

# The Reproduction of Socio-racial Hierarchy and the Development of Educational Psychology in a Multilingual Context: A Case Study of Future Technical Managers

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**Abstract:** Recent geopolitical events, such as the Arab spring, North-South relations, neocolonialism, subordinates' speeches, terrorism and far right radicalisation, as well as the intensification of competition between multinational companies, are having a considerable effect on cooperation between multinational teams, which, in turn, is affecting the training of future technical managers in engineering schools. In the context of such phenomena, this paper considers a management training plan for a pluricultural environment that takes into account the subjective and intersubjective stress affecting the working environment of multicultural teams. The research behind this project took place at the "École Centrale de Paris" using company games put in place by the Human Relations Department about twenty years ago. The paper looks at the time period from 2012 to 2017, using a research-intervention methodology. It deals with leadership duties, in particular those who are in charge of the shared social and cultural environment (history, institutions, law, language), regardless of their nationality or native tongue. In the training phase, teams tend to separate functional and emotional elements. This trend creates a lack of group and individual control at the emotional level, which could lead to functional apathy. The alliance based upon rationalization leads to two positions: firstly a position of non-conflict with regard to the presence of international students; and secondly the formal request to mediate feelings of hatred directed towards international students.

**Key words:** racism, intersubjectivity, training, cross cultural, intervention

## 1. Introduction

Historically, training programmes for engineers in France have always been open to hosting international students, as well as being open to participation in work experience placements overseas (Lemaître, 2018, p. 8). In the context of current geopolitical upheavals (terrorist attacks, the Arab Spring, sustainable development), coupled with the blossoming of emergent countries on the international stage (Trépant, 2008), how does the transformation of North-South relations in a post-1989 world affect the way in which multicultural teams, composed of student-engineers in the initial phase of training, are managed? Furthermore, what is the impact on the development of cooperation skills within these multilingual teams? This paper is concerned with a pedagogical

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device, known as business games, put in place for students embarking on their second year of training at CentraleSupélec. CentraleSupélec is a French public school born of the recent merger between the École Centrale de Paris (ECP) and Supélec, situated in the Paris-Saclay area. Based on the assumption that teams are forced to reach some degree of compromise as the result of differing interpretations of the prescribed task, “l’organisation réelle du travail est un produit des rapports sociaux”<sup>1</sup> (Dejours, 2013, p. 228). In terms of cooperation, the issue is “de la volonté des personnes de travailler ensemble et de surmonter collectivement les contradictions qui naissent du fait de la quiddité de l’organisation de travail. [...] la coopération relève de la liberté des sujets et de la formation d’une volonté commune”<sup>2</sup> (Dejours, 2013, p. 203). The analysis of the cooperation within multicultural teams in this study focuses on the way in which socio-political changes affect the handling of cultural differences in the context of groups of students simulating the work of enterprise executives. In the case of business games concerned with reproducing the management of companies (Barth & Géniaux, 2010), teams are composed of a mixture of francophone and non-francophone engineering students. Over 30% of the student body consists of foreign students coming from over 70 different countries. Ranked number 1 at the international level, it offers to about 30% of its students, the opportunity to undergo an experience combining training and professionalisation abroad. 25% of first jobs taken up by former students are overseas. In fact, students have the choice between three international campuses participating in an international project that promotes the engagement of emerging countries.

