



# Une configuration adhocratique pour et par un continuum médiationnel: le cas de l'association de la communication éducative Sino-Française (A.C.E.S.F)

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# Une Configuration Adhocratique pour et par un Continuum Médiationnel.

Cas de l'Association de la Communication  
Educative Sino-Française (A.C.E.S.F)

Thèse de doctorat de l'Université Paris-Saclay  
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Thèse présentée et soutenue à Guyancourt, le 19 Septembre 2019, par

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# **General Introduction**

*« We cannot solve our problems with the  
same thinking we used when we created them »  
Albert Einstein*

## **Mediation across time**

The word mediation integrated the French language in the 13th century, by borrowing Latin “mediatio” which meant "to stand between", and the adjective “medius”, "central". Thus, in ancient French, mediation had the meaning of "division" and it was only in the 14th century that it took its modern value as a mediation intended to reconcile persons or parties, first in the field of religion (Jesus is mediator between God and man), then in those of law and diplomacy (Grelley, 2012). Grelley continued his historical approach to mediation by continuing with Aristotle who considered the notion of mediation as related to the mechanics of syllogism. The syllogism being an operation by which one concludes to the mutual relation between two terms (...).

Plato and Socrates visualized mediation in another formal dimension and which is the maieutic method of accompanying reflection; this maieutic method whose purpose is to allow a person to reach the best of his own thought through verbal exchange.

For Hegel, in *Phenomenology of the Mind* (1807), mediation is an act of negation and overcoming at the same time, which establishes the link between the subject and the object, time and eternity (...) the organizing principle of a unit to be restored. Hence Hegel opposed or rather supplemented the notion of mediation through intermediation.

Georg Simmel (1858-1918), inspired by Hegel, continued the same line of thought in his *Philosophy of Money*, published in 1900, in which he presented money as the mediating element between man and the world, thus making the relationship between man and things objective.

It is in the 20th century that the first books on mediation appeared; they can be contradictory but they are all imbued with this research to strengthen the decision-making potential of people. The philosophy that illustrates this aspiration would be Habermas's philosophy: deliberative democracy.

Since then, the ethical principles of mediation have been relatively consistent, but the different institutional variations of mediation practices show the confrontation of different rationalities and the interaction of multiple actors whose objectives are often ambivalent (...) depending on the types of mediations and the cultural and institutional contexts in which they are practiced (Faget, 2012)

## **Mediation between Ideology and Practice**

The choice was made to explain these conflicts under two principles: ideology and practice. Ideologically, mediation is thought of as a counter-culture to institutional powers; the ethics of mediation defend the principle of direct participation and accountability in the resolution of one's own conflicts.

Or also, the ideology of the new public management imposes indeed, in an ever more prevalent way, the need to reduce public intervention and to transform management methods by copying them on those of the private sector (Faget, 2012) they would thus come under a kind of soft power (Nye, 1990) which are appreciated by their capacity to better manage.

But on the other hand, in practice, many practitioners consider mediation as a technique, a method of conflict resolution (...) and adopt relatively structuring and closed communication models (...) their posture is more directive (...) focus the debate on the relevant elements (...). This model does not aim to transform individuals and their relationship to the world, but only the conflict context between them (Faget, 2012).

## **Thesis Problematic: "Mediation Continuum"**

Mediation designate an intermediary; its extension is a sufficient proof of the generality of the concept it designates and consequently of the difficulty of clearly defining the characteristics of what it covers.

This issue was exposed in the presentation text of a symposium on mediation, organized by the UMR CNRS 6065 group, which was held in Rouen in December 2000 and which Chini presented in 2001, describing it as blurring the boundaries between disciplines: In a global way, any element (living or not) which, interspersed between two others, modifies relations between them is a mediator. However, if we stick to such a general definition, everything can be, from one point of view or another, a mediator of something. In particular, in the humanities or social sciences, this term is appropriate to all situations studied since the notion of mediation is linked to the social character of the world and to the needs of communication and action. So, whatever the nature of it (objects, people, signs), we can always talk about mediation. This reality was qualified by Gremmo in 2007 by the "nomadic notion" which crossed many disciplinary barriers. And going beyond the epistemological difficulty and heterogeneity of definitions of different mediation practices; all definitions refer to mediation

as a "process" rather than a "procedure" and this is what Ban Mrad described as informal in 2006.

Also "mediation is something other than the simple management of a conflict since it increasingly invests fields that are not those of competition and conflict, but rather those of communication, its objective then not being to repair a relationship that has deteriorated but to create it" (Grelley, 2012).

It is in this respect that "mediation" as a practice, in its different applications, requires the development of new conditions of truthfulness and validity of empirical knowledge implemented by mediators to reduce the disparity with "mediation" as an ideology. "Mediation", which Caune described as "the production of a meaning that engages the community".

Thus, mediation practices require that the mediator operate on a new "common epistemic space" in the social sciences (Olivier de Sardan, 2008, p. 13) within a framework that Battistoni described as a «mediation continuum» in 2012, a "continuum" introduced by (Lalonde, 2001; Bernard et al., 2001; Leflanche et al., 2006; Chini, 2001) to express all mediations. But this transdisciplinary knowledge is still missing (...)

Therefore, the weak conceptualization of "Mediation Continuum" expressing a continuity between mediation practices justifies our problem and led us to an initial main question: how to perpetuate a mediation process?

### **Thesis subject and research questions**

At first, we were interested to identify the most institutionalized form of mediation used and we identified mediation in the jurisdiction system that we can qualify by mediation to resolve a dispute. Highlighting that in law, mediation is one of four jurisdiction tools described as "Alternative Dispute Resolution" (ADR). So, after presenting briefly Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) means, we pursued our inquiry by sharpening our knowledge on mediation in law through identifying the main types of mediation (administrative, conventional). Then we pointed out the selection and role of a mediator in a conventional mediation that we have finalized by the process followed in order to finalize the mediation process. The answer to this questioning we named it: Mediation to prevent or to resolve a dispute.



After this first questioning, among the research led, we have chosen to deepen our knowledge in Habermas philosophy of man his theory on “*Agir Communicationnel, 1987*”; going from his notes on “Ethics of discussion” leading to his vision on “Deliberative Democracy” which has generated multiple contemporary forms such as participatory approaches and his analysis on the conditions of socialization of a human being in his theory of communicational action. Habermas perception of a man allowed us, to understand the different manifestations of an identity, ethnic, national, religious diversity in a person’s interaction with others; Habermas philosophy allowed us to comprehend a man unabridged in our aim of socialization through a “mediation continuum” approach. Then the comprehension of a man as a whole was completed with Lévinas interpretation of Ethics (*éthique et infini, 1982*) and perception of the other (*utopie de l’humain, 1993*). These readings were important to us in order to comprehend the main pillar of our work “a human being” before proceeding to the mechanical aspect of creating bridges between the different mediation practices.

So at a first stage, the perception of a human being as a whole confronted with mediation discernment, application across time allowed us to pass from Ideology of Mediation (from relation to others, to decision making) that we write with a capital letter “M” to the application of mediation nowadays (from decision making to the current mediation forms) and we chose to write nowadays mediation forms with the letter “m”.

Based on this comparative main thread, we have defined an analytical grid with four main features: Objective, Linking, Process and Duration. Than each of these features were diverged into two main sub-sections:

- Agreement and Communication for Objective;
- Interpersonal relation and Partnership relations for Linking.
- Structured Mediation and Structured Approach for Process
- Short & Accurate and Long & undetermined for Duration.

Following the identification of this first analytical grid, we have inventoried current mediation practices reading them through the identified variables which led us to a structured inventory of seventeen mediation practices under two deducted mediation types: mediation to resolve a dispute and mediation to create links.

Then, we pursued our questioning with the concern of which configuration will allow an effective continuity between these mediation practices. Knowing that a configuration can be defined as “the particular arrangement or pattern of a group of related things” (Cambridge dictionary). Lots of arrangements in multiple fields are possible, we can even merge between multiple disciplines to deduct a common configuration. But in our thesis, we have decided to develop the structure of an organization in management.

Our choice of an organization structure in order to develop bridges between the mediation practices led us to base on Mintzberg “structure et dynamique des organisations, 1982”. The analytical grid we have chosen in order to compare Mintzberg organizational structures is based on four variables:

- Structure & functioning of the organization
- Design parameters
- Contingency factors
- Scheme

Out of which we have pinpointed the adhocratic structure as our choice for a “mediation continuum” and we have justified its miscibility based on four main variables which are:

- Coordination & Innovation
- Long term, short term vision
- Dynamic & Iterative process
- Internal & external contingency factors

Then we pursued our search of an effective configuration to allow a “continuum mediation” by our questioning on the role of trust and an orchestra man to reach our destination.

We then formulated three research questions:

- To what extent does an adhocratic structure contribute to a «mediation continuum»?
- To what extent is the presence of an orchestra-man decisive for a «mediation continuum»?
- To what extent does the trust factor promote a «mediation continuum»?

## **Field of study and methodology**

To answer these questions, our research approach is complemented by a case study. To analyze the adhocratic structure, observe the attributes of the man-orchestra and forms of trust, we use the case method. Our field choice to study “mediation continuum” was chosen to be on the educational level and more specifically the accompaniment structures of Chinese students willing to study abroad.

Effectively, according to UNESCO in 2010, there were 3,600,000 international students worldwide. This number has increased by 38% since 2006<sup>1</sup>. *“The first continent of origin of mobile students is Asia (48%). The Chinese, Indians, South Koreans followed by Germans and Malaysians are the most numerous to study abroad. The countries with the highest number of international students are the United States (19%), followed by the United Kingdom (11%), Australia (8%), France (7%) and Germany (6%)”*.

In France, the proportion of students from Asia has increased rapidly to 22% in 2015, and the Chinese are now the second most represented nationality with 9% of students, compared to 5% in 2002<sup>2</sup>.

When we tried to understand the reasons leading to this increase and to comprehend its context, we pinpointed that the human resource development is China 21st century priority measure. Thus, setting up a mass education system becomes a priority but the Chinese institutions alone aren’t capable to respond to this objective, because of their shortcomings and the lack of qualified personnel that’s why sending students abroad helps to achieve this aim.

That’s why, the Chinese government made a strategic choice in the education sector which is to delegate its missions for the internationalization of the Chinese education system. On the general level, this delegation (formal, informal) was made to different typology of official actors located in China. On the French level, official actors existing in China are Campus France, Alliance Française but we also have local actors such as private language centers or a category of actors named intermediate agents or intermediate educational agents, a currently booming sector in China.

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<sup>1</sup> [https://ressources.campusfrance.org/publi\\_institu/etude\\_prospect/chiffres\\_cles/fr](https://ressources.campusfrance.org/publi_institu/etude_prospect/chiffres_cles/fr) (site last checked April 7, 2019)

<sup>2</sup> Fiche 15. Les étudiants étrangers dans l’enseignement supérieur dans L’état de l’Enseignement supérieur et de la Recherche en France n°10 - Avril 2017

Our field choice was initially justified by our interest in the educational system in general seeing the multiplicity of actors and number of existing coordination missions in between; then our interest in the Chinese educational system has allowed us to focalize our choice seeing the fact that Chinese students are the second most represented nationality studying in France. Finally, the existence of intermediate agencies which mission is to accompany Chinese students in their studies abroad and that represents a currently booming sector in China confirmed our choice since “mediation” is the core activity of these agencies. Mediation can be between the students and the official structures at the educational level; or mediation between structures whose activities are focalized or include students and whose mission can be improved if it’s bespoke to its clients...

So, after identifying a list of intermediate agencies<sup>3</sup>, we decided to choose Association de la Communication Educative Sino-Française (A.C.E.S.F), located in France, which accompanies Chinese students wishing to continue their studies in France. A fairly young association in age but whose selection was motivated by its organizational structure, our proximity to the association and the maturity of its approach.

In our research, we adopt an interpretivist epistemological posture that presents itself as a middle way. Interpretations apprehends reality through the hypothesis of relativism.

We collect data through a qualitative survey and participative observations. Being a member of the association acquired us the confidence of the multiple actors we have interviewed which facilitated the exchange of information; it also allowed us to have continuous exchanges with the association team which permitted a continuous access to information and especially a chance to elucidate particular observations on ground in order to avoid misinterpretations.

We conduct semi-directive interviews based on an interview guide, with members of the association and stakeholder’s partners of the association. We then analyze the data collected through vertical and horizontal analysis grids and interpret them in the light of the chosen theoretical reading grid. This exercise is based on continuous back and forth between theory and the field, with respect for abductive reasoning.

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<sup>3</sup> See Appendix C

## **Thesis plan**

In our thesis, we will begin the **first part** with “Mediation continuum – between structure and mediation practices”. In the first chapter we will have a transversal approach to define Mediation. We start by identifying mediation to prevent a dispute or to resolve it, alternative dispute resolution (ADR) methods. We will consider the types of disputes, their corresponding advantages and from which we will spread on one of the forms of ADR, mediation, through the role of the mediator and the mediation process.

Then, we will continue with Mediation, in which we will explore ideology through the passage from relationship to others to the application of mediation today. Stirred by this ideology, we will deduct characteristics of two forms of mediation: "**Mediation to resolve a dispute**", «**Mediation to create links**» with the aim of elucidating the different mediation practices, in the form of a non-exhaustive inventory, according to the **identified characteristics: objective, relationship, process, duration**.

**And we will conclude this part with the correlation between the characteristics of the two forms of mediation and the practices of mediation and then we will formulate the problem of our thesis: how to perpetuate a «continuum mediation»?**

In response to this problem, we made our choice to mobilize the organizational structure, in general and from which we have chosen, the adhocracy that advances a context of coordination and innovation, a long-term and short-term vision, a dynamic and iterative process and that we will transform into an adhocratic structure for a continuous and perennial mediation process. Thus, **the first research question would be, to what extent does an adhocratic structure contribute to a «mediation continuum»?**

We will complete this first research question with a second line of thought, **to what extent the presence of a man-orchestra is decisive for a «mediation continuum»?** and the third line of thought would be our research question on the trust factor for a «mediation continuum».

**The second part** deals "with the construction of the research project and the case study. **Chapter IV** presents the architecture of research (epistemological positioning, research objectives, methods of data collection, processing and analysis, and methodological limitations of research).

In **chapter V**, we present the field of the case study, the mass education system in China focusing on the structure of the Chinese school system and Chinese student mobility, key dates of the Chinese education system that show its evolution and the actors of the internationalization of the Chinese education system towards France.

Then, we present our field of study: the Sino-French Educational Association (A.C.E.S.F) and its correspondence with the organizational structure in adhocracy.

The **third part** presents the results of the case study and their interpretations. In **Chapter VI**, we present the results, the different processes observed and the multiple noted findings.

In **Chapter VII**, we analyze and interpret the results in the light of theory.

In **Chapter VIII**, we discuss the limitations and biases of our research. We also present the managerial and theoretical teachings observed, following the comparison between empirical and theoretical data.

The **general conclusion** takes up the main contributions of this research work and proposes tracks for further investigation.

**FIRST PART**

**CATALYZING LINKS**

**BETWEEN STRUCTURE & MEDIATION**

**THE THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

*"There is nothing constant except change"*

*Bouddha*

# **CHAPTER I**

## **MEDIATION**



This work focuses on the mediation of partnerships, upstream and where attention is paid to the continuity characteristic in a mediation approach.

In this chapter, we analyze in a first section, mediation at the legal level as an alternative to litigation, which takes four main forms: arbitration, conciliation, participatory procedure and mediation. In a second section, we analyze mediation as creating links instead of terminating them.

## **Section I.1: Mediation to prevent or resolve a dispute**

In this section, we will focus on mediation to prevent or resolve a dispute. At this level, we will distinguish the four alternatives to litigation which are arbitration, conciliation, participatory procedure and mediation. These alternatives to litigation are tools that promote access to law and justice for all. Then we will detail the different types of legal mediation and especially conventional mediation. To continue with the status of the lawyer mediator and the general mediation process.

### **A. Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR)**

#### **A.1 Arbitration**

Opetit B. in his book on arbitration theory defined the nature of arbitration and underlined its advantages: « Arbitration allows the settlement of a dispute (arising or likely to arise) to be submitted by agreement to a freely chosen third party who is entrusted with the task of judging. It differs from other amicable dispute resolution methods in that the dispute is decided by one or more arbitrators who make an arbitral award binding on the parties. Recourse to arbitration may be provided for by an arbitration clause inserted in contracts concluded in the course of a professional activity ». <sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Opetit B., *Théorie de l'arbitrage*, in *Droit et modernité*, Paris, PUF, coll. « Doctrine juridique », 1998.

