioning

- The great diversity of work with horses makes them part of the elaboration of professional groups
The horse: a professional

• A common core job

• A professional training

• The life and work conditions
To conclude

• The theoretic and methodological framework of social and human sciences are relevant to study work interrelationships between humans and horses

• Psychodynamics of work allows to analyse the agentivity and the subjective investment of horses in their work with humans

• The sociology of professional groups allows to consider the agentivity of the horse as a constructive element of a job core and a specific identity to the professional group

• The life and work conditions of horses are inseparable of those of humans
Thank you for your attention