My research on racism (Baralunga, 2016b) has given me an insight into the way in which the radicalisation of right-wing political parties (Haegel, 2012; Mayaffre, 2012) and the revolts of youth treated as descendents of immigrants (Boubeker & Hajjat, 2008; Merklen, 2012; Noiriél, 2007) impacts the desire for an anti-racist engagement that supports the development of a so-called post-colonial or post-racial society (Bancel, Bernault, Blanchard & Amiraux, 2010; Blanchard, 2006; Blanchard, Chalaye & Mabanckou, 2012). I have observed that work done into the impact of racism in a group setting is still hampered by an attachment to the concept of “us”, defined in terms of national identity, which fails to distinguish between ethnos and genos (Benslama, 2003). This phenomenon is attached to defense mechanisms, which affect witnesses, victims and the perpetrators of racism, such as commodification, emotional denial and control (Baralunga, 2018). This is why, in my training practices, within the business games educational device at CentraleSupélec I wanted to focus on the risks of reproducing relations of socio-racial domination. For this reason, my training methods for the business games educational resource at CentraleSupélec, involving an atmosphere of competition between multicultural teams, I have sought to highlight the risks of reproducing relationships founded on socio-racial domination (Baralunga, 2016a). The training and mentoring of future business leaders in groups characterised by national, linguistic and cultural diversity, allows for the study of how cooperation is developed in multilingual teams in the context of commercial competition. I will show how writing reflective analyses along the way helps students to overcome the phenomena that lead to the replication of socio-racial hierarchy within groups.

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<sup>1</sup> “real work organization is a social relations byproduct”, translated by the author with the help of Daniel Suprenant, Vesa Puuronen and Lucy Merkin, whom I want to thank.

<sup>2</sup> “people will work collectively together and to overcome the same way contradictions rising from the quiddity of work organization, cooperation concerns individuals freedom and therefore the rising of a common will”.

<sup>3</sup> The following referred information comes from website CentraleSupélec and more specifically from the International section (<https://www.centralesupelec.fr/> accessed december 11 2018 at 3:35 pm).

## 2. Field and Research Method

### 2.1 The Training Device

For 20 years, second-year students have been encouraged to attempt to manage a virtual business under the auspices of the Human Relations Department<sup>4</sup>. In order to tackle management and humanities teaching, they are divided into six to twelve teams that compete against one another, (Didier Anzieu et Jacques-Yves Martin). For a period of 8 to 9 months, the students simulate the situation of a business in a state of crisis and attempt to improve its performance. This scheme (Falla, 2013, p. 4) lasts for five days. For two consecutive weeks a year, 250 students a week, participate in this live game. Teams are created at random, except in the case of non-francophone and female students. Therefore, different nationalities work alongside each other within the same team. According to the terminology of Sylvie Chevrier (2013, 2018), they can be considered multicultural teams, because the students' cultural and social environment of reference is France and they speak a variety of languages: French, English, Chinese, Spanish, Portuguese, etc. A multicultural team functions in a shared social and cultural environment using only the language of the host country, while the mother tongue of certain team members is different from the language in which they are working.

The specific goals of the scheme at CentraleSupélec are twofold. The first aim is to help students to discover business and its main functions and to introduce them to management and accounting, whilst allowing them to experiment and become aware of the functioning of a work team (decision-making, organisation, etc.) and to analyse their own contributions to the team. The second aim is to take into account individual and collective experience considering what is at stake in this particular situation. Secondly, the aim is to allow hosting and elaboration of individual and collective experience taking into account essential stakes linked to operating in this specific context. This pedagogical device, created by Christian Michelot, is based on research carried out by Bion (Michelot, 2016, p. 121). There are three aspects to the evaluation: learning outcomes in economics, management and humanities; participation (leadership, fulfilling the demands of a specific role within the team); the quality of the analysis that takes place during debriefing phases concerning strategy and management as well as team-work. From an educational perspective, what makes this training device unique is the fact that it involves two types of educators: facilitators and coaches (Jaillon, 2014). In fact, part of the training team is composed of creators of business games, psychologists, psycho-sociologists and organisation consultants. In order to achieve personalised professional support, the coaches (who have clinical skills) are receptive to students' implicit needs as well as their explicit demands.