➤ **Types of disputes concerned**

Any natural or legal person faced with a dispute may resort to arbitration in order to settle a dispute. However, it mainly concerns commercial law, business life and litigation where the amounts involved are significant.

➤ **Advantages**

Arbitration presents a fast procedure as it is locked in very strict time limits and the arbitrator is an expert in the dispute being discussed. Moreover, it is a confidential procedure as the debates are not public and thus the parties reduce the risks of damaging their image. It is a procedure with controlled costs as the arbitrators' fees are known upstream and especially that the arbitrator can settle the dispute by arbitration award.

## **A.2 Conciliation**

Conciliation is the agreement of the parties which is obtained with the help of a third party called a conciliator.

Indeed, conciliation in most cases involves a third party, who is a conciliator, an auxiliary of voluntary justice guaranteeing the impartiality of conciliation and professional secrecy. If an agreement is reached, the conciliator shall draw up a record, signed by the parties and himself, which may be validated by a judge in order to give it enforceability.

➤ **Types of disputes concerned**

Recourse to conciliation can be considered for most disputes in everyday life, whether outside or during legal proceedings: neighborhood disputes, unpaid debts, contestation of an invoice, problems between landlords and tenants, etc.

Excluded are administrative law conflicts between individuals and the administration as well as certain areas related to the family and public order (filiation, parental authority).

➤ **Advantages**

The main advantages of conciliation can be summarized as it is implemented quickly and inexpensively since the conciliator can be an auxiliary of voluntary justice.

And the procedure followed in conciliation is informal, and therefore flexible according to the parties' need for dispute resolution.

### **A.3 Participatory procedure**

The participatory procedure assisted by a lawyer is a convention by which the parties who oppose each other undertake, before bringing the matter before the courts, to work jointly and in good faith towards the amicable resolution of their dispute. Each party is accompanied throughout the proceedings by its lawyer. He is the only professional to combine confidentiality, professional secrecy and legal knowledge and to provide all the guarantees related to his ethics.

If an agreement is reached, an agreement specifying the terms of this agreement is signed by the parties putting an end to the dispute. This agreement may be subject to homologation by a judge. In the event of failure of an agreement, the judgement of the case will be accelerated thanks to the taking into account of the exchanges already intervened.

#### **➤ Types of disputes concerned**

The participatory procedure can be envisaged for most disputes that have not yet been referred to the courts, as well as in industrial tribunal matters.

However, disputes concerning so-called unavailable or extrapatrimonial rights, i.e. rights linked to a natural person (filiation, delegation of parental authority, etc.) are excluded except divorce and legal separation.

#### **➤ Advantages**

Like all other alternatives to trial, the participatory procedure removes the vagaries of a trial and the parties retain control over the decisions to be taken. Moreover, legal certainty is ensured by the compulsory presence of a lawyer with each party throughout the process, in strict compliance with the legislation. Also, time and resources are saved since the negotiation schedule is agreed in advance and the costs are shared between the parties. Finally, this procedure is subject to absolute confidentiality regarding exchanges and documents communicated.

#### **A.4 Mediation**

Thanks to the intervention of the mediator, a neutral, independent and specifically trained third party, the opposing parties can reach a solution in accordance with their respective interests, thus putting an end to the dispute.

The mediator's mission is not to settle a dispute but to facilitate negotiations between the parties, who remain in control of the solution to be given to their dispute. The mediator will help them to resume dialogue and reach a lasting and fair agreement together.

There are two types of mediation: conventional mediation and judicial mediation.

##### **➤ Types of disputes concerned**

Mediation can intervene in numerous disputes: Disputes between individuals (*neighborhood disputes, property disputes, divorce, etc.*); commercial disputes (*between clients and suppliers, service providers, agents, etc.*); professional disputes (*between employers and employees, between employees, etc.*); and real estate disputes (*between co-owners, landlords and tenants, landlords and trustees, etc.*).

##### **➤ Advantages**

What makes mediation an original method of conflict regulation is that it uses techniques that lead the parties to find their own solution to their dispute; a compromise.

So, it is a reciprocal gain for the parties; it restores dialogue and recreates a social bond between the parties without any losers or winners. Thus, mediation ensures the continuity of relations especially if relations (such as commercial relations in the case of companies) must be brought to persist at the end of the dispute. Even if mediation fails, the declarations and documents used in this context cannot be disclosed or invoked before the courts without the agreement of the parties.

Finally, as in all other alternatives to litigation, mediation avoids the vagaries of litigation in terms of costs and delays.

### **A.5 Summing-up ADR**

In these four Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) methods, elaborated above, the lawyer or lawyers play an important role in accompanying through the administrative processes and mediating between the parties involved in order to resolve the dispute without the vagaries of the trial. We were interested in the criteria for selecting one alternative over another in a conflict, a master explained to us, during a telephone conversation, that the choice of the alternative to the trial is a choice in light of the identity of the parties involved, the nature or gravity of the dispute and the expectations of each of the parties hence communication with the lawyer is important for the choice of the alternative to the trial.

In our case of «mediation continuum», we will start by taking an interest in one of these alternative modes; but to avoid developing an alternative mode by simple analogy, we have compared the different alternative modes with mediation.

The thinnest distinction that exists between mediation and the four Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) concerns conciliation, on which the literature is abundant. Indeed, the term conciliation comes from the Latin “conciliare” (to unite) and that of “mediare” mediation (to be in the middle) and going further than the terminology Jean-Loup Vivier underlines that "the difference between mediation and conciliation is easy to define in theory: the conciliator elaborates a decision and receives the consent of the litigants the mediator helps the parties to elaborate an agreement themselves", (1996, p. 12). As in our case, we do not want the development of a decision and that we are rather in the development of a successful mediation context to the mediation of potential links, then we eliminate conciliation.

Then, concerning arbitration, Jarrasson defined it in 1987 as "the institution by which a third party settles a dispute between two or more parties by exercising the jurisdictional mission entrusted to it by them". So even if the arbitrator is an independent third party, his role is to settle a dispute and impose his decision, whereas the mediator must allow the mediators to be free of the content of their agreement. As in our case no decision would be imposed on the participating actors, then we would not be interested in this form for the future.

And continuing with the participatory procedure it is a procedure assisted by a lawyer and by which the parties who oppose, commit themselves, before seizing justice, to work jointly and in good faith to the amicable resolution of their dispute. It is a rather interesting mode on which we hesitated for a long time before making our choice of mediation mode at the legal level.

But as in our case, we aspired to change through partnerships and not only accompanying the actors; and as the participative procedure is concentrated rather on the accompaniment of the actors than by elimination, we decided to develop the mediation mode as an alternative mode to the trial at the legal level.

This is why in the following section, we will detail the different pillars of mediation as Alternative Dispute Resolution: main typologies of mediation, the identity of the mediator and the mediation process.

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## **B. Main types of mediation as Alternative Dispute Resolution**

In the 1970s, the term mediation appeared after the institution of the Mediator of the French Republic (Act of 3 January 1973). Individuals prefer peaceful formulas that seek a balance of interests rather than all or nothing, that take into account fairness and common sense rather than the direct application of the law. The answer to this request can be mediation.

Mediation is based on an old tradition that led the parties in conflict to turn to a third party for advice and to help them put an end to their disagreement. This third party could be the lord, the parish priest, the mayor, the teacher or the head of the corporation.

Many people involved in a dispute believe that a just solution can be moderate in that it reflects a balance of interests at stake. To achieve this, they want to be able to explain themselves, understand their partner's position and participate in the search for a middle way. In many cases the protagonists wish, whatever the outcome of their dispute, to continue their relations in a peaceful climate; this is the case of many commercial, family, neighborhood and associate relations in which the maintenance of relations is essential over the long term, hence the importance of discretion.

Mediation can respond to these concerns, which explains its emergence under many variants, public and private. At the legal level, there are two main typologies of mediation: legal or administrative mediation as well as private or conventional mediation

### **B.1 Legal or administrative mediation**

At this level, legal mediation, judicial mediation and sectoral mediation are initiated at the request of a judge.

At the level of legal mediation, there is first of all conciliation within the framework of a judicial procedure which takes place at the Prud'hommes level. Where we have the amicable settlement of companies in difficulty, or collective labor disputes or in the context of over-indebtedness.

Then we have judicial mediation. At this level and as article 131-1 of the NCPC (Decree No. 96-652 of 22 July 1996, art. 2, OJ of 23 July 1996) specifies: "The judge seized of a dispute may, after having obtained the agreement of the parties, appoint a third person to hear the parties and to confront their points of view to enable them to find a solution to the conflict between them. This power also belongs to the interim relief judge during the proceedings".

Then there is the Sectoral Mediation which applies in the public sector, since the institution in 1973 of the Mediator of the French Republic, whose role is to be the free intermediary between the citizen and the administration, many mediators have been created, exercising either a permanent function in the public sector (mediator of the city of Paris, of national education, of the post office) or in the private sector where large companies have appointed mediators to receive complaints from their clients. Or finally in the international field, as the European Union has set up a European Ombudsman to intervene in conflicts between the Community administration and users.

## **B.2 Private or conventional mediation**

Conventional mediation, called private mediation, is based on the same principles as public mediation: the rejection of the trial, the agreement of the parties to participate in it, the intervention of a third party, the search for a suitable solution to settle a dispute. However, conventional mediation has no legal basis other than contract law. A mediation agreement is therefore concluded within the framework of contractual freedom.

Thus, conventional mediation is either organised by the parties themselves, referred to as ad hoc mediation, or by a conciliation centre to which the parties agree to submit, in which case it is institutional mediation.

In the case of ad hoc mediation, the clause is a procedural agreement that provides for the cases of implementation, the mechanism for appointing the mediator(s), the mediation process, the distribution of the fees, the time limit for reaching a settlement and all the modalities that are desired.

If a dispute arises between parties who are not bound by a mediation clause but who wish to reach an agreement within the framework of a mediation, they shall apply to a mediation center or sign a mediation agreement between themselves.

## **C. The Mediator in conventional mediation**

Throughout the four alternatives to the trial (Arbitration, Conciliation, Participatory Procedure, Mediation) the lawyer/mediator plays an important role of advisor, accompanist.



However, in our respect for the legal technicality required in each of the alternatives and that in our case we are interested in mediation channeling lasting links; we have chosen to focus below on the choice of mediator and the mediation process in the framework of a private or conventional mediation given its framework compatible with our case.

### **C.1 The choice of the mediator**

As with arbitration, it is customary to say that good mediation depends on the quality of the mediator. Indeed, the choice of mediator is not easy insofar as it depends on the nature and importance of the dispute and the profile of the parties in conflict. The choice between ad hoc and institutional mediator often depends on the experience of the parties concerned.

Institutional mediation introduces security insofar as the mediation centre has a settlement, a list of preferred mediators, administration and mediation practice.

Conversely, ad hoc mediation makes it possible to design a process tailored to the case and the personality of the mediator. The parties may choose their own mediator or have it appointed by a third party.

In all cases, the mediator must fulfil mandatory conditions in order to carry out his mission:

- Be independent and free from any attachment with the parties;
- Be a good psychologist and master the conduct of negotiations;
- Enjoy individual authority;
- Be able to quickly gain the confidence of the parties and their counsel;
- Be of high probity and complete impartiality.

It is obviously desirable that he be familiar with mediation, that he be a lawyer and that he have skills in the field dealt with.

### **C.2 The role of the mediator**

As has been said, a mediator in conventional mediation has no power of inquiry, cannot decide the dispute and cannot impose a solution. Therefore, the whole art consists in facilitating debates, enlightening the parties, identifying obstacles, identifying common interests, imagining acceptable solutions and making it possible to reach an agreement.

## **D. The mediation process**

### **D.1 The absence of formalism**

Since conventional mediation has no legal framework, the parties have the freedom to organize the procedure, often called process, as they see fit. In the case of institutional mediation, it is then governed by the mediation rules of the mediation center, which are binding on the parties and the mediator. Also, the characteristic of conventional mediation is that it is not subject to any formalism which makes it possible to retain a process very adapted to the circumstances but prevents from retaining a precise methodology.

The decision to resort to mediation may be taken before any conflict (mediation clause inserted in a contract) or suitable for its occurrence. A mediation agreement is then established. Bearing in mind that the implementation of mediation should be undertaken only if it is required by contractual provisions or if the parties are determined to seek agreement in good faith.

### **D.2 The assistance of a lawyer**

The assistance of a lawyer is a question that arises as soon as the dispute arises. It is always desirable for drafting the agreement, choosing the mediator, drafting the mediation protocol. Lawyers are indispensable partners in making choices.

### **D.3 Meetings and consequences of mediation**

The mediator must ensure that the mediation does not get bogged down and must enter the active phase as quickly as possible; in fact, the superiority of mediation is essentially due to the fact that the mediator favors the emergence of problems and common solutions coming from the people themselves, without seeking to resolve the conflict for them or force them to reach an agreement, before the expiry of the time limit.

Beforehand, the mediator diagnoses the situation (documentary analysis, from the individual and collective angle); conflict is often the symptom of managerial and/or organizational problems, so mediation must not be based solely on the behavioral evolution of the actors.

Then, the mediator will organize individual interviews in which he aims to inform about the mediation, to verify the adhesion of the parties and to facilitate the individual account of each party's experience. The collective interviews will then follow, focusing on the collective narrative of the work situation, the expression of positions and grievances, the search for underlying interests and the emergence of lasting consensual solutions, in the sense of individual and common effectiveness.

Finally, as a result of the mediation meetings, the mediator will either draw up a report stating that the parties were unable to reach an agreement (the parties are free to take legal action or arbitral proceedings), or a mediation memorandum of understanding if the mediation was successful.

#### **D.4 Summing-up item D: The mediation process**

In conclusion of these sequential stages of the mediation process in the legal field, we are especially interested in the work process of the mediator in accompanying the actors since the sequence of mediation in three phases (upstream of the meeting, meeting, downstream of the meeting) interests us particularly at the level of the establishment of continuity in mediation. Same approach of three phases (upstream, meeting, downstream) but a different reasoning

## **E. Summary section I. 1: Mediation to resolve a dispute**

In conclusion of this first legal section in the chapter on continuum in mediation practices to resolve disputes: whether between individuals in civil matters, between public services and their users, and even within companies, have developed in recent years. This "alternative" resolution of conflicts to the judicial system is becoming more professional and even more institutionalized, as will be seen in the inventory of the different forms of mediation in the following section.

In our case of continuity in mediation; we are looking for an approach that differs from the judicial approach, even if it could borrow certain procedures from it. We are looking for an approach that differs from negotiation even if the latter is a fairly common form in the development of partnerships; since negotiation does not require a neutral position, where the negotiator may be an actor in one of the parties concerned. We are looking for mediation that goes beyond the simple management of a conflict, which is generally unidirectional in nature, given the standardization of the stages.

Indeed, mediation nowadays invests more and more "fields which are not competition and conflict, but rather those of communication, its objective not then being to repair a relationship which would have deteriorated but well to create it" (Grelley, 2012)

So, while keeping in mind the interest of the mediator's work process in the legal framework that can be distinguished in three phases upstream of the meeting, the meeting, downstream of the meeting we will continue our questioning on value-creating mediation, channeling lasting links.

## **Section I.2: Mediation, creating value through catalyzing links**

In our case of «mediation continuum» in the context of value creation on the long run, we will begin with a historical look at the ideology of mediation through the temporal passage from a relationship to others towards decision making to the application of mediation.

Then we will revisit the fields of mediation through a non-exhaustive inventory of the types of mediation practices in the various fields in which it appears. And that we will conclude with a general distinction of the types of mediation practices in two forms that we will justify and name: “breaking links” and “«Mediation to create links»” as two mediation forms.

### **A. Ideology of mediation**

#### **A.1 From relation to others, to decision making**

It is possible to identify a beginning of mediation in the culture of ancient Greece, with the philosophical current aiming to make people reflect on their relationships to others and, consequently to themselves. The philosopher put this know-how into practice so that a person could reflect, express the best of himself and thus make everyone reflect on his master-slave relations with himself and with others (cf. the Republic, Book IV, Plato).

In the historical common thread that Jean-Louis Lascoux had constructed in his book « *pratique de la médiation, une méthode alternative à la résolution des conflits* »<sup>5</sup>, in the rhetorical philosophy <sup>6</sup>, mediation allowed a person to position himself, to make the choices with which he was going to be able to determine himself, by aiming at the passage to the act. Aristotle codified this act by the art of persuading through the mechanics of syllogism<sup>7</sup>.

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<sup>5</sup> Jean-Louis Lascoux, *Pratique de la médiation, une méthode alternative à la résolution des conflits*, ed. ESF, 2004

<sup>6</sup> Rhetoric is both the science and the art of action of discourse on minds. The word comes from the Latin *rhetorica*, borrowed from ancient Greek and translated as "technique, art oratoire" (Georges Molinié and Michèle Aquien, *Dictionnaire de rhétorique et de poétique*, Paris, LGF - Livre de Poche, Encyclopédies, 1996, 350p.).

<sup>7</sup> An operation by which one concludes a reciprocal relationship between two terms by highlighting the relationship that each of them has with a third. The syllogism is therefore not only the passage from the universal to the particular but a mediation, a medium term between a subject a property that is not analytically contained in the subject.

At that time of antiquity, following the historical thread of Lascoux, mediation, which was still not conceptualized as such, was formed under two currents. Both streams required the intervention of a third party, but in the first stream the third party was to bring about individual responsibility (especially in conflict situations) while in the second stream the third party took the place of the people and went in the direction of imposed decision-making, disempowering the people.

Thus, we see that the individual as such had lost his primary value for which mediation had emerged in the beginning to the benefit of collective well-being by reducing the harmfulness of conflict. It was with Descartes who was seeking to rationalize man's relationship with the world that man as an individual took up his right within mediation.

Of course, this research by René Descartes has been completed by other philosophers such as Spinoza in his ethical reflections on the search for individual autonomy or Jean-Jacques Rousseau with his work on the social contract or Freud's work on human psychology....

It is in the 20th century that the first books on mediation appeared; they can be contradictory but they are all imbued with this research to strengthen the decision-making potential of people. The philosophy that illustrates this aspiration would be Habermas's philosophy: deliberative democracy.

We do not claim to be able to make a complete history of the notion of deliberative democracy given its ramification and complexity, therefore despite all its philosophical interest on the decision-making potential of people, and given that we are interested in creating value by leading change and not only by its accompaniment, in other words we are upstream of the context of mediation per se, it seems instructive to us to present certain avenues of reflection of Habermas's extended philosophy and which correspond to our aspiration to lead change.

Deliberative democracy takes its most obvious source in a text by Habermas published in 1983: "the programmatic notes to found an Ethics of discussion"; these texts played a major role in the idea of deliberative democracy which has branched out into different contemporary forms such as participatory approaches and in which one could cite several examples, which have taken place or are still in progress, such as the consensus conference on GMOs in France, the participatory budget of Porto Alegre or the "London Citizens" bottom-up approach...

Habermas world deserves to follow the path of deliberative democracy which is the result of many of his other philosophies. The core of Habermas's philosophy is Man, whom he has privileged in the theory of communication for the simple reason that man above all is a human being of language; which gives him the characteristic of a being with high potential whether at the level of skills or aptitudes. Then all along this philosophical path of language, Habermas leads us to identify the identity of man through the philosophy of existence, this existence that modulates the human being all along the way before his becoming a citizen according to Habermasian perception. This Man that Habermas accompanies through existence, through history; this Citizen that Habermas perceives in modernity through the passage of so-called traditional societies that follows a "divine hierarchy"; to so-called modern societies in which the social bond can only be an agreed bond that is based on an argumentative discussion. This society in which Man evolves and which Habermas integrated in the heart of his analysis by the conditions of socialization of the human being through his work: the theory of communicational action.

#### **A.2 Feedback loop A.1: From relationship to others, to decision making**

Finally, pluralism in Habermasian philosophy must not be neglected. Under this term, we understand the different manifestations of an identity, ethnic, national, religious diversity particularly palpable in recent years.

Inspired by Habermas' world, without yet being sharpened in our choices as we approach the subject of mediation under the angle of change management; and through the transversal reading of Habermas' philosophies, the driving element is not a strategic disposition but a context allowing a shared reality between Citizens, between Men;

This is how we continue our reading, before mediation, before the meeting, between conflict resolution and the creation of links.

### A.3 From decision making to the application of mediation nowadays

Particularly popularized nowadays, the participation of citizens in decision-making at the level of their living space is the foundation of democracy and a pillar of new forms of economy such as the social and solidarity economy; mediation is interesting at this level by its conception for the involvement of the individual in conflict resolution or management as through participatory approaches that can be defined as:

*"any arrangement by which actors - stakeholders or stakeholders - of different types are brought together to contribute, more or less directly and more or less formally to the decision-making process".*

In 1969, Arnstein's scale (attached at right) was a success on the issue of participation and in which he attempted to assess the real impact of participatory decision-making schemes, proposing to rank them on a scale according to their degree of effectiveness and conformity to an ideal of genuine citizen participation.

Arnstein identified eight levels of participation. At the bottom of the scale, participation is low or almost non-existent. At the highest level, it takes the form of participation fully invested by citizens.

Despite all the interest of this scale on participation, we will not develop it entirely or develop the differentiation criteria between its eight levels. In fact, we are particularly interested in the effective power of citizens which represents for us the idealistic participation of Man, of the Citizen that we carried from the reading of Habermas.

The sixth level of effective citizen power represents the level of partnership. This level Arnstein perceives as politically initiated, but citizens are invited to participate in the decision-making process as equal partners. The seventh level is the level of initiative and direction of citizens who, according to Arnstein's perception, represent a project or ideas that are initiated and managed by citizens. Finally, for the eighth level, Arnstein identifies it with joint decision-making through projects or ideas initiated by citizens and politicians participate in the decision-making process as partners.

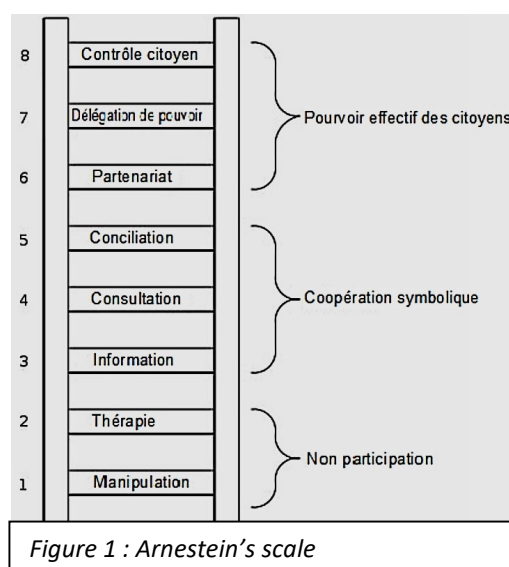


Figure 1 : Arnstein's scale



Without having the ambition to focus on one of these three levels representing the actual power of citizens, we will keep them in the background while pursuing our common thread upstream of mediation.

Effectively, in the continuation of the reasoning, we were interested in mediation through the transversal vision of authors who perceived Mediation through the disciplines and whose cross-opinion in our previous readings, introduced us avenues of reflection for the development of two forms of mediation, which we will discuss in the next section.

**According to Jean Caune**, in his article on “cultural mediation”: a construction of the “social link” mediation *"is an essential concept which makes it possible to describe and understand the relations between men and the relations of men to the groups they constitute"* (Caune, 1999) in other words "interpersonal relations - short relations - are the place of the affirmation of oneself in a relation to the other" but Caune opposed his perception of ephemeral links, of short duration, to the subject of Lévinas "long relations make us walk together". To conclude that "mediation as a social project cannot simply forge ephemeral links, it must also participate in the production of a meaning that engages the community" (Caune, 1999). Knowing that the opposition between ephemeral links and constructive relationships can be perceived in the conditions of the relationship; In the case of ephemeral links it is a short-term frontal dialogue between actors and a long-term circular communication for constructive relationships. **Thus, in our case, in which we question ourselves on continuity in mediation, we will consider linking as an indicator between the forms of mediation under construction; through the two characteristics of “interpersonal relationships” and “partnership relationships”.**

This implies the comparison of their characteristics of "agreement" - "communication" with "interpersonal relations" - "partnership relations"; we can deduce two new characteristics of time which are: « **Short and precise** » - « **long term and indeterminate** ». For example, if the decision-making potential is agreement, it induces us in the effectiveness of the latter through a frontal dialogue for the respect of a short and predetermined duration of time.

**In parallel Jacques Faget**, in his article « *les mondes pluriels de la médiation* », states that *"the dream of natural mediation that cannot (...) be conceived under an institutional yoke (Six, 1995) has been shattered by the generalized concern to conceive, in an increasingly complex society, more adaptable modes of governance (...) than those proposed by traditional institutions"*. Thus, while the distinctive features of a mediator are relatively identical across the different practices of mediation, the different variations of mediation show, on the other hand, a heterogeneity between the number of actors involved, the complexity of the issues or the conflict leading to *"a confrontation of various rationalities and the interaction of multiple actors whose objectives are often ambivalent"* (Faget, 2012).

Jacques Faget illustrated these "games of forces" along two axes that he called "the axis of the system" and "the axis of the actor". This perception of complexity in two axes has allowed him to emerge several criteria generating the games of force and from which we are interested in two at the level of the actor's axis and that we will cross in order to obtain our general indicator as a criterion of differentiation between the two forms of mediation under construction. Indeed, Jacques Faget put forward that at the level of "the actor's axis", we find "the forces of emancipation" and "the forces of normalization".

At the level of the "forces of emancipation" Faget considers competence "sometimes individually, sometimes collectively" and in parallel, at the level of the "forces of normalization", Faget points out that many mediators consider mediation "as a simple technique" and thus apply "relatively structuring and closed communication models"; it is thus that he infers that "this model does not aim to transform individuals and their relationship to the world, but only the conflict context that opposes them".

In our case of «mediation continuum», we will decline this Faget confrontation between "the forces of emancipation" and "the forces of normalization" as an indicator of the progress of mediation. We will continue this declination in the binary characteristics of this indicator, which will be: on the one hand what we will call structured mediation, which can also be called mediation processes, and on the other hand we will have a structured approach.

**Structured mediation** would be a set of sequential steps, led by a mediator for a small group of people with the objective of resolving the common conflict between them.

Whereas the **structured approach** would be a configuration of structured "objects" piloting a mediation approach for a large group of people with the objective of transforming individuals and their relationship to the world.

Finally, approached from the point of view of vocabulary, mediation accounts for "practices that observation reveals extremely diverse by their object, their purpose, their operational modalities and the actors they involve" (Grelley, 2012) thus without having the aim of an exhaustive list of existing definitions of "mediation" through the different practices or different disciplines whether religious, We have chosen, for the rest of our reasoning, two definitions which could illustrate the common points in mediation but which at the same time reflect their different degree of perception of the place of the individual, of Man within the mediation process; this eternal debate that dates from antiquity to Descartes, Habermas....

The choice of the first definition, enunciated by Michèle Hofnung, is that it corresponds to the essence of mediation displayed in one way or another in the definitions of the various mediation practices (which will be developed in section B of this part) and the other of a legal nature since it represents a sequential process of which a large portion of the mediation practices apply it; hence our choice of the legal definition which includes the others. The choice of the second definition is due to the interest in displaying the linearity of the mediation approach which is clearly illustrated at the legal level and implied in the definition or process of different mediation practices that will be developed in subsection B of this part.

On the one hand, Michèle Hofnung proposes to define the common ideology in mediation, independently of the practice of mediation, as *"the process of ethical communication based on the responsibility and autonomy of the participants, in which an impartial third party, without decision-making or advisory power, with the sole authority recognized by the mediated parties - promotes the establishment, re-establishment of social ties, prevention or resolution of the situation in question through confidential interviews"*. (Hofnung, 2007)

On the other hand, mediation in civil and commercial matters<sup>8</sup> considers it as « *Any structured process by which two or more parties attempt to reach an agreement, outside any judicial procedure for the amicable resolution of their disputes with the assistance of a third party, the mediator, chosen by them or appointed, with their agreement, by the judge seized of the dispute* »

So why, in the context of this thesis, had we considered that there is a difference of perception of the individual between the general definition of mediation and the definition in civil and commercial matters? by the difference of their objectives. Indeed, one wants to re-establish "communication" while the other wants to reach an agreement.

Through communication, one is in the objective of sharing information for the creation of a social bond; a social bond defended by Habermas as an agreed bond that can only be created if it is based on an argued discussion. While for the agreement, the objective is to reach a decision to resolve a conflict and avoid or reduce its hazards harmful to the collective.

Moreover, this shift from ideology, from the aspiration of "Mediation" in itself towards the practical application of mediation displays a transmutation between theory and practice; this said, we are not in the objective of criticizing the operational approach of mediation practices, knowing that each of them is justified in its own field; nor that we are in judgment on the compatibility of practice with ideology; our objective is to put forward the criterion of the perception of the individual within the mediation process; this eternal ambition that we can consider as the core of mediation throughout history. This is why the criterion of the perception of the individual within the mediation process will be represented by the indicator "Objective" with the characteristic's "agreement" and "communication".

So, following this thread line: from the relationship to others, to the application of mediation today; we will elucidate, in the next section, the characteristics of the selected indicators in each of our chosen two forms of mediation.

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<sup>8</sup> NOR : JUSC1117339R

## **B. Features of Mediation forms: « Mediation to resolve a dispute », «Mediation to create links»**

Through our reading so far, we can confirm that the majority agrees that the mediator's mission, through the different mediation practices, is based on common ethics: the mediator has an obligation of means not results, he must behave in a neutral manner and he is committed to the confidentiality of exchanges. This is how the CPMN<sup>9</sup> developed the profession's first code of ethics and professional conduct, COEDEOME<sup>10</sup>.

As we have already seen, the scope of mediation is unlimited. So, in order to structure my approach, I first thought of a comparative reading between the typologies of mediation as an alternative process to litigation in the legal field with the notion of mediation as a field of conflicts or partnership relations while referring to the same typology of disputes in the legal field;

But since at the legal level the four forms of standardized disputes (Arbitration, Conciliation, Participatory Procedure, Mediation) are related only to a field of conflicts.

And given that in our case, we aim to a continuity between the different practices in mediation for value creation, I have decided to structure my approach to delimiting mediation practices, within the framework of this thesis, in three phases.

The first phase is to group and confirm my choice of the binary characteristics of mediation, which was elucidated in the first interval of this part, by indicator, under two forms of mediation: the form of mediation "to break links" and the form of mediation "to weave links". And we will conclude this phase with the definition of each of the forms of mediation by the elaboration of their reciprocal characteristics grouped in the form of a table.

The second phase is to have a non-exhaustive inventory approach of existing mediation practices by developing each of the mediation practices identified according to the context of mediation practice (definition, field of application, process) and from which we will deduce the characteristics corresponding to our list of four indicators of forms of mediation (Objective, Relationship, Process, Duration). Thus, the list of indicators would be: "Context", "Objective", "Linking", "Process" and "Duration"

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<sup>9</sup> CPMN: Chambre Professionnelle de la Médiation et de la Négociation

<sup>10</sup> Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct for Mediators

Finally, a summary table will correlate the different mediation practices identified to the indicators, characteristic of the two suggested forms of mediation: « Mediation to resolve a dispute » and « Mediation to create links ».

In his article « Les mondes pluriels de la médiation », Jacques Faget pointed out the difficulty of overseeing the different forms of mediation since « *mediation practices are developing in extremely diverse institutional and social fields* » (Faget, 2012). Thus, despite the agreement on « *relatively homogeneous codes of ethics* » (Faget, 2012) such as the neutrality and impartiality of the mediator, mediation practices resist the construction of a « *coherent whole* » (Faget, 2012)

Pierre Grelley continues with this confirmation of the heterogeneity of the different practices of mediation, but with the nuance that some of them correspond well to « *clearly identified functions, both new and in original parts* » (Grelley, 2012) ; but that for other practices « *the reference to mediation seems somewhat abusive because the functions it covers are (...) modes of action already known by other names, such as stewards who have become sports mediators* » (Grelley, 2012)

In our case of a continuum mediation approach, we sought the practice or set of mediation practices that would meet our ambition of channeling lasting links.