In order to carry out research on students' written accounts of the process along the way regarding cooperation in multilingual teams, the corpus is composed of data linked to my interventions as a coach for one week a year over a period of six years (2012, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2017 and 2018) and relating to two games. The first of these games, carried out from 2012 to 2017, is a company selling manufactured goods (Stratirac), and the second, established in 2018, is a company offering computer services (CMF). With Stratirac, I was coaching two or three teams, depending on the year, and each team was composed of six or seven members. In the first instance, written material dealt with allocating roles: General Manager, Financial Business Manager, Marketing/Sales Director, Research and Development Manager, Production Manager, Human Resources Manager. Since 2016, there has also been a role in managerial control. Working with CMF involved simultaneously following the work

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<sup>4</sup> <http://www.etre-en-jeu/fr/accueil>, accessed december 11 2018 at 8:30 pm.

of five teams, each composed of five students taking on different roles within the Board of Directors (the role of Research and Development Manager was not included).

## **2.2 Theoretical Framework**

From the psycho-social perspective that I share, taking on intercultural questions allows for an appreciation of subjective and intersubjective processes with the aim of supporting individual learners. The individual's request (Michelot, 2002) guides the way in which I listen and accommodate the dynamics and functioning of a group. To clarify my position, I have also taken into account clinical knowledge of groups and institutions and social psychology:

- 1) Cultural differences (Kaës et al., 2012) within groups lead to representational difficulties (differences in individual subjectivity).
- 2) The structure of a group is based on solicitation (Huguët, 1983) that will activate and refresh imagined social meaning.
- 3) Conflicts between group members concerning racial issues will affect members' values.

I will show how this knowledge supports the significance that I attach to reflective writings as part of the learning process, basing my analysis on the research carried out by Muriel Molinié. As a sociolinguist, Molinié articulates the clinical posture of the coach, dealing with pluricultural issues and the acquisition of multilingual skills, through the use of writings and reflexive drawings, in the context of a group. Using a piece of research on career paths, she trains teachers (in second/foreign languages, but also speakers intervening in groups and organisations (Fatien Diochon, Chanut & Molinié, 2014). As far as cultural difference and solicitation is concerned, this research illustrates, for example, how to set in motion the learning process and investigate setting aside dominant representations of national culture and language learning and thereby overcome the challenge posed by conflicting values. Furthermore, at the institutional level, she reconsiders the framework guidelines, relating to the domain of education, of the Bologna Declaration of 1999, an agreement signed by 29 countries. She calls attention to the practical guidelines relating to the ways in which multicultural and multilingual skill development can be encouraged in higher education, referring in particular to the European Common Reference Levels for languages (CECRL) (Molinié, 2006, 2015). Here we are concerned with the analysis of educational techniques allowing for the acquisition of multicultural competences, since, to this day, the business games scheme at CentraleSupélec, functions independently of French language programmes or foreign language teaching.

## **2.3 Support Device**

Research into the learning process has examined coursework and critical writings. According to Chabanne, such writings are "intermediate", because they are different from normal writings. They are linked to the individual learning process, "cette pratique impose [...] l'écriture d'intervention: surlignage, soulignements, ratures, encadrés, annotations marginales...[,] ils sont parfois échangés au sein d'un élève à l'autre, ou retravaillés au sein d'un groupe[.] Dans les écrits intermédiaires, c'est [...] le contenu, les intentions, qui intéressent les lecteurs. Les annotations vont porter vers ce contenu, demander des éclaircissements, souligner l'intérêt d'un passage, identifier une réussite dans la formulation ou bien regrette une maladresse, une obscurité"<sup>5</sup> (Chabanne,

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<sup>5</sup> "this practice imposes the intervention writing: highlighting, underlining, boxes, marginal notes... [,] they are sometime traded between pupils or reworked in the group [.] The content the intentions are a matter of interest concerning intermediate writings. Notes will go toward content, asking for clarification, outlining a motivating passage, identifying a successful wording or noting a