This is why it was decided to contrast the characteristics identified in the "ideology of mediation" under two categories. The first category represents a conflict resolution process while the second category is in the sense of partnerships, the « *producing of meaning that engages the community* » (Caune, 1999)

Then, each of the characteristics arranged by category will be grouped to derive the definition of the resulting form of mediation.

Thus, the characteristics identified previously by indicator and in opposite binary relationship are:

### **B.1 Objective: Agreement – communication**

As previously justified, depending on the objective of the mediation practice which could be an agreement or communication between stakeholders, the corresponding decision-making potential of the actors concerned could be determined.

If the objective is to **reach a decision**, an agreement then the **decision-making potential of the actors is low**. Whereas if the objective is **information sharing**, communication then the **decision-making potential of the actors is high**.

## **B.2 Linking:** Interpersonal relation – Partnership relations

As it has already been argued, « interpersonal relations – short term relations – are the place of self-assertion in a relationship to another » (Caune, 1999) and for Lévinas « long-term relationships make us walk together ». In his article « cultural mediation: building social ties », Caune had opposed his vision of interpersonal links to Levinas' consideration of the contribution of long reports in order to deduce an added value of « *production of meaning that engages the community* » (Caune, 1999).

Thus, in our current case of highlighting the differences between two forms of mediation, we will compare the meaning that Caune gives to short-term interpersonal ties with Levinas' perception of long-term relationships.

As a consequence, at the level of the « Linking », we will consider the **Interpersonal Relation** as a short-lived ephemeral connection whereas the **Partnership relations** are constructive, long-term relationships.

## **B.3 Process:** Structured mediation – Structured approach

As previously highlighted on the conduct of the mediation in: Structured mediation or structured approach.

**Structured mediation** that can also be called a mediation process would be a set of sequential steps, led by a mediator for a small group of people with the objective of resolving the common conflict between them.

While a **structured approach** would be a configuration of « objects »<sup>11</sup> structured, piloting a mediation approach for a large group of people with the objective of transforming individuals and their relationship to the world

## **B.4 Duration:** short and accurate – long and undetermined

As we have already elaborated in detail and we are repeating below, if the decision-making potential of the mediation form is agreement and not communication, it induces us in the effectiveness of the latter by respecting a short and predetermined period of time. While partnership relationships follow the logic of effectiveness of the mediation process through long-term communication between actors allowing the maturity of ideas.

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<sup>11</sup> By objects we want to indicate the elements, pillars necessary to allow the desired approach of mediation

Following this binary division of the mediation forms features, we will now elaborate the characteristics of each of the desired forms to deduce the corresponding definition by form and thus correlated the name illustrating it best. Noting that the characteristics of each form do not represent any contradiction or opposition of meaning.

#### B.5 SUMMING-UP ITEM B

<i>Features</i>	<i>Characteristics</i>	
<b>OBJECTIVE</b>	<b><i>AGREEMENT</i></b>	<b><i>COMMUNICATION</i></b>
	*Low decision-making potential due to lack of integration *Objective to reach a decision	*High decision making potential for integration stake *Information Sharing Objective
<b>LINKING</b>	<b><i>INTERPERSONAL RELATION</i></b>	<b><i>PARTNERSHIP RELATIONS</i></b>
	*Ephemeral relationship *Direct dialogue between mediator and stakeholders	*Constructive relationships *Circular communication via tools
<b>PROCESS</b>	<b><i>STRUCTURED MEDIATION</i></b>	<b><i>STRUCTURED APPROACH</i></b>
	*Set of sequential steps *led by a mediator *for a small group of people *to resolve a common conflict	*Configuration of structured "objects" *driven by an intermediate mechanism *for a large group of people *to transform individuals and their relationship to the world
<b>DURATION</b>	<b><i>SHORT AND ACCURATE</i></b>	<b><i>LONG AND UNDETERMINED</i></b>
	*Efficiency of the process by respecting a short period of time	*Effectiveness of the process through the degree of maturation of ideas
	<b>Mediation to resolve a dispute</b>	<b>Mediation to create a link</b>

**For the first mediation form:** it is a set of sequential stages of mediation led by a mediator for a small group of people and whose objective is to reach agreement on a common conflict through a frontal dialogue between the parties involved and the development of an interpersonal relationship of short duration and precise in time.

Given the linearity of this form and its objective of putting an end to a relation, it will be called "**Mediation to resolve a dispute**" for the remainder of the thesis.

**As for the second mediation form:** it is a configuration of structured "objects" piloting a mediation approach whose objective is the development of a circular communication context for a large group of people with the purpose of forging long-term and indeterminate partnership relationships over time.



Given the openness of this form based on a structured configuration without the obligation to follow a precise synchronized approach, it will be described as "**«Mediation to create links»**" for the remainder of the thesis

And in the following section we will itemize the different types of mediations that are currently applied in mediation through the correlation of the features, characteristics of mediation forms that we have identified here above.

## **C. Structured Inventory of mediation practices**

### **C.1 Family mediation (conjugal mediation)**

**Context** : Following the National Family Advisory Council in 2002 « *family mediation is a process of construction or reconstruction of the family bond centered on the autonomy and responsibility of the persons concerned by situations of rupture or separation in which an impartial, independent, qualified and without decision-making power third party, the family mediator, favors, through the organization of confidential interviews, their communication, the management of their conflict in the family domain understood in its diversity and evolution* ».

In 2014, the Parental Authority and the Interest of the Child (APIE) Act was passed, completing the initial definition of the National Advisory Council and stating that « *family mediation, which aims to calm conflict and preserve relationships within the family, is a structured and confidential process for the amicable resolution of family disputes* »

In parallel to family mediation, we also find **conjugal mediation** (separation between spouses), the latter follows the same framework as family mediation but with the difference that they have no children.

the field of application of family mediation or conjugal mediation is the family in its diversity. Within the framework of the law on the exercise of parental authority as well as in divorce proceedings; or inheritance; care of an elderly and/or dependent person...

**Objective**: Agreement given the objective of reaching an amicable agreement

**Linking:** Interpersonal relationship as it is only during mediation, the time of reaching an agreement through the confrontation of stakeholders concerned.

**Process:** Structured mediation given the precision of the three stages in the process a priori and that it be directed by the mediator between the spouses for example to determine the conditions of separation. It may be initiated by one or more persons concerned. This is called conventional family mediation. It can also be initiated by a judicial orientation. When it is ordered by a magistrate; it is then a question of judicial mediation.

But regardless of how the process is triggered, family mediation will take place in three stages: first, it will be the preliminary interview, i.e. the first interview, individual or otherwise, with the aim of getting to know each other and providing information on the framework, the conditions and the process. Then, in the second phase, there will be several mediation sessions to address together the subjects which concern them. Knowing that the number of sessions is not unlimited. Finally, agreements can be agreed and drafted with the support of the mediator and that the persons will transmit to their lawyers or directly to the judge for integration in a court decision.

**Duration:** Short and accurate (three beats, the time it takes to reach an agreement)

key information of family/ conjugal mediation	
<b>Context</b>	*conventional family mediation *Judicial mediation
<b>Objective</b>	Agreement
<b>Linking</b>	Interpersonal relationship
<b>Process</b>	Structured Mediation
<b>Duration</b>	Short and accurate

## **C.2 Social mediation (citizen mediation, neighborhood mediation)**

**Context:** the inter-ministerial delegation to the city (IDC) defined social mediation as « *a process of creating and repairing social links and settling conflicts in everyday life, in which an impartial and independent third party tries, through the organization*

*of exchanges between people or institutions, to help them improve a relationship or settle a conflict between them ».*

Social mediation is also called citizen mediation or neighborhood mediation depending on the geographical area covered.

Its field of application is reflected in neighborhood conflicts, the resolution of tensions between neighborhood populations and institutions.

In social/citizen/neighborhood mediation, intervention principles were identified instead of an intervention process. Indeed, social mediation is a relational approach aiming to privilege the maintenance, the maintenance and/or the restoration of sociability between people living in the same environment. This type of mediation is frequently characterized by the voluntary involvement of mediators.

**Objective:** Agreement is the main pillar given the relational interview approach. Communication may exist in the presence of a collective project initiated by the mediator.

**Linking:** the pillar is the interpersonal relationship, given the mediator's proximity to each other, generating a relationship of short duration. The partnership relationship can exist if ever the mediator initiates a collective project to mobilize the actors.

**Process:** Structured mediation a priori in view of the nature of inter-actor intervention in conflict management or prevention or through awareness-raising and individual information; unless open awareness-raising and information sessions are organized and to which residents of the geographical area concerned are invited; same reasoning is applied in the case of the presence of a collective project initiated by the mediator. Finally, it should be noted that collective projects initiated by the mediator or awareness sessions for a large group of people are considered as an exceptional case and not the rule at the level of these three types of mediation in general and especially at the level of social and citizen mediation because despite all the interest of collective projects initiated by the mediator or mobilization sessions in large groups, these are still expensive projects that are not always funded by the state or the state representative on the territory.

**Duration:** Short and Accurate considering that neighborhood conflict management requires a fast solution to avoid complex situations or unwanted actions.

<b>key information of Social mediation (citizen mediation, neighborhood mediation)</b>	
<b>Context</b>	*neighborhood conflicts *Resolution of tensions between neighborhood populations and institutions
<b>Objective</b>	Agreement
<b>Linking</b>	Interpersonal relationship
<b>Process</b>	Structured Mediation
<b>Duration</b>	Short and accurate

### **C.3 Asset mediation**

**Context:** Property mediation concerns the various property conflicts that can arise between members of the same family. The sources of these conflicts are multiple; it can begin with the emotional character up to the divergent interests. Thus, the heritage mediator helps to resolve disputes that arise in the management of assets between individuals or even with administrations.

Its application is in areas of difficulty between heirs, management of assets entrusted, intermediary role with notaries or other administrative institutions

In this mediation practice, a specific mediation process has not been identified, since the mediator's role is to inform the parties concerned about the foreseeable court decision in relation to their respective situation. But when legal proceedings are initiated, there is no possibility of formal mediation.

**Objective:** Agreement given its objective of assisting in the resolution of disputes that arise in the management of conflicts without direct power granted to stakeholders.

**Linking:** Interpersonal relationship given the motivation of the link to resolve the dispute.

**Process:** Structured mediation given the limitation to a specific stage of information to the parties concerned before the initiation of legal proceedings.

**Duration:** Short and precise as it is punctual in taking information from the mediator

key information of Asset mediation	
<b>Context</b>	*difficulty between: heirs, management of assets entrusted *intermediary role with notaries or other administrative institutions
<b>Objective</b>	Agreement
<b>Linking</b>	Interpersonal relationship
<b>Process</b>	Structured Mediation
<b>Duration</b>	Short and accurate

#### C.4 Consumer mediation

In 2015, with the order#2015-1033 of August 20, 2015, it was introduced “consumer mediation”

**Context:** A "right to mediation" is thus given to consumers « *Every consumer has the right to have recourse free of charge to a consumer mediator with a view to the amicable resolution of the dispute between him and a professional. To this end, the trader shall guarantee the consumer effective recourse to a consumer mediation mechanism* »<sup>12</sup>.

Its field of application is consumption in all its forms, construction...

Its process is a mediation carried out by a consumer mediator, who is private, by differentiation with public mediators. Consumer mediators are supervised by a mediation assessment and monitoring commission. Mediators deploy dedicated dispute resolution websites that provide direct access to information about the mediation process for the parties involved<sup>13</sup>.

**Objective:** Agreement given the sole objective of amicable resolution of the dispute

**Linking:** Interpersonal relationship given the ephemeral link for the duration of the mediation

**Process:** Structured mediation since it is the mediator who controls the process; even if this mediation practice ensures the autonomy of opening the file online but does not grant him the freedom to communicate with the other party.

**Duration:** Short and precise ending with the closing of the file online

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<sup>12</sup> According to the new article L. 152-1 of the Consumer Code

<sup>13</sup> For example, the electronic communications mediator on [www.mediateur-telecom.fr](http://www.mediateur-telecom.fr) (consulted on 17/06/2018) or airplane tickets refunds [www.refund.me/fr/](http://www.refund.me/fr/) (consulted on 17/06/2018)

key information of consumer mediation	
<b>Context</b>	consumption in all its forms
<b>Objective</b>	Agreement
<b>Linking</b>	Interpersonal relationship
<b>Process</b>	Structured Mediation
<b>Duration</b>	Short and accurate

### C.5 Professional mediation

**Context:** According to the Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct for Professional Mediators: « *mediation is a decision-support process aimed at empowering individuals, whether or not it is a conflict situation. Thus, mediation will allow parties in conflict situations to find a solution negotiated in a contributory way, i.e. an agreement that can be durable, respectful of people and their interests. Consequently, in the context of a dispute, mediation consists in promoting its resolution and anticipating the consequences of the choice that can be made by each client* »

Its field of application is in project management in disputes at the level of companies; whether it is internal relations, situations of relational suffering, moral harassment, breach of contract....

The process of professional mediation is rational, methodical. This makes it possible to implement structured processes and support systems based on the practice of relational engineering in organizations. This framework is applied with the objective of speed and efficiency through precise stages: Introduction, Contextualization, identification of the positions of the actors in conflict, identification of the stated solutions and search for other hypotheses, solution and anticipation of the consequences and finally agreement.

**Objective:** agreement given its objective of a negotiated solution

**Linking:** Interpersonal relationship as the purpose of the relationship is to create dialogue for conflict resolution

**Process:** Structured mediation as it is based on mandatory sequential steps to follow.

**Duration:** short and precise given its objective of speed and efficiency

key information of professional mediation	
<b>Context</b>	Project management disputes at the level of companies
<b>Objective</b>	Agreement
<b>Linking</b>	Interpersonal relationship
<b>Process</b>	Structured Mediation
<b>Duration</b>	Short and accurate

## C.6 Corporate mediation

**Context:** corporate mediation consists in accompanying a dispute in the company's environment (customers, suppliers, administrative contacts, local authorities, etc.). It is a national service under the French Minister of Economy, assisting any company (public or private) that encounters difficulties in its commercial relations with a business partner.

Its field of application is the intervention in prevention of a dispute, accompaniment of a dispute; and in both cases it is between a company with one of the stakeholders of the environment of the company and who can be its customers, its suppliers....

Its process in the context of the business involves efficiency tools and techniques such as interest-based negotiation, contributory negotiation, etc.<sup>14</sup>.

**Objective:** Agreement as it is triggered with the existence of a conflict

**Linking:** Interpersonal relationship as the link is created the time of conflict resolution

**Process:** Structured mediation as the process focuses on efficiency tools to reach agreement.

**Duration:** short and accurate to ensure the efficiency of the process

key information of corporate mediation	
<b>Context</b>	Prevention of a dispute, accompaniment of a dispute between a company with one of its stakeholders who can be its customers, its suppliers...
<b>Objective</b>	Agreement
<b>Linking</b>	Interpersonal relationship
<b>Process</b>	Structured Mediation
<b>Duration</b>	Short and accurate

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<sup>14</sup> Contributive negotiation is centralized around persons and was developed by associate whom were Henri-Sendros-Mila ; this method values each of the parties.

## C.7 Ombudsman

**Context:** it is a form of advocacy mediation; it is the form of mediation in which an "ombudsman" who is an objective person investigates people's complaints against government agencies.

Its scope would be user's complaints against government agencies.

Its process is structured in stages; first, a thorough review of the complaint file, then the Ombudsman determines whether the complaint is founded and makes recommendations to the appropriate government agency.

**Objective:** Agreement given the lack of face-to-face presence of the complaining party; which implies reduced potential for involvement.

**Linking:** Interpersonal relationship as the relationship exists for a specific time slot

**Process:** Structured mediation in view of the three sequential steps led by the mediator

**Duration:** short and precise in a three-stage slot

key information of Ombudsman	
<b>Context</b>	User's complaints against government agencies
<b>Objective</b>	Agreement
<b>Linking</b>	Interpersonal relationship
<b>Process</b>	Structured Mediation
<b>Duration</b>	Short and accurate

## C.8 Socio-religious mediation

**Context:** the university degree<sup>15</sup> in socio-religious mediation aims to train field actors capable of resolving conflict situations in full knowledge of the facts and making them evolve towards social pacification.

Its application field is through collective action in daily life such as social interventions actions in an open environment, civil security measures in sensitive neighborhoods....