2006, pp. 60–61). The function of “intermediate” writings is to encourage reflexivity in the learning process. Marie-France Bishop, after studying the use of reflexive writings in public education institutions traces their use in educational programmes to 2002; she says “l’utilisation de l’écriture [participe] à construire une attitude réflexive [...] Leur objectif premier n’est pas la maîtrise du savoir-écrire. [...] Destinés à soi-même ou à un entourage restreint, [ils] ont pour principale fonction la réflexivité et la quête d’identité, c’est-à-dire une inscription de soi à travers l’écriture”<sup>6</sup> (Bishop, 2006, pp. 46–48). In both the creation and dissolution of teams, the experimentation methodology involves psycho-social support for the group throughout the process and pays attention to the various demands of the team and its individual members. The tools that I am using are: direct intervention alternating between a focus on the individual, the individual within the group and the group itself; writing assignments aiming to capture the lived experience of the team in situ; and finally staging an experiment of group experience. There are two types of written support: individual and collective, covering four registers: individual, in-group, out-group and the competitive environment. Their content should take the form of narration, a description of emotions/feelings and they could include metaphorical imagery as a means of expression. These written supports are central to the training activity and help to establish a framework. They are written during the inter-group period or during the time allocated to accomplishing a task. They are reworked in the form of a synthesis at different moments during the session or socialised within the group by their authors. When teams separate, each of them stages (presents) their groupal experience. It takes the form of a narrative representation of the group’s experience, which takes place at the end of the session. Students summarise their collective experience and choose a medium to carry out the narration. Each group presents their experiences to all of the other groups participating in the competition. “La créativité est une aptitude particulière de l’esprit qui lui permet de réaliser soit des découvertes (“actions qui permettent d’arriver à connaître ce qui était caché ou ignoré”), soit des inventions (actions consistant à “créer, en montrant de l’ingéniosité ou du génie, quelque chose de nouveau, d’original, dont personne n’avait eu l’idée, dans le domaine de l’industrie, de l’art, de la pensée”). Elle s’oppose à la productivité en ce que cette dernière met l’accent sur la quantité de travail et sur la répétition des gestes et des opérations. La créativité tient dans la qualité et la nouveauté ; elle a pour fonction d’introduire dans le monde un message nouveau qui n’y était pas, message susceptible de donner lieu à des démarches, intellectuelles ou pratiques, dans un domaine quelconque de la réalité physique ou mentale”<sup>7</sup> (Anzieu et Martin, 2012, p. 267).

## **2.4 Results**

The data obtained has allowed me to draw four main conclusions. The first is linked to filling managerial jobs based on students’ gender and non-francophone status. Leadership roles tend to be attributed to students familiar with the shared social and cultural environment (history, language, etc.), regardless of their nationality, or mother tongue. Overall, two teams had a female and non-francophone General Manager (Italy and Brasil). Three others had a non-European male General Manager.

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clumsiness, an even obscurity.”

<sup>6</sup> “the use of writing [participates] in the construction of a reflexive attitude. Their first goal is not mastering the know-how-to-write concerning the self. Their main function is reflexivity and identity quest, which means a self positioning through writing.”

<sup>7</sup> “Creativity is a peculiar attitude of the mind allowing to realize whether discoveries (“actions enabling to discover what was hidden or ignored”), or inventions (actions consisting in “creating, showing resourcefulness or geniusness, something new, original, nobody thought about in the industrial, in the art or in the thinking field”). It’s opposed to productivity because it’s focusing on the amount of work and repetition of tasks and operations. The essence of creativity are quality and innovation; its function is to spread a new message throughout the world that wasn’t there before, who may lead to intellectual steps or practices in any kind both in physical and mental field of reality.”