The slogan of socio-religious mediation reflects its mediation process: "Know each other better to understand each other better and live together better";

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<sup>15</sup> The faculty of Strasbourg has joined forces with the first free faculty in social and solidarity economy (FFSSE) to develop the diploma of socio-religious mediation..



**Objective:** Agreement in view of the objective of resolving conflict situations and developing them in the direction of social pacification.

**Linking:** interpersonal relationship since the mediators' intervention is in temporary conflict situations.

**Process:** Structured mediation as it is led by a mediator to resolve a common conflict.

**Duration:** short and precise given the limited time slot at the precise time of the intervention

key information of socio-religious mediation	
Context	Collective social interventions
Objective	Agreement
Linking	Interpersonal relationship
Process	Structured Mediation
Duration	Short and accurate

### C.9 Transcultural mediation

**Context:** It is the establishment of sociability links between two heteronomous cultural systems<sup>16</sup> ; and transcultural mediation would be building bridges between everyone's points of view

Its perceived field of application is rather limited despite the scope of this typology of mediation but so far it has focused on the medical sector to promote the conditions of a patient-caregiver alliance in the face of illness in medico psychological, socio-educational fields; this focus has been justified by the context of today's hospital which is mixed in the face of patients with multiple identities (nationality, different languages, singular way of thinking about illness, suffering...)

Its process is designed to resolve situations of mutual misunderstandings that are multiplying between the nursing body and the sick; hence the need for innovative training for the nursing body enabling them to perceive the patient under his multiple identities and to adapt easily at the time of treatment.

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<sup>16</sup> Heteronomy is the fact that a being lives by rules imposed upon him. Heteronomy is the opposite of autonomy since the latter represents a being that lives and interacts with the rest of the world according to its own nature.

**Objective:** Agreement as the mediation between the nursing body and the patient is to explain to each other to be able to make the decision while preserving the health of the patient.

**Linking:** Interpersonal relationship since the relationship is of short duration in the general framework of the practice or particular context at the medical level.

**Process:** Structured mediation as it takes place between a small group of people in the general setting and between patient-caregiver in the particular setting.

**Duration:** short and precise due to the short time interval of the relationship

key information of transcultural mediation	
<b>Context</b>	Potential application fields are numerous but so far it is focused on the medical sector
<b>Objective</b>	Agreement
<b>Linking</b>	Interpersonal relationship
<b>Process</b>	Structured Mediation
<b>Duration</b>	Short and accurate

### C.10 Cultural mediation

**Context:** « *Cultural mediation refers to the process of linking the spheres of culture and society, the construction of new links between politics, culture and public space. It encompasses a wide range of practices from audience development actions to participatory and community art. Ultimately, it aims to make each person, visitor or spectator, a true cultural actor.* »<sup>17</sup>

In 1960, its field of application was to ensure accessibility for the greatest number of cultural works and productions. Nowadays it is more focused as a strategy in contexts of territorial revitalization and social development in educational circles or other social actors such as municipalities; with the aim of integrating the cultural dimension in their respective fields of activities. So, in terms of sectors, we find public spaces, municipalities, workplaces, museums, etc.

Its process is structured in the field of art around creativity and innovation. Examples include activities such as participatory practices that demystify creative processes on

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<sup>17</sup> [www.culturepourtous.ca/professionnels-de-la-culture/mediation-culturelle/](http://www.culturepourtous.ca/professionnels-de-la-culture/mediation-culturelle/)

the streets. The art that goes through a process of citizen participation in order to take a stand in situations affecting the community....

**Objective:** Communication as stakeholders have a great influence on the process through the different cultural innovation projects in which they can participate directly.

**Linking:** Partnership in view of the construction of new links between legal entities and individuals (politics, culture and public space)

**Process:** Structured approach since the mediation approach is driven by innovative cultural projects between a large diversified group of stakeholders

**Duration:** Long but not necessarily indeterminate since the relationship between the different stakeholders could end once the cultural project is over. Unless stakeholders of an "X" cultural project come together to organize a future "Y" project.

key information of cultural mediation	
Context	Integrating cultural dimension in territorial revitalization
Objective	Communication
Linking	Partnership
Process	Structured approach
Duration	Long term

### C.11 Intercultural mediation

**Context:** It is the establishment of social links between people from different cultures who reside on the same border territory. Knowing that when we talk about culture we find ourselves with hundreds of definitions given the richness of the concept for example it is *«a set of models that describes past behavior or determines future behavior, which the individual acquires and transmits through symbols, and which constitutes the distinctive mark of a human group. The essential core of culture is composed of traditional ideas and particularly the values attached to them »* (Serge Roy). Then in turn the word value is a basket of ideas and ideologies and which can be identified as *« what is implicitly or explicitly desirable for an individual or a group and which influences choice among modes, means and objectives of action »* (Serge Roy).

And let us not forget the richness of the expression "bonds of sociability" which began the definition or complexity of the individual itself.

Its field of application could be in any institution or organization facing a potential conflict between individuals or groups from different cultures.

Its process is to continually encourage social bonding through dialogue, negotiation and non-violent communication with the aim of accepting differences and respecting diversity; with the aim of fostering living together among individuals living nearby.

**Objective:** Communication as its main objective is to establish social links between people from different cultures without necessarily wanting to reach a decision

**Linking:** Partnerships since the desire to establish social links implies the construction of serene relationships over a long period of time.

**Process:** in this case we would be facing structured mediation and structured approach. A structured mediation in the case of a process for a small group in the context of a particular conflict; but then we find ourselves in the context of a social mediation, a citizen mediation or a neighborhood mediation.

While it is a structured approach in the case of awareness sessions for a heterogeneous public for example an awareness session on the subject of the values of the republic for a group of immigrants from different nationalities.

**Duration:** Short and accurate in the context of a particular conflict between a small group of individuals, but then we find ourselves in the context of a social mediation, a citizen mediation or a neighborhood mediation.

Long-term and indeterminate with the objective of maturing ideas for acceptance of the other. Knowing that what is particularly interesting at this level is the perception of the duration of the mediation process not only between mediator and stakeholders but that it can also consist in the number of awareness-raising sessions over a long period and towards a large diversified public that creates a continuous intercultural mediation context, thus inducing a long-term intercultural mediation.

key information of intercultural mediation	
<b>Context</b>	any institution or organization facing a potential conflict between individuals or groups from different cultures
<b>Objective</b>	Communication
<b>Linking</b>	Partnership
<b>Process</b>	Structured approach
<b>Duration</b>	Long term indeterminate period

## **C.12 Transnational mediation**

**Context:** It is the act of establishing social ties between people who do not reside in the same territory. So, we notice that it is the same approach as intercultural mediation with the exception that people do not reside on the same territory and who are not necessarily of different nationalities for example a Frenchman living in Paris and a French person expatriate living in China.

Its field of application is widespread in transnational organizations and by organization we mean company, or public organization or international non-profit organization. For example, Greenpeace.

Its process can be identified with that of intercultural mediation and in which one seeks to encourage social link through negotiation and non-violent communication with the aim of accepting differences and respecting diversity; but given that the actors are geographically separated, mediation tools must be innovative to ensure dialogue and negotiation.

**Objective:** Communication as its main objective is to establish social links between people of different cultures and living in different territories.

**Linking:** Partnership relations such as the will to establish social links implies the construction of serene relationships over a long period of time, which will allow fruitful collaboration by overcoming differences.

**Process:** As with intercultural mediation, the process of mediation can either be a structured mediation or a structured approach. A structured mediation in the case of a process for a small group within the framework of a particular situation but unlike intercultural mediation, social mediation cannot intervene at this level given the geographical difference; if the situation requires it, one would rather speak of a professional mediation within the framework of two sister companies but separated by the continent. However, such a situation is relatively an exception to the rule given the high cost it generates; moreover, at the level of companies and in terms of efficiency, fixed work procedures are created that all persons connected to the same workplace must follow it, which reduces the risk of conflicts in the same space.

A structured approach in the case of a continuous training policy of an organization towards its employees; for example the case of a company that produces in China and the parent company is in France; in order to simplify the continuous coordination of work and avoid the loss of time because of conflicts related to differences in

managerial practices in each of the countries, the organization could integrate a managerial training, periodic and continuous to the address of its employees with the aim of taming them to the culture of each other.

**Duration:** Long and indeterminate as the acceptance of the other requires a long maturation of ideas to avoid a sudden relapse or artificial acceptance.

<b>key information of transnational mediation</b>	
<b>Context</b>	*International companies (such as Nestlé...) *International non-profit organizations (such as Greenpeace ...) *or even public organizations functioning worldwide (such as
<b>Objective</b>	Communication
<b>Linking</b>	Partnership
<b>Process</b>	Structured approach
<b>Duration</b>	Long term, indeterminate period

### **C.13 Environmental mediation**

**Context:** it is a dialogue between stakeholders who represent interest groups or individuals concerned with environmental issues. The aim of this dialogue is to produce an agreement satisfactory to all parties, thanks to the intervention of a third party called a mediator, whose function is to facilitate dialogue without taking a position on the substance or attempting to influence the outcome.

Its field of application is the management of natural resources, enhancement of natural resources, appropriation or protection of natural resources/ landscapes/ species, prevention and management of a conflict related to land use planning (ex: Notre Dame des Landes airport is the perfect), support for the co-construction of a territorial policy project (ex : Agenda21)

Its process is a research organized and assisted by a third party, by a mediator. Indeed, mediation develops scenarios; the debate is based on an exchange of arguments and its purpose is to convince the other to reach a decision collaboratively.

But given the large number of participants: professionals and companies, associations, local authorities, administrations, citizens... (indeed the high number of participating

categories ensures the representativeness of stakeholders), environmental mediation requires specific mediation mechanisms such as open forums for public debate.

Also, environmental issues are complex in nature with multiple dimensions such as multi-stakeholders, multi-issues. This requires transdisciplinary mediators and methodological tools to promote information.

**Objective:** Communication as the objective is sharing information between stakeholders

**Linking:** partnerships with the aim of building constructive long-term relationships.

**Process:** Structured approach given the need for advanced methodological tools to ensure dialogue with and between a large number of participants.

**Duration:** Long and undetermined according to the rhythm of the meetings

key information of environmental mediation	
<b>Context</b>	*management of natural resources *enhancement of natural resources *appropriation or protection of natural resources/ landscapes/ species, *prevention and management of a conflict related to land use planning *support for the co-construction of a territorial policy project
<b>Objective</b>	Communication
<b>Linking</b>	Partnership
<b>Process</b>	Structured approach
<b>Duration</b>	Long term, indeterminate period

For the rest of our inventory, we will continue the non-exhaustive list of mediation practices with the incorporation of media coverage in its development. According to Professor Ghislaine Azémard<sup>18</sup>, specialist in editorial policies in the multimedia sector, « *mediatization is a mediation whose intermediary is necessarily a media*» and defines mediation in information and communication sciences as « *a communication and transmission process that uses one or more intermediaries, which may be of a different nature. Mediation makes information accessible through different code-decoding processes*»<sup>19</sup>. The mediation process will depend on the architecture of the code-decoding of the information when creating the media and « *the mediator will propose a set of tools and resources to promote learning and enable learners to organize information and produce meaning (...)*» (Rézeau, 2002)

#### C.14 Educational mediation

**Context:** Avanzini<sup>20</sup> defined pedagogical mediation in the education register by « *this concept designates the enterprise of the one who develops and facilitates the relationship between culture and a subject who, until then, has failed to assimilate it and whose situation is sought to be re-mediated. Mediation... is essential to the learning activity. (op. cit. : 14) »*

Its explicit field of application is at the school level in particular and at the educational level in general.

His process can be highlighted by the interpretation of Monique Linard (1996) as « *combines computational cognitivism on the one hand with a techno-centric and prosthetic conception of instruments (mediatization), and on the other hand cognition seen as a "knowledge activity" with an anthropocentric conception of cognitive tools (mediation)*» in other words, the learning process follows this relationship of passing information to the level of a teaching process, for example.

**Objective:** Definitely Communication with the transmission of knowledge

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<sup>18</sup> University professor in information and communication sciences; his research specialises in the interactive, scientific, cultural, educational and territorial e-médiations sector, which are carried out within the framework of the research and digital creation programme (LEDEN).

<sup>19</sup> G. Azémard, 100 notions pour le crossmédia et le transmédia, éditions de l'immatériel, 2013, p.124

<sup>20</sup> Guy Avanzini Professor of Educational Sciences at the University of Lyon II (in 1987) - Professor Emeritus of the Department of Educational and Training Sciences and Practices (in 2003).



**Linking:** Partnership relationships in the sense that information sharing links the donor to the recipient of the information; it is the value of the information that determines the strength of the partnership relationship.

**Process:** Structured approach given the configuration of information in the form of structured objects in order to allow its transmission.

**Duration:** long and indeterminate provided the viability and quality of the configuration of structured objects.

key information of educational mediation	
<b>Context</b>	school level in particular and at the educational level in general
<b>Objective</b>	Communication
<b>Linking</b>	Partnership
<b>Process</b>	Structured approach
<b>Duration</b>	Long term, indeterminate period

### C.15 Scientific mediation

**Context:** scientific communication or scientific mediation was originally known as "popularization of science". The mediation of scientific knowledge with the aim of restoring dialogue between science and society and creating knowledge accessible to citizens. This practice emerged historically with the concept of "Habermas public space" which had studied in the 18th century how the bourgeoisie freed itself from cultural and ideological domination, the aristocracy and the church... the result of its study is that by "thinking freely", the bourgeoisie questioned the legitimacy of power in place and shoved it; it is what he described as "public space" that becomes possible as soon as urbanization develops and the notion of "private space" emerges in the bourgeoisie. Metaphorically, nowadays, the bourgeoisie is all citizens, and equal access to knowledge is promoted by scientific communication that seeks to empower individuals by acquiring a critical thinking.

Its field of application is very rich and diversified with a range of tools and means; starting with the playful approach of the city of science and industry, the palace of discovery or the development of educational tools around science as the association S{CUBE} supported by the community Paris-Saclay and so many other examples.

Its process depends on the chosen configuration; for example, in the Science City it is an interconnection of objects facilitating access to information and this series of objects can be illustrated by: Temporary or permanent exhibitions, the library, the digital crossroads, the children's city, the trades city, the health city, activities and shows.

Then within each of its objects, the respective elements are interconnected by a series of sub-objects to allow the transmission of information by different means. As an example, let us take the object "activities and shows". These sub objects are composed of: animations/workshops, planetarium, cinema, Geode, Conferences and videogame area. Thus, we notice that each of these sub-objects is based on means or a form of mediation different from the other such as the audiovisual in the case of the “Géode” and the videogame area.

**Objective:** Communication as its purpose is information sharing

**Linking:** Partnership reports given the circular and continuous disclosure of information.

**Process:** Structured approach as it is disseminated to a large group of people to transform individuals through access to information through a configuration of structured objects.

**Duration:** long and indeterminate knowing that it could be conditioned by the time of existence of the entity that grants it.

key information of scientific mediation	
<b>Context</b>	field of application is very rich and diversified with a large option of tools and means
<b>Objective</b>	Communication
<b>Linking</b>	Partnership
<b>Process</b>	Structured approach
<b>Duration</b>	Long term, indeterminate period

### **C.15 Territorial mediation (or territorial dialogue)**

**Context:** If we mentioned the heterogeneity of the term mediation, what would we say about the combination of mediation and territory? The term territory leads us on different paths of reflection following the mobilized analytical triangle. What is certain is that everyone agrees that a territory is a geographical area, having borders, which has a legal belonging and a natural specificity. Other criteria's may still represent the territory as the linguistic criterion but points of conflict will emerge as for example it is not the territory which assigns the linguistic criterion but the group of actors who reside there... and the sources of confrontation are long.

Our ambition in this thesis is not to dissipate the conflict at the level of terminology but rather to inventory the mediation practice applied in the field.

That said, it brings the conflict back to three terminologies: territorial mediation, territorial dialogue and territorial innovation. The Delegation for Regional Planning and Attractiveness (DATAR) has identified territorial innovation as the construction of an innovative territory by setting in motion a large collective of actors and diverse interests around territorially and politically constituted issues. By this definition we perceive the primacy of the concern for efficiency by the predetermination of the stakes; then around these stakes, the hoped mechanism would be the passage of the individual interest of the actors towards the collective interest, in the objective of mobilization of the actors. As we notice, the primary concern of the approach is not to invite the actor to the dialogue table but rather how to mobilize him to take action in the predefined sense. Of course, the actor will get involved but for an interest and not for dialogue. Therefore, despite all the interest of this expression and its operational approach, it will be eliminated from the current framework and will be pursued with territorial mediation and territorial dialogue.