As far as team work is concerned, the presence of non-francophone students leads has three consequences. When the group is not open to the perceived difficulty of the presence of non-francophone students, we noticed a greater rupture in interpersonal interaction, between functional and emotional aspects. “L’injonction positiviste de la novlangue managériale interdit l’expression personnelle “négative”, empêchant la réflexion sur l’organisation et les pratiques [...] pour faire du lien – du lien entre vécu et analyse, et conflits psychiques, symptômes psychosomatiques et pratiques managériales”<sup>8</sup>, setting the scene and encouraging coursework in the form of reflective writings help to take advantage of the expressive nature of language, (Vandeveldt-Rougale, 2017, p. 139). In certain cases, a sense of apathy can be detected, as though the game had been lost before it had even started, such that no contribution aimed at completing the goals of the project was possible. My approach to apathy is based on research into group energy, according to which only a part of the group’s total energy can be used. “Du point de vue de la recherche d’une efficacité optimale dans le fonctionnement des groupes, il apparaît indispensable de réduire le plus possible l’énergie latente”<sup>9</sup> (Anzieu et Martin, 2012, p. 170–171). According to such a model, the group’s functioning is driven by the latent impulsive motions and emotions of the group. As such, the group gives up its purpose, focusing purely on its identity. We can thereby observe the manifestation of group illusion (Anzieu). The process of forming alliances to achieve goals that are less fantastical than real would require a longer game duration, work on conflicting values as though the risk of expressing hatred would endanger each of the member’s own identity, would lead to a problem mediating relations and adopt an autocratic position or identifying porte-symptôme<sup>10</sup> within the group. “Pour Dahrendorf, le conflit social a sa source dans l’inégalité du pouvoir qui entraîne des relations d’autorité de domination et de soumission. Ces relations entraînent à leur tour des intérêts divergents et même contradictoires de la part des groupes, les intérêts divergent étant à l’origine des conflits sociaux. [...] La thèse de Coser est de montrer que le conflit intragroupe ou intergroupes est un facteur d’innovation et de changement social: le conflit peut éviter l’appauvrissement de la créativité, l’affrontement des valeurs, des intérêts, des normes, la lutte pour le pouvoir et l’égalisation des chances sont des facteurs de vitalité sociale”<sup>11</sup> (Touzard, 1977, p. 41). For teams in which group members wanted to experience a good group dynamic (an absence of conflict), the real organisation of work hampered team involvement. This can be read in the scene of closure. Faced with the risk of apathy, one group (out of all of the groups involved) responded by asking for more support. “La coopération exige en effet d’abord des relations de confiance entre les sujets”<sup>12</sup> (Dejours, 2013, p. 231). The General Manager takes on a central role in terms of support by providing the means to satisfy impulses and to eliminate conflictual situations, easing feelings of guilt-induced anxiety; in short this member becomes a type of organisational leader (Anzieu & Martin, 2012, p. 290).

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<sup>8</sup> “managerial newspeak, a new message, prohibits personal negative expression, preventing thinking on the organization and practices to create linkages, particularly between experience and analysis, and psychological conflicts, psychosomatic symptoms and managerial practices.”

<sup>9</sup> “From the research point of view of optimal efficiency within group functioning, it seems necessary to minimize latent energy as much as possible”.

<sup>10</sup> symptoms-bearers.

<sup>11</sup> “For Dahrendorf, social conflicts stems from power inequality leading to relations of authority, of dominance and submission. Those relations lead in their turn to competing and even contradictory interest on behalf of the groups, competing interests stemming from social conflicts. Thesis of Coser wants to show that internal conflicts within groups at between groups are an innovative process and social change factor. The conflict can avoid impoverishment of creativity, value, interest, standards clashes, struggle for power and equal opportunities, a factor of social vitality.”

<sup>12</sup> “Cooperation requires in fact first of all trust relationship between individuals.”

### 3. Educational and Clinical Vignette

#### 3.1 A Tendency to Separate Functional and Emotional Aspects

In 2012, I intervened in the implementation of the Stratirac business game. Following a presentation of the game in the amphitheatre during a week dedicated to training and introducing educational methods, teams were gathered in a workspace and the animator distributed roles. There is often competition to occupy certain roles, notably that of the General Manager. On the first day of the game, the General Manager explained having been influenced by his involvement in associative activities. During the first two days of training, they are encouraged to make their promotion come to life by carrying out a project. By the end of the third day of the business game he wrote: "I didn't like all the aspects of financial management I had to manage". The student who took on the role of the Finance Manager had initially also hoped to play the role of General Manager. Did this initial rivalry have an impact on the relationship between the General Manager and the Finance Manager? From an external point of view, the pairing of General Manager-Finance Manager seemed to work well, it was even a strategy used in the organisation of team work (a self-regulating meeting was organised on the second day of the project). The General Manager added: "I don't think I would like to be general manager in a real company, but I love everything to do with human relations, team management, making sure that there is a good atmosphere in the team". This remark surprised me, whilst also confirming a suspicion about problems involved in team work. The members of this team did not request any support; they regularly stated that everything was going well. During the evaluation phases on the penultimate day, the Progress Manager emphasised the centralisation of information in a paranoid manner, as though he was afraid of being misjudged if he made a mistake in the suggestions he made to his team. "This role was an opportunity to gain awareness of the great interdependency between members of a company (indeed, I forgot to warn others that some of my decisions would have consequences on production) and that it is not possible, even when goals and budget are fixed, to avoid spending a good deal of my time finding out about the impact of my decisions on the company as a whole, even when these actions are purely technical in nature. In terms of my feelings about the project, the image that comes to mind is that of a tree in a storm; I didn't have time to accurately evaluate the impact of my decisions but I had to give precise guidelines and not appear to be pointlessly hesitating, especially given that a mistake could have a significant impact on the group". As for the team's Human Relations Manager, he writes: "Business games, even if we are aware that they are not games, still have a great impact on our thinking. On the one hand, when the situation seems to be under control, when we end up achieving all our goals and meeting profitability targets, we feel very powerful! Like a lion, cunning like a fox: we feel like we are on top of the instructions that we have been given. Even if, in our case, we found it difficult and were never came first in these games, the feeling was still strong. On the other hand when everything is going wrong and we don't manage to anticipate things and are in a bad position, we feel down and find it very hard to regain motivation. We feel like we've done things badly and so we simply feel bad. The best moment was when, after many bad months (loss of our patent), we turned things around and made our company profitable again. The situation was quite difficult and I think what I appreciated the most was taking a step back as a group and getting things back on track. Finally, it was also demanding because of the build-up of stress and moments of tension, we were all very tired by the end". Finally, the Finance Manager describes in two stages the way in which he carried out his role. Like the others, he wrote a report on the third day of the game and he completed it on the last day, asking me if he could add an additional statement: "I had the feeling of being lost in the forest, hearing voices asking me for money, like witches wanting me to get lost (even if I am aware that my teammates did not want me