Territorial mediation and territorial dialogue are two expressions that can naturally be substituted by actors in the field, with a preference for territorial dialogue. Given the value of the word dialogue and the ambition to achieve it through mediation, as well as the weight of its use in the field; we will use the expression territorial dialogue for the rest of this paragraph, but we will keep the expression territorial mediation in our inventory of mediation practices in order to keep the homogeneity of the terms at the inventory level.

Thus, territorial dialogue <sup>21</sup> is “a set of practices of consultation, mediation and negotiation on environmental and territorial issues”, (Barret, 2003). Following this definition, what directly challenges us is the viability of including this practice in the inventory of mediation practices, while it includes consultation and negotiation in parallel with mediation.

So what is consultation and negotiation? Following Jean-Eudes Beuret<sup>22</sup>, consultation is « *a process of collective construction of visions, objectives, common projects, with a view to acting or deciding together, based on a cooperative dialogue between several stakeholders and aimed at building new coordinations around one or more problematic objects* ». According to this perspective, concertation will be accepted as an accompaniment to mediation and will even be considered as a leverage effect.

For the Walton and Mac Kersie (1991) negotiations, two types were established: distributive or integrative. Distributive in the context of conflicting negotiations where stakeholders are in an attitude of imposing their preferences. While in integrative negotiation stakeholders are in a cooperative attitude with each other to create a common "value" for both parties.

This is why, within the framework of this inventory, territorial dialogue is integrated as a practice of mediation, considering that the typology of concertation mentioned would be integrative concertation.

Its field of application is around knowledge mediation and conflict management.

Its process depends on the architecture of the code-decoding of the information. For example, DIALTER<sup>23</sup> organization has two main purposes in its configuration: "activities" - "domains". At the "activities" level we find: diagnosis and expertise - advice and support - facilitation and mediation - training.

Then, at the "domain" level, we find: Water - Natural and rural areas - industry, transport, energy - urban territories.

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<sup>21</sup> Territorial dialogue is an expression created by Philippe Barret in 2003

<sup>22</sup> Jean-Eudes Beuret specialized in conducting consultations and negotiations for the management of resources, environmental goods and territory, in Europe, Africa and Latin America. Author of "The conduct of consultation - for environmental management and resource sharing"

<sup>23</sup> DIALTER's slogan is the engineering of territorial dialogue

The DIALTER work process will start with the crossing of objects/subobjects between "activities" and "domains" according to the perceived need at the territorial level or according to the request of a territorial actor.

**Objective:** Communication since the practices involve consultation and integrative negotiation, which implies a high potential for stakeholder involvement.

**Linking:** Partnership relationships as the objective of dialogue is to bring actors to collaborate together.

**Process:** Structured approach given the will to confront interests by a large number of different actors on a territory.

**Duration:** long and indeterminate because of the length of time required for the territorial dialogue as a first step and the reality that the actors who continue the long dialogue sessions until the last session do so not for the simple pleasure but for their ambition to collaborate with the rest of the actors present at the end.

<b>key information of territorial mediation (or territorial dialogue)</b>	
<b>Context</b>	Knowledge mediation and conflict management
<b>Objective</b>	Communication
<b>Linking</b>	Partnership
<b>Process</b>	Structured approach
<b>Duration</b>	Long term, indeterminate period

### **C.17 Mediation of environmental knowledge**

**Context:** "ePLANETe is an online platform for knowledge mediation in the fields of the environment, sustainable development and the ecological economy" (ePLANETe.blue). The discovery of the platform is differentiated according to different learning communities, users. It is organized around different "doorways" (entrance door), thematic spaces grouping together "galleries" that bring together a set of digital objects. The core of ePLANETe as a portal is the offer of structured knowledge within galleries, each offering a catalogue of digital objects (profile of indicators, actions, educational modules, deliberation tools...)"<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> Presentation of the knowledge mediation portal ePLANETe.blue

Thus, it brings together a diversity of digital objects leading to an infinite potential for mobilizing ePLANETe.<sup>25</sup>

Concerning the process of access to knowledge; it is an approach that will depend on the user's profile and purpose. Its profile, given that the latter is conditioned by the right of access to the « **DOORWAYS** » (*Toutatis, Taliesin, Fairground, Merlin, Camelot, Kerbabel*) and « **GALLERIES** » (*Collaborative Activities, NewsReels, People, Partners, The Forest of Broceliande, Yggdrasil, Ideas & Action, Virtual Garden, Food baskets, Cycles & Cascades, Deliberation Support Tools v5, Eco Innovation Terrains, Les KerBabel Indicator kiosks, Tool Theory Terrains*) within « **THEMATIC SPACES** » (*"Showroom", EPLANETe Communities, RCE (Learning Resource Centre), Teaching Activities & Programmes, Dagda's Garden, Evaluation, Panoramix, Indicator Bazar, Tool Kit, Deliberation Support Tools, Babel Garden*) of the platform. These access rights have been defined by the system administrator.

Its purpose, such as the creation of information or a "piece of information" (depending on the terminology of the platform). The navigation from an information to another will depend on the choices or questions made by the user, the filters that exist within the gallery and the crosslinks linking the gallery to other galleries. Noting that not all digital objects are connected to each other; the links are preconditioned by the platform architect's choices. To illustrate the architecture of the ePLANETe platform, we will start with the smallest unit within the platform and which is a piece of information; In the current example it will be a piece of biodiversity existing in the gallery of « Virtual garden » or "Virtual Biodiversity Garden".

In this gallery, the piece of biodiversity can be described in many ways. First of all, we can identify it by name, photo or description; then we can discover it through "Filters" of the Biodiversity Tips and that we can also consider as a typology of information from which the user can select the tracks that he would like to explore. This list of Filters is: Ecosystem Type, Order of Life, Environmental Functions, Cognitive Assessment, Vulnerability Vectors, categories of actors and each of these categories in turn include sub-parts. As for example the filter "Ecosystem Type" includes: Desert, Forest (all types), Wetlands, Mountains (Alpine), Polar (including Tundra), Prairies, Heath, Agroecosystem, Urban, Continental Waters, Coastal Areas, Coral Reefs, Marine;

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<sup>25</sup> List of "Doorways", "Thematic Area" and "Galleries in Annex".

Then, we can discover the geolocation of the piece of biodiversity by referring to the geographical map. Afterwards, you can read the details of the contributor (name, category of actor, community) who created this piece of biodiversity. Finally, we can acquire more information on the piece of biodiversity through the « **Crosslinks** » that connect virtual spaces to each other. Thus the Biodiversity Tips can be linked to other pieces of information in the Virtual Garden or in another space. It is the same process of discovering bits of information that applies in other galleries.

**Objective:** Communication given the high potential for information sharing whether through the creation of information pieces or their discovery.

**Linking:** Partnership relationships such as access and information sharing which creates a high potential for circular communication and even partnerships among platform stakeholders.

**Process:** Structured approach given the pre-established configuration of the platform's digital objects that controls the mediation process or the discovery of information through filters in a gallery or « crosslinks » between galleries and to which a large number of people can access it according to their user profile and access rights.

**Duration:** long and indeterminate as there are no restrictions on the number of accesses to the platform per user.

<b>key information of mediation of environmental knowledge</b>	
<b>Context</b>	Environmental knowledge mediation
<b>Objective</b>	Communication
<b>Linking</b>	Partnership
<b>Process</b>	Structured approach
<b>Duration</b>	Long term, indeterminate period

In the above section, we have identified, read the current mediation types under four main variables: **Objective, Linking, Process and Duration**.

This reading allowed us to perceive Mediation types under two main perspectives: “Mediation to resolve a dispute”, “Mediation to create a link”

Both of these perspectives can generate a value but it would be different types of values. Creating links can allow new partnerships to develop while dissolving existing links will manage risks in conflictual situations which will reduce potential generated damage.

## D. Abstract section I.2 - Correlation table between the characteristics of the two forms of mediation and mediation practices

After having developed the list of existing mediation practices in the literature and widespread in the field, we will now correlate each of the mediation practices to the characteristics, Indicators of each of the two mediation forms that we have established and justified in the first section of this part.

Mediation Forms	Mediation to manage a Dispute				Mediation to catalyse links			
	OBJECTIVE	LINKING	PROCESS	DURATION	OBJECTIVE	LINKING	PROCESS	DURATION
Mediation Practices	AGREEMENT	INTERPERSONAL RELATION	STRUCTURED MEDIATION	SHORT & ACCURATE	COMMUNICATION	PARTNERSHIP RELATIONS	STRUCTURED APPROACH	LONG & UNDETERMINED
Family/ Conjugal Mediation	X	X	X	X				
Social Mediation (citizen mediation, neighborhood mediation)	X	X	X	X				
Heritage mediation	X	X	X	X				
Consumer mediation	X	X	X	X				
Professional mediation	X	X	X	X				
Corporate mediation	X	X	X	X				
Ombudsman	X	X	X	X				
Socio-religious mediation	X	X	X	X				
Transcultural mediation	X	X	X	X				
Cultural mediation					X	X	X	X
Intercultural mediation					X	X	X	X
Transnational mediation					X	X	X	X
Environmental mediation					X	X	X	X
Educational mediation					X	X	X	X
Scientific mediation					X	X	X	X
Territorial mediation (or territorial dialogue)					X	X	X	X
Mediation of environmental knowledge					X	X	X	X



## **Section I.3: Abstract chapter 1**

The absence of formalism that characterizes mediation is noted by "the multiple definitions that refer to the term mediation process rather than that of procedure" (Ben Mrad, 2006).

Pierre Grelley, in his article *"the scales, the sword and the pendulum. Pour une petite histoire de la médiation"* highlighted Hegel's perception of mediation, identifying that for Hegel in Phenomenology of the Mind (1807) "mediation is both an act of negation and overcoming, which establishes the link between the subject and the object" (Grelley, 2012).

This thought of Hegel was deepened by Georg Simmel (1858-1918) with the concepts of mediation and intermediation. "In Philosophy of Money, published in 1900, G. Simmel presents money as the mediating element between man and the world which, with exchange, appears as a calibration factor making man's relationship to things objective" (Grelley, 2012).

Also, in the New Little Robert, the verb mediatize or more precisely the action of mediatizing is "what serves to arrive at an end". Thus, by correlating the etymology of the word mediation which means "medium" or "median" with the meaning of the verb to mediate "what serves to achieve an end" one can determine that the "process" of mediation can be either a direct action of a mediator or an indirect action or Hegel's mediation/intermediation.

This is why, in our theoretical part, **the different types of mediation which are creators of different values but of different natures (*Mediation to manage a dispute, Mediation to catalyze Links*) will be perceived on the same footing as both of them can create an added value**. Mediation to manage a dispute will reduce the negative externalities of the dispute either financially or on the psychological level; same for Mediation to catalyze links which added value can be perceived following the type of link it created. This allows us to have a structured range of types of mediation that can be used, adapted according to the situation or the evolution of a situation to meet the existing need, noting that in the second part of this research we will choose the types of mediation required for the development of the strategy necessary for mediating an educational, intercultural partnerships.

For the moment we will pursue our questioning in the second chapter where we will ask ourselves about the structure that will enable us to manage simultaneously the range of different types of mediation.

## **CHAPTER II**

### **A PERENNIAL MEDIATION APPROACH PILOTED BY AN ADHOCRATIC CONFIGURATION**

*"Systematic innovation requires a willingness to see change as an opportunity."*

**Peter Drucker**

In this chapter, we identify, in a first section, the organizational structure under these three fundamental pillars of coordination mechanisms, basic elements and flow system. In a second section, we will identify Mintzberg's structural configurations through four paths of reflection with the objective of selecting the organizational structure that will ensure us a continuous mediation structure.

## **Section II.1. The structure of an organization**

### **A. coordination mechanisms**

According to Mintzberg in his book the structure and dynamics of organizations: *"The structure of an organization can be defined simply as the sum total of the means employed to divide the work between distinct tasks and then to ensure the necessary coordination between these tasks".*

The division of labor is largely dictated by the work to be done and the technique used to do it; Mintzberg took the example of the company Ceramico whose division of labor was based on: preparation, shaping, finishing, varnishing, firing. A relatively technical and linear division of labor.

However, coordination between these tasks is more complicated as it requires a multitude of means. These means that Mintzberg called **"the coordination mechanisms"** that are a combination of communication and control and that he called *"the glue that holds together the parts of the organization"*. There are five such coordination mechanisms:

#### **A.1 Mutual adjustment**

This mutual adjustment is naturally used in the simplest organizations in terms of numbers of employees and simplicity of tasks performed. But paradoxically, mutual adjustment is also used in the most complex organizations as it allows to face multidisciplinary contexts and the success of the enterprise will depend essentially on the ability of specialists to adapt to each other along a path they discover as they advance.

Mintzberg considered the mutual adjustment as the first coordination mechanism to achieve coordination of work through simple informal communication.

**A.2 Direct supervision** is the coordinating mechanism by which *"one person is given responsibility for the work of others"*; this type of mechanism emerges as an organization believes in and leaves primitive simplicity

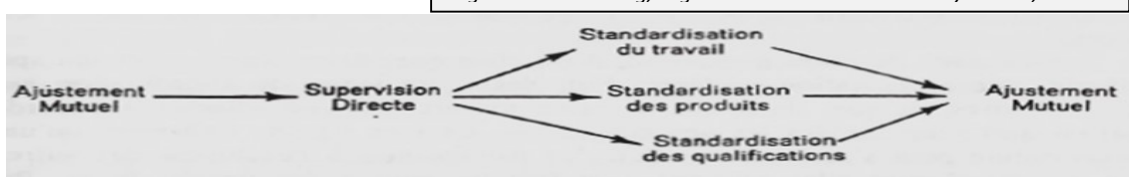
**A.3 The standardization** defined by March and Simon in 1958 by *"The coordination of the various parts is incorporated into process from the design stage, and the need for continuous communication is reduced"*.

At the level of this coordination mechanism, Mintzberg listed three basic types of standardization. The work process, the products, as well as the qualifications of the operators. These three types of standardization can each be designed to meet pre-established standards.

- **Process standardization:** Work processes are standardized when work content is specified or programmed
- **Standardization of products:** standardize work results (for example by specifying in advance the dimensions of the product, or the performance to be achieved). Ex: taxi driver; he has no requirements on the way to take but only the destination provided by the customer. When results are standardized, interfaces between tasks are predetermined by performance standards
- **Standardization of qualifications:** Qualification and knowledge are standardized when the training of the person performing the work is specified. The standardization of qualifications indirectly leads to the result, which is obtained directly through the standardization of processes or results: the control and coordination of work

The necessary coordination between tasks is not fixed in time, a transition from one mechanism to another will be necessary as the organizational work becomes more difficult. Mintzberg described this succession as "a continuum between coordination mechanisms" and illustrated it in the diagram below which begins with mutual adjustment in simple situations but also ends with mutual adjustment in the most complex situations. This is what Mintzberg will call *"the continuum between coordination mechanisms"*.

Figure 2 : Mintzberg, organizational structure and dynamics, 1985



In each specific situation, one organization will prefer one of the coordination mechanisms to the other four, to organize the division of labor within the structure and that, to some extent, these coordination mechanisms are substitutable for each other. This does not mean that one organization can rely on one mechanism to the exclusion of the others. Most use all five to varying degrees.

Now that we have identified the components of the structure; we are interested in the other pillar of Mintzberg's: organization. According to Mintzberg *"an organization is a constellation of works, which are as many quasi-independent coterie of individuals working on issues that are their responsibility at the level of the hierarchy where they find themselves"*.

So how the "continuum between coordination mechanisms" allows the organization to function as they are; well through structural glue (*Mintzberg, organizational structure and dynamics*)

In our case study, the relationship between mediation and organizational structure.

## B. The five basic elements of an organization

### B.1 Operational center

it is the first basic element of the organization, composed of operators whose work is directly linked to the production of goods and services around four essential tasks: they procure what is necessary for production, they ensure the actual manufacturing, they distribute products and services, they ensure direct support functions. The operational center being the most protected part of the organization, it is there that standardization is generally the most advanced and it is the heart of each organization.

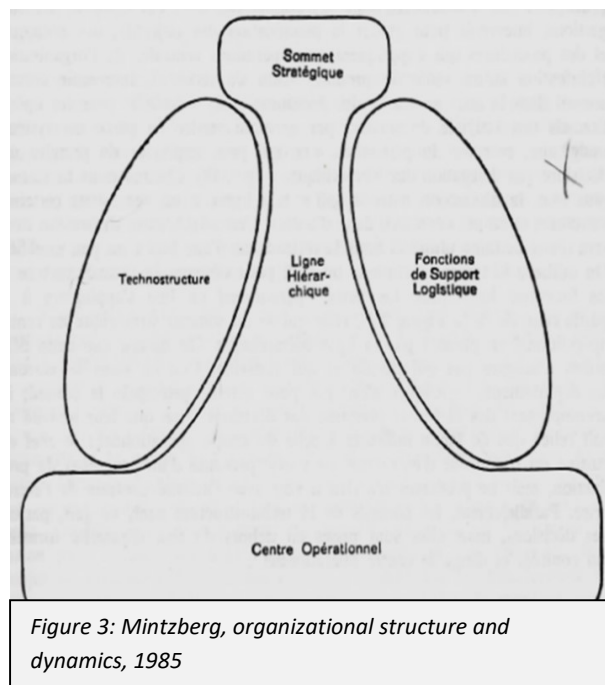


Figure 3: Mintzberg, organizational structure and dynamics, 1985

**B.2 strategic summit:** it is composed of people with broad responsibilities (the Executive Director and his team) and it is the second basic element of an organization. Its function is to ensure that the organization fulfills its mission effectively:

- Direct supervision, which is the responsibility of strategic top management and line management; the essence of direct supervision is to ensure that the whole organization functions in an integrated and smooth manner.
- Manage the organization's boundary conditions, its relations with the environment. Strategic summit executives should devote a significant portion of their time to acting as spokespersons; liaison, developing high-level contacts for the organization
- The development of the organization's strategy as a mediating force between the organization and its environment. Formulating strategy then consists of interpreting the environment, and developing coherent forms of strategies to cope with the environment in organizational decision flows.

**Thus, by overseeing the organization's boundary conditions, strategic summit executives develop their own understanding of the environment; and by fulfilling their direct oversight role, they will seek to tailor the strategy to the organization's strengths and needs.**

**B.3 Hierarchical line:** it is the strategic top is joined to the operational center by the line of authority and considered as the third basic element of the organization is the line of authority. This line extends from the managers immediately below the strategic top to the first level managers who have direct authority over the operators and who embody the coordination mechanism called direct supervision.

**B.4 Technostructure:** In the technostructure we find the analysts (and the employees who help them) who serve the organization by acting on the work of others and is considered as the fourth main element in the organization. These analysts are dissociated from the direct workflow: they can design, plan, change or train the operators but they do not do the work themselves. Thus, the technostructure is effective when it uses analytical techniques to make the work of others more effective. Analysts are the drivers of standardization in the organization.

**B.5 Logistic support functions:** The fifth basic element of the organization is the logistic specialized units which, outside the workflow, have a support function vis-à-vis the organization chart. For example, legal advice, public relations, social relations.

Now that the basic elements of an organization and the function of each of them have been pointed; the obvious question that follows is how these five basic elements are related to each other; as an organizational structure is not static, how the flows of work, authority, information and decisions are correlated in organizations.

### **C. the organization as a flow system**

After identifying the five basic elements of the organization, we pursue our approach by putting forward the dynamic between these basic elements. The parts of the organization are linked to each other by different flows of authority, material, information and decision-making processes.

To elaborate these different flows, Mintzberg examined several schools of thought in organizational theory: formal authority system popularized by management theorists; regulated flow system popularized by supporters of scientific management and control system theorists; informal communication system popularized by human relations theories; and finally, organization as a constellation of works and as an ad hoc decision-making process system within the theory of organizations given their integration of formal and informal aspects in the functioning of organizations.

**C.1 Formal authority:** The organization is seen as a system whose structure is described by its organizational chart. This is why it is necessary to consider the organization chart as a useful document that gives an exact image of the division of labor and how formal authority circulates between posts even if it does not describe informal relations.

**C.2 System of regulated flows:** The organization is seen as a system of flows functioning smoothly and represented by the flow of raw materials, information and decision-making processes.

In other words, the system of regulated flows describes the use of standardization as a coordination mechanism, hence the distinction between three flows:

- \* the operational work that passes through the operational center
- \* information and control decisions that go from the operational center to the line of authority and allow performance information to be codified starting with the operational center.
- \* the flow of functional information, which is the flow of information between operational and functional staff through which the latter provide information and advice for decision-making. It is the technostructure that designs and manages the information system used by operational staff. This system of regulated flows shows the organization as a regulated system formed of harmonious flows of materials, information and decision-making processes.

**C.3 Informal communication system:** This information system is particularly important since the organizational chart did not display them.

Indeed, there are power centers that are not officially recognized; a rich informal communication network is added to and sometimes bypasses regular circuits; and decision-making processes function independently of the regulated system.

Thus, the informal communication network can be conceived as a set of informal channels connected by "nerve centers" - individuals who are at the crossroads of the canals, and who communicate directly, outside the formal system of authority.

In this phase three visions of the organization's functioning are palpated, of which Mintzberg insisted on the need to perceive their interdependence and not their separation; As the formal conditions the informal, and the informal has a great influence on what works in the formal. This leads us to the last two visions of the organization that mix formal and informal.

**C.4 Constellation of works:** Scott (1961), in his review of research in organizational theory, noted that «where people work side by side and have common interests, they communicate much informally» among themselves within “coteries”.

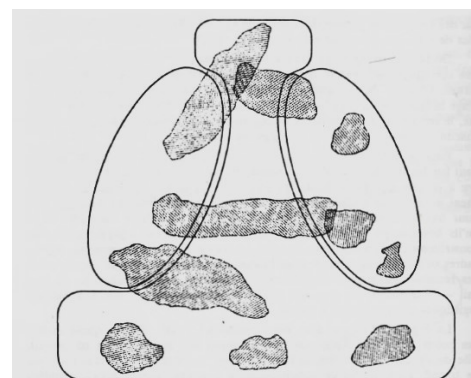


Figure 4 : Mintzberg, organizational structure and dynamics, 1985



**Thus, Mintzberg pointed out that *"the organization can be considered as a set of constellations of works, which are as many quasi-independent coteries of individuals working on issues that are their responsibility at the level of the hierarchy where they find themselves"*.**

The working constellations range from formal to informal, from working groups that appear in the organizational chart as separate units and are scattered across the five basic elements.

To conclude, while formal authority and regulated flow systems describe organization as a kind of spiral spring made of a single material, and tapering to the top;

The informal communication system describes it as a circuit in all directions; the working constellation system describes it as a multilayered circuit.

**C.5 Decision-making processes:** The organization as a system of processes. Authority and communication in organizations are not objectives in themselves; they are flows that aim to facilitate other flows.

In the regulated system, Mintzberg had advanced the operational workflow and the flow of regulated decision processes as a flexible flow of ad hoc decision-making processes.

This decision-making process will allow formal and informal aspects of the organization to merge into each other to determine the organization's behavior.

Highlighting that a decision is a commitment in an action, usually a commitment of resources, a signal of an explicit intention to act. While a decision-making process show that *"the choice itself is often like icing on a cake: one of the steps leading to the decision, not necessarily the most important"* (Mintzberg, Raisinghani, Théoret, 1976)

Therefore, decision-making processes in order of importance can be: operational decisions, managerial or strategic decisions, etc.

Thus, an ad hoc decision-making process shows the complexity of the interactions between formal and informal flows in the functioning of an organization.

#### **D. Abstract section II.1: Structure of an organization**

Section one of Chapter Two delineated the basic components of a structure that are the division of labor into tasks and the coordination between these tasks. Around which the operating pillars of an organization have been developed and which are the basic elements of the organization (*strategic summit, technostructure, logistic support function, hierarchical line, operational center*) correlated by a system of flows within the organization (*formal authority, regulated flows, informal communication, constellation of work, ad hoc decision-making processes*).

What led us to this reading of Mintzberg's work in his book *Structure and Dynamics of Organizations* is our aim to create correspondence between the types of mediation and organizational structure.

Indeed, the first correspondence established between these two fields was the notion of task coordination. This was satisfactory for the correlation between a static mediation and a structure. However, a mediation mission is a dynamic process between two or more stakeholders and requires continuous and innovative coordination at different time scales since one could never foresee an end date of the mission from the beginning; everything will depend on the evolution of coordination, communication between the different stakeholders participating in the meetings.

Hence our objective of correspondence between the two fields pursued with Mintzberg towards the organizational structure who defined it as "*a set of constellations of work, which are so many quasi-independent coteries of individuals working on questions which are their responsibility at the level of the hierarchy where they find themselves*" and it is which enabled us to point the aspect of continuity and dynamism in the whole of an organizational structure and that allowed us to declare a basic characteristic for the correspondence between structure and mediation.

Then following the characteristics of the organizational structure in general, Mintzberg detailed it in the form of five structural configurations which are differentiated by their main coordination mechanism, the key part of the organization, the design parameters, the functioning and the contingency factors.

Thus, in our ongoing objective to formalize a mediation process with the aim of making it sustainable, we are now questioning the structural configuration that would allow us to manage this continuous mediation process between mediation types.

## **Section II.2: Structural configurations**

According to Mintzberg, in the case of an organizational structure, to design is to influence the levers that influence the division of labor and the coordination mechanisms thus affecting the functioning of the organization, the flows of materials, authority, information and decision-making processes that run through it.

From which Mintzberg developed five organizational structures and within the framework of our current case study it was decided to concentrate their characteristics into: the main coordination mechanism, the basic element of the organization, the integrated flow system(s) in the functioning of the organization, the parameter of formalization of behavior associated with the evaluation of the level of link mechanism, the specialization of workstations and finally the type of grouping in units. This choice of characteristics was made with a view to continuing the correspondence between the mediation "continuum" and the organizational structure. In other words, the characteristics that will allow us to deduce which would be the most agile to allow a continuous adjustment and which can be qualified as organic structure i.e. lack of standardization, which is flexible and tolerates ambiguity. This correspondence is summarized in the table below:

Criteria	Main Coordination Mechanism	Basic element of the organization	Flow system	Formalization of the behaviour	Linkage mechanisms	Specialization of workstations	Grouping in units
<b>Structural Configurations</b>							
<b>Simple Structure</b>	Direct supervision	Strategic Summit	Authoritative flow, Informal communication flow	Few	Few	Few	By Functions
<b>Mechanist bureaucracy</b>	Work standardization	Technostructure	Authoritative flows, Regulated flows	Important	Few	Double specialization, horizontal and vertical	By Functions
<b>Professional bureaucracy</b>	Standardisation of qualifications	Operational center	Informal communication flow	Few	A lot in the administrative part	Horizontal specialization	By Functions and By Market
<b>Divisionalized structure</b>	Standardisation of productions	Hierarchical line	Authoritative flow, Regulated flow, Informal communication flow	A lot	Few	Moderate Horizontal and Vertical Specialization	By Market
<b>Adhocracy</b>	Mutual Adjustment	Support functions	Informal communication flow, constellation of works	Few	A lot, everywhere	Focus on horizontal specialisation	By Functions and By Market

*Figure 5: Deducted Summary table of Mintzberg structural configurations*

This choice of correspondences of the parameters advanced by Mintzberg can be justified by considering that most organizations are subject to these seven forces; but, to the extent that the conditions that we will also call contingency factors favor one more than the others, the organization is led to structure itself according to one of these configurations<sup>26</sup>.

Thus, we will begin with the presentation of all the structural configurations of Mintzberg, to lead to the choice of the structural configuration that we find best adapted to our case of “continuum mediation”.

## **A. Simple structure**

### **A.1 Between the structure and functioning of the organization**

The Simple Structure is not elaborate; this is its main characteristic. Coordination is mainly through direct supervision. All important decisions tend to be made by the executive director so the strategic top emerges as the key part of the structure, in fact, the structure rarely includes much more than one man at the strategic top and an organic<sup>27</sup> operational center operating with a significant flow of authority, from the top accompanied by a flow of informal communication and the flow of decisions is from the top down.

### **A.2 Design parameters: Behavior formalization, Link mechanisms, workstation specialization, Grouping in units**

The simple structure has few linking mechanisms given the key part of the structure and which is the strategic summit; little specialization of workstations as behaviors are poorly formalized and the grouping of work tasks is by functions with a large size of units.

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<sup>26</sup> Without forgetting that in a system, there are no dependent or independent variables: everything depends on everything.

<sup>27</sup> The organic structure is characterized by the absence of standardization which makes it flexible and tolerates ambiguity; Especially in those cases where the future cannot be predicted, therefore it is impossible to coordinate activities by standardization.

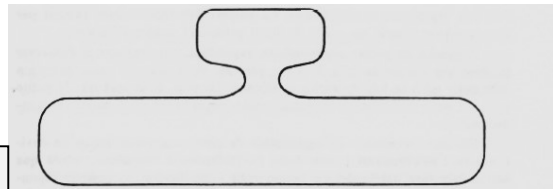
### A.3 Contingency factors

The Simple Structure is characterized by its young age, its small size and a non-sophisticated technical system. Thus, all operational and strategic decisions are centralized by senior management, which will promote flexibility and adaptability to its simple and dynamic but hostile environment.

In addition, centralization can introduce confusion between strategic and operational issues. The general manager can be involved in operational problems to the point where he neglects strategic considerations; which is also true in the other direction. Both types of problems are common in entrepreneurial Organizations.

### A.4 Schematic of the simple structure

Figure 6 : Mintzberg, simple structure



## B. Mechanistic bureaucracy

### B.1 Between the structure and functioning of the organization

In the mechanistic bureaucracy, the main coordination mechanism is the standardization of work processes. Thus, formal power is clearly located at the top. Hierarchy and authority are essential elements. But a lot of informal power is also at the top because that is where the knowledge, the big picture, lies. This makes the key part of the organization, the technostructure supported by large flows of authority everywhere, a system of regulated flows at all levels of the structure and a top-down decision flow, knowing that the flow of informal communication is discouraged by leaders.

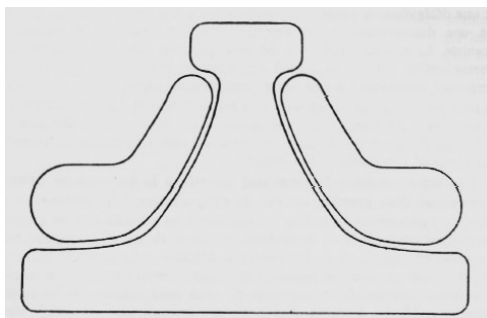
## **B.2 Design parameters: Behavior formalization, Link mechanisms, workstation specialization, Grouping in units**

The mechanistic bureaucracy has few linking mechanisms given the key part of the structure which is the technostructure and the latter provides the links. Formalization of behavior is important within a clear and precise framework; which naturally explains the important horizontal and vertical specialization in this type of structure, whose grouping of work is by functions and whose units are large at the base but small in the rest of the structure.

## **B.3 Contingency factors**

The mechanistic bureaucracy is an old, large organization and a non-automated technical regulatory system; a simple and stable environment. However, important human problems for which there is no apparent solution. What is good for production is simply not good for individuals. Significant changes will apparently be required, not through direct confrontation or legislation, but through the creation of new conditions to which the organization will have to respond. This allows us to deduce that it is an outdated structure given the environment that is becoming more complex and more dynamic that will not alleviate the social problems of the mechanistic bureaucracy

## **B.4 Schematic of the mechanistic structure**



*Figure 7: Mintzberg, organizational structure and dynamics, 1985*

## **C. Professional bureaucracy**

### **C.1 Between the structure and functioning of the organization**

Professional bureaucracy involves stable operational work, so behavior is «predetermined or predictable, i.e. standardized; but operational work is also complex

and must therefore be directly controlled by the operators who carry it out. Hence the basic element of the organization is the operational center.

The organization is therefore turning to the coordination mechanism that makes it possible to achieve both centralization and decentralization: the standardization of qualifications; thus, each knows what he can expect from the other.

Thus, the flow of informal communication is important in the administrative part and the flow of decisions is from the bottom up.

## **C.2 Design parameters: Behavior formalization, Link mechanisms, workstation specialization, Grouping in units**

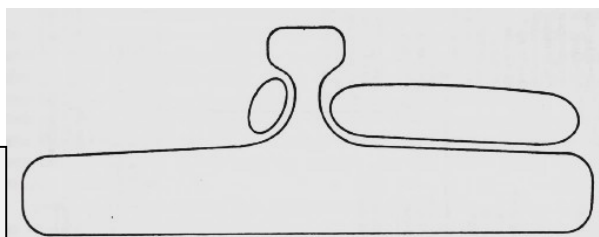
Liaison mechanisms are omnipresent in the administrative part of the organization. Little formalization as this structure is based on the principle of recruitment of specialists, well trained professionals which allows them a large margin of freedom in their work; This justifies a significant horizontal specialization and the grouping of specialists is by function and by market with the size of units large at the operational level, at the base and small elsewhere.

## **C.3 Contingency factors**

Professional bureaucracy is a fashionable structural configuration omnipresent in the labor market. A complex but stable environment. The power of the professional has two origins: first, his work is too complex to be supervised by a superior or standardized by analysts. This last characteristic gives the professional a mobility that allows him to demand considerable autonomy in his work accompanied by a non-sophisticated technical system. But professionals can organize themselves into organizations for many reasons, such as sharing resources. However, in the face of this freedom that one can praise for one's democracy, the other end of the coin is darker because professionals tend to neglect the essential problems of coordination, control and innovation that arise in these structures.

## **C.4 Schematic of the professional bureaucracy structure**

*Figure 8: Mintzberg, bureaucracy structure, organizational structure and dynamics, 1985*



Thus, like the Mechanic Bureaucracy, the Professional Bureaucracy is a rigid structure, well adapted to its standardized production but not to innovation. All bureaucracies are made for stable environments.

As long as the environment remains stable, the Professional Bureaucracy does not encounter any problem. But a more dynamic environment requires change, new skills, cooperative efforts by multidisciplinary teams of professionals, and all these calls for a different structural configuration in order to attain our “continuum mediation”

## **D. The Divisional Structure**

### **D.1 Between the structure and functioning of the organization**

Like the Professional Bureaucracy, the Divisional Structure is less an integrated organization than a set of quasi autonomous entities coupled by a central administrative structure. It is not a complete structure but rather an umbrella structure for other structures. Each division has its own structure; the Divisional Structure focuses on the relationship between the strategic top and the top of the hierarchy. Hence the basic element of the organization is the hierarchical line.

Each division has all the functions necessary for operations on its markets. Thus, for operations management, the organization follows the performance control system, then granting it the standardization of outputs/results as the main coordination mechanism, while noting that the standardization of qualifications, direct supervision has a role at the operational level of each of the units.

### **D.2 Design parameters: Behavior formalization, Link mechanisms, workstation specialization, Grouping in units**

The success of the Divisional Structure depends on the skills of its divisional managers; hence the size of the units is large at the top and is based on the grouping into units based on markets that can also be called by division. Thus, there is much formalization of behavior within each division and that each division is autonomous from the other therefore few liaison mechanisms as they do not need to coordinate and

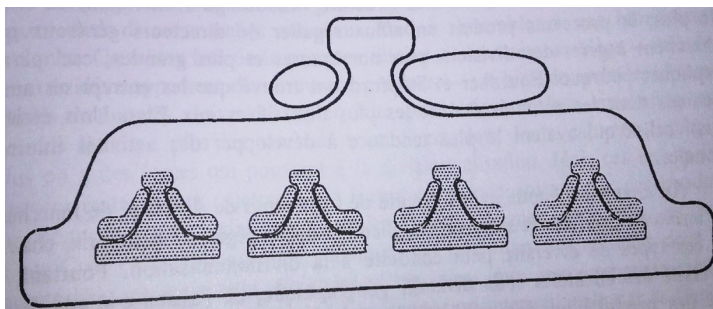


as the divisions are autonomous and decisions are at their level, this structure requires global and vertically limited decentralization.

### **D.3 Contingency factors**

The contingency factor that, more than any other, drives the organization to adopt the Divisional Structure, is the diversity of the Child markets (1977). Of all the configurations, the divisional structure is the one with the narrowest application area. The Divisional Structure is old, large and based on the power needs of managers. In the current context of globalisation, it is a fashionable structure.

### **D.4 Schematic of the divisional structure**



*Figure 9: Mintzberg, divisional structure, organizational structure and dynamics, 1985*

## **E. Adhocracy**

### **E.1 Between the structure and functioning of the organization**

Adhocracy is a very organic structure with little formalization of behavior: a strong horizontal specialization based on training; a tendency to group specialists in functional units for personnel management, and to deploy them in small units (project groups) to carry out the work; Thus, an important use of liaison mechanisms to encourage- mutual adjustment which is the main coordination mechanism. Innovation means breaking with established routines.

The innovative organization cannot therefore rely on any form of standardization to coordinate its activities. In other words, it must avoid all the pitfalls of the bureaucratic structure, including the high division of labor, the marked differentiation between units, the highly formalized behavior and the intensive use of planning and control systems.

The structure of Adhocracies must be flexible, organic, self-renewing. Toffler (1970) notes that "they are currently changing their internal structure with a frequency - and sometimes with a brutality - that makes parties dance. Titles change from week to week. The positions are transformed. Responsibilities change hands. Large organizational structures are dismantled, reassembled in new forms, and re-arranged. Departments and divisions appear in one day and disappear the next" (p. 128). This is why the basic element of membership is the support functions since they are easily scalable given the need for ongoing projects.

## **E.2 Design parameters: Behavior formalization, Link mechanisms, workstation specialization, Grouping in units**

As Chandler and Sayles (1971) note, these organizations do not have the advantages of those that do repetitive work. "The organization cannot classify its activities into well-differentiated categories like those used by consultants... Too much behavioral responsibility can lead to excessive rigidity" (p.201).

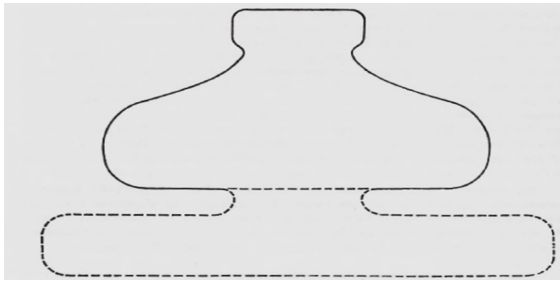
This is why at the level of the adhocracy, one finds oneself with a horizontal specialization of workstations with small units throughout the structure allowing it to respond to the variety of missions it will face; it is what implies the need for a little formalization of behavior and that missions will be treated by function and by market to target the characteristics in each of the missions.

The same applies to the liaison mechanisms that are crucial for the ongoing coordination between the various support functions. Of all the structural configurations, Adhocracy is the one that least respects the classical principles of management, and especially unity of command. The regulated flow system does not matter much either. In this structure, information and decision-making processes circulate in a flexible and informal way, where they need to do so to promote innovation.

### E.3 Contingency factors

Innovations are made in environments that are difficult (complex, dynamic) to understand; This requires a young, organic form of structure that relies on the application of sophisticated technical expertise. Adhocracy must recruit experts, professionals whose knowledge and skills have been highly developed in training programs and empower them. But, unlike what happens in the Professional Bureaucracy, Adhocracy cannot rely on the standardized qualifications of these experts to ensure the coordination of its activities, under penalty of achieving standardization and not Innovation. Rather, it must treat existing skills and knowledge as mere foundations on which to build new ones.

### E.4 Schematic of the adhocracy structure



*Figure 10: Mintzberg, adhocracy structure, organizational structure and dynamics, 1985*

## **Section II.3: Abstract Chapter 2**

So what can we conclude from this section dedicated to the development of the five Mintzberg structural configurations according to a set of criteria that we considered important to help us make our choice of structure; a configuration that will ensure us the proper context for continuous mediation and that we allow ourselves to qualify as a mediation structure for information purposes. A mediation structure that will allow us to correlate several specialized work units and that each of its units is autonomous in its operation but while adjusting to the others according to the need. An organic mediation structure characterized by the absence of standardization which will allow it to be flexible and cushion the complex environment of continuity between the different types of mediation.

It is for that reason, that we will choose for the continuation of the thesis the organizational structure in adhocracy which main coordination mechanism is mutual adjustment and having a horizontal specialization of work supported by liaison mechanisms throughout the structure. The grouping into units is certainly in function and by market but in our case of study we will consider the market as a mediation project requiring different types of mediation in a complex and dynamic environment.

**CHAPTER III**  
**«MEDIATION CONTINUUM»**

### **Section III.1: Miscibility of an adhocratic structure with a “mediation continuum” approach**

Before continuing to justify the choice of the organizational structure in adhocracy for a continuous mediation approach we prefer to start by admitting its weak points, declared by Mintzberg, and then present its advantages in order to deduce the balance in favor of the context of the continuity between mediation practices by adhocracy.

**At the level of the weak points highlighted by Mintzberg, we find the reactions of individuals who have to live with the structural ambiguities of Adhocracy:**

- Knowing that the project they are working on is coming to an end causes frustration for the members of the organization;
- Employees do not feel they really know who their supervisor is
- Individuals who have been transferred to the organization several times during the course of the contracts may feel hatred towards the organization of which they are temporarily a part;
- Confusion is common because positions are not clearly defined in the organization, authority relationships are unclear, and lines of communication are flexible and unorganized;
- The personal development of individuals is random and unplanned

**Second, the propensity of this structure to inappropriately transform itself into other structures** given its instability. Indeed, the adhocratic structure adapts over time to generate a stable structure.

**Finally, Problems of Efficiency.** No structure is better suited than Adhocracy to solving complex and poorly structured problems. None can compete with it for sophisticated innovation but the cost of that innovation is high. Adhocracy is not an efficient structure.

Indeed, the root of Adhocracy's inefficiency is the high cost of communications. (Knight; 1976, p. 126). In these structures, people talk a lot: this is how they combine their knowledge to develop new ideas. But this takes time, a lot of time. When there is a decision to be made in a mechanistic bureaucracy, someone from above gives an order and that is it. But this is not

the way things happen in Adhocracy: everyone is involved, project managers, function managers, liaison officers and specialists of all kinds, in a long process.

When the decision finally emerges, which is in itself a feat, it is later modified. All this is the cost of finding a creative solution to a complex and ill-defined problem.

**Another source of inefficiency in Adhocracy comes from the irregularity of the workflow,** as noted above. It is almost impossible to keep staff continuously busy: “the work required to solve an unfamiliar problem is not well planned and there are therefore alternating periods of intense activity and periods of unproductive waiting” (Goodman and Goodman, 1976, p. 495). In January, the specialists play bridge because they have nothing to do, in March they work overtime without hope of finishing the project on time.

**Faced with its weaknesses in terms of efficiency, inevitable changes in form and structural ambiguity; Adhocracy remains the corresponding structure for solving complex problems for sophisticated innovation through its context favorable to: coordination - the double vision of long and short term - a dynamic and iterative process - its internal and external contingencies - its continuous value creation. Characteristics that we will develop here below and that represents the required context for continuity between the different types of mediation.**

### **A. Coordination and Innovation**

As Goodman and Goodman (1976) found in the case of a theatre company, the precise definition of roles inhibits innovation. "Coordination can no longer be planned but must come from interactions" (pp. 494-495). This represents the heart of a mediation approach with the aim of mobilizing the actors within the framework of accompanying a mediation mission.

None of the structures discussed in section II.1 is capable of sophisticated innovations. The simple structure can certainly innovate but in a relatively basic way. Mechanical and Professional Bureaucracies are structures designed to perfect standard programs, not to invent new ones. And even if the divisional Structure solves the problem of strategic rigidity, it is not designed for innovation either, especially because it is focused on the control by standardization of results.

The sophisticated innovation that would advance an effective mediation context requires a structural configuration that would make it possible to merge the work of experts belonging to various disciplines into groups of projects constituted according to needs. To borrow from Alvin Toffler (1970) the term he popularized in "The Shock of the Future, it is Adhocracy".

**So why adhocracy is the suitable structure for a continuous mediation; because mediation in its different forms requires communication, information sharing, the development of new skills, new knowledge through combinations of those that exist, to transform individuals and their relationship to the world.** So, rather than allowing the specialization of experts and the differentiation between functional units to dominate its functioning, Adhocracy will allow conventional barriers to be broken down and different parties will be able to join forces in multidisciplinary teams each created for a specific project or innovation.

Going further, how will the multidisciplinary teams in general and in mediation in particular resolve the problem of « uprooting the professional and maintaining his links with the field of his expertise » (Chandler and Sayles, p.15)? The solution is that adhocracy will allow the grouping by functional units to achieve innovation by project.

Also, how will the coordination be achieved inside and between these projects by groups? As we have seen in the general presentation of structural configurations, the use of standardization as the main coordination mechanism is impossible; the same is true for direct supervision because of the complexity of the work: best coordination must be done by those who have the knowledge. That's why the mutual adjustment, as the main coordination mechanism in adhocracy, is the answer to this difficulty; And of course, the focus on mutual adjustment in Adhocracy goes hand in hand with the massive use of design parameters that encourage it and that are: all liaison mechanisms - integrating frameworks - liaison positions are created to coordinate work within project groups and between groups.

In addition, most managers in adhocracy do not have a managerial role in the usual sense of the term: they do not give guidelines and do not have exclusivity in the allocation of resources. Instead, they devote much of their time to liaison activities, they carry out lateral coordination between the different teams and between these

teams and the functional units. This corresponds to the ultimate mission of a mediator in his missions.

Finally, adhocracy is decentralized thus allowing a more egalitarian distribution of power among all parts of the organization a constellation of work linked by informal communication which is one more pillar in the sense of internal democracy of the organization. Knowing that in mediation no one is allowed to monopolize the decision same as in adhocracy no one is allowed to monopolize the innovation.

## **B. Long term, short term vision**

Through the two typologies of adhocracy, operational and administrative, Mintzberg has correlated the capacity for innovation of adhocracy with its long- and short-term vision and in which we are interested as a catalyst for the continuous mediation.

### **B.1 Operational Adhocracy**

Operational Adhocracy innovates and solves problems directly for its customers. Its multidisciplinary teams of experts often work on a contractual basis, such as in consulting firms and advertising design agencies.

Faced with a problem posed by a client, a request for mediation for the management of a conflict, the Operational Adhocracy commits itself to a creative effort to find a new solution, a divergent reflection in order to innovate. **Such in continuous mediation, it is the divergent thinking that will ensure representativeness and support for the stakeholders, allowing the mediator to put forward the positions of the various stakeholders.**

Because Operational Adhocracy seeks to innovate, its specialists must interact informally in organically structured groups; coordination resulting directly from the standardization of qualifications. **As in continuous mediation in general, in a conflict management or relationship building in particular, we do not seek to highlight the standard quality of services for problem solving, but rather to adapt the organizational structure to support the actors or help them to lead change.**

An essential feature of Operational Adhocracy is that administrative and operational activities tend to be confused in a single effort: within a project, work planning and design are difficult to distinguish from execution.



Line managers and members of support units who form a typically large group of highly trained individuals in this structure can sit alongside operational specialists in project groups. Even when the distinction is made between the two, close relationships must develop between the operational and administrative levels, sometimes to the point that they are able to exchange roles freely. **This is also the case in the context of a continuous mediation between the team that communicated or created contact with the mediation requesters and the support team during the mediation process; the trust obtained by the first team towards the stakeholders will simplify communication during the mediation process and the expert insight of the second team will allow a structured approach in inter-stakeholder cohesion. Thus, the operational adhocracy will allow a short-term vision within the framework of a project-based mediation mission.**

## **B.2 Administrative Adhocracy**

The second major type of Adhocracy also works with project groups, but with a different objective. Instead of undertaking projects to serve its clients and entangling administrative and operational activities such as Operational Adhocracy, Administrative Adhocracy undertakes its projects to serve itself, and separates distinctly its administrative component from its operational center. The latter is separated from the rest of the organization so that the remaining administrative component can be structured as an Adhocracy. This approach can be done in many ways.

First, the operational center may be established as a separate entity, when the organization particularly needs to innovate (to improve its services in the market or to increase its number of mediation projects for example). Therefore, the separation of the operational center allows the main administrative component of the organization to remain organically structured with a view to innovation. **Such as required in continuous mediation