to get lost)". On the fourth day, he added: "I had the feeling, especially at the start, that I was being taken over by figures, and that I was disappearing under paperwork. I had the feeling of fighting like a lion against numbers and not always having enough time to correctly interpret them. I also had the feeling, still linked to that same image of a lion, that I was being tough towards the other team members when I was lacking information. Indeed, I tended to say "no", maybe too curtly, when somebody asked me for money. However once my budget was complete, I went back to being a lion cub, both playful and serious at the same time". In fact, in the evening of the third day of the business game, the General Manager burned his right arm by accidentally putting it on a hot plate. In his self-evaluation, he writes: "we did not get depressed when informed of the final results and there were never any real conflicts." What about the only non-francophone student in this team? On the third day, he said: "I found myself in the role of Sales and Marketing Manager". How did he feel about it? "I felt like I was in front of a mirror, because all of my estimates were reflected in the market, and market fluctuations and the behaviour of others were unpredictable, which meant that my estimates were often wrong". He added: "the unpleasant part was when we had to change the market we had forecasted at the start. It proves that, at first, we were not as competent as the other teams". He concludes: "what's important in a company is team work, a mistake or a gain is the responsibility of the whole team". On the second day, he wrote, with regard to communication and cooperation within the team: "I find it difficult to communicate with everyone, because I'm not sure about the data I'm giving the team". Concerning team work he wrote: "Communication is easy, sometimes there are minor conflicts, but people generally get along well." Concerning team dynamics and evolution, he wrote: "I am dynamic as far as work is concerned, but I don't communicate very much with the others". On reading the Financial Manager's report, I decided to send an email to the General Manager on 10th November at 9 p.m. "After the business games session, I have been informed of specific tensions in your team. Now that the session is over, the purpose of this email is to let you know about the feelings expressed by X. C., who was in charge of financial management. In fact, you have been faced with the sometimes in flexible attitude of the Financial Manager during the business game in the sense that the General Manager's role is to be responsible for the overall functioning of the team. In fact, the financial requests sent to X. C. were hard for him to deal with, because he found it difficult, within the allocated time, to identify the elements necessary to satisfy the demands of the different departments. So in the absence of these elements during the business games session, I was hoping to recognise the unstated tensions that you experienced and underline, now that the session is over, the difficulty of being in a position of responsibility when, within a group, individual tensions tend not to be expressed collectively. I look forward to hearing from you and wish you all the best". He replied: "Thank you for your post-game feedback. At the end of the business game, X. C. let us know how he felt about his role of Financial Manager and the problems that he had and his problems managing papers and guiding other members as best he could. I had a talk with him and I don't think that there were any real tensions between anybody, even if not everyone was comfortable with his position". Despite showing signs of denial, this reply indicates the circulation of individual writings, group discussion and the potential for self-regulation of issues.

### **3.2 Functional Apathy Instead of Individual and Group Regulation**

Again in 2012, in another team that I was coaching simultaneously in the Stratirac business Game, the Human Resources Manager was Brazilian. While observing the group, I noticed annoyance, offhand remarks about him, but no formal team complaint about him. The Research and Development Manager said that advice from the non-Francophone student had enabled the General Manager to avoid a strike in the second month. Meanwhile, the



Marketing and Sales Manager suggested that the General Manager took on the functions of the General Manager from the third month. What does the Human Resources Manager have to say about his participation? "I played the devil's advocate, so I was the one always finding problems with decisions." His use of language did not allow for a shared recognition of his position. I intervened in order to help him to become aware of the negative impact of his critical and sometimes casual attitude regarding group dynamics. He was engaged in self-criticism, and was attacking the creation of links and establishment of trust within the group, as though his status as a foreign student necessarily constituted a hindrance to group cooperation. After my intervention, he tried to pay more attention to his interventions and to be less on the attack towards other members of the group. There was no formal request for support on the part of his teammates. The General Manager wrote "My legitimacy was based on my listening and my knowledge of all fields. When I had to make decisions, I think I got it right". The Progress, Research and Development Manager said that the General Manager "often imposes his decisions on his teammates". The Marketing Manager wrote: "Sometime I felt like hiding, the most unpleasant moment was during month 4. I felt responsible for the team's failure, but finally I took a step back and realised that we were a team. There is last night's meeting". The General Manager (GM) said about this issue: "There were two unpleasant moments, the end of month 6 with big losses and the last night's meeting with you, where I felt a lot of criticism from you, which I did not feel was appropriate". The non-francophone student changed his position within the group after a direct intervention, abandoning his position as *porte-mal*<sup>13</sup>.

### **3.3 Become Allied on the Rationalization: From Un-confliction to the Roadmovie**

In 2017, I intervened in a team of six members in a session of the Stratirac business game, four out of seven members of the team being non-francophone. On the last day, the team created a form of road-movie to present their project; they are all in a van with little money but with a great project and a shared desire to travel to the north. This fantasy is surprising by the fact that each of them had their own role in the van and by the Bohemian dimension of their shared creation. The team was made up of late arrivals and several non-francophone students (4 out of 6). No request was made, but there was a focus on the role of each team member and a desire to get to know each other rather than taking on roles that could lead to conflict and to a readjustment of group dynamics in order to complete the main task with which they were faced. The Progress, Research and Development Manager wrote: "My feelings have changed over the past week of this business game. At first, I was under a lot of stress because of the complexity of the task and the lack of time, then this feeling turned into relief and even joy when we had a great third month. But it quickly turned to despair and regret in month 5. I had got caught up in the game and I wanted to stop right away after some incomprehensible results. We were like a bird ready to jump from the top of a cliff ready to fly away and who is hit by an arrow from nowhere, breaking a wing and making him fall from the cliff. Certainly with only a wing left and many efforts, we can avoid a crash, but what the use? With only one wing we would never be able to fly alongside the other birds up in the sky. It would be better to save our efforts to die in a dignified manner or to catch another bird with our claws and pull him to join us." Depressive and melancholic moments often occur when teams are faced with reality: complex hazards, the impossibility of managing success indicators, open up to the unrepresentable, the unspeakable, a feeling of loss. Instead of identifying and facing up to problems, he adopted a morbid outlook. Was it a way of avoiding having to deal with feelings of self-hatred which would require recognising his desire for control and mediating it?

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<sup>13</sup> evil-carrier role.

### **3.4 Alliance Upon Rationalization: Request for Mediation**

In 2017, I coached a team in the Stratirac business game. The team was composed of seven members, five of them non-francophone students. Very quickly, one of the members of the team asked for my support. His problem was that three members of the team came from Asia (China). He occupied the role of Finance Manager and couldn't figure how to build a team without a common working language. I intervened on a number of occasions to support each member of the group and thereby encourage communication and listening within the group. The team was composed of two sub-groups, one Chinese, the other group composed of two Moroccan and two French students, all of whom had a perfect grasp of French. One of them wrote about the Human Resources Manager (HRM). "What I appreciated as with your two compariotes, is that you are more or less able to overcome the language barrier: I can see it's not that easy for you (we are all aware of that) but you do the best you can to be understood, to approach o us and give us the data and information that we need. It would be very useful for you to go a step further and to express your ideas and doubts rather than waiting to be asked for your opinion, because not everyone will be as tolerant as we are and you run the risk of being overlooked." As indicated above, trust supported by the General Manager (GM) position had opened facilitating a mediation, putting back positions in movement, a non francophone student identify with the finance manager (FBM) had embeded himself as a symtoms carrier role, the finance manager (FBM) acting as a tormentor while three non-francophone students joined together to help each other, he would embedded himself in an infra-group solidarity enhancing deployment and recognition of their own potential within the team.

## **4. Conclusion**

I would like to end this paper by highlighting the role of support staff, whether coaches or animators, in a scheme designed to teach decisionmaking as part of a board of directors in a business. This learning outcomes of such a scheme can be divided into two sources: acquiring economic and social management skills and acquiring relational skills in a multicultural environment. The concept of support, as defined by Maëla Paula, reveals how the use of creative devices in higher education gives students points of reference and allow them to experience in vivo a number of different individual and group roles, whilst working towards specific goals and creating a system of relationships with the aim of transforming attitudes to cultural difference. Becoming involved through 'intermediate' and reflective writings and through creativity encourages a questioning of the quality of working conditions in response to strong ethical values. This research has led to four main conclusions:

- 1) Leadership functions are primarily attributed to individuals with a full grasp of the social and cultural environment (history, institutions, laws, language etc.) irrespective of their nationality or native language.
- 2) A tendency to separate functional and emotional aspects.
- 3) A lack of individual and group regulation on an emotional plane leads to functional apathy.
- 4) Alliance on rationalization.

Either in relation to a lack of conflict faced with the presence of international students or relating to a request to mediate feelings of hatred directed towards international students.

Despite the polarisation of ethno-racial issues in France, would it be worth offering training schemes founded on the team-building process in a post-colonial context to future technical managers?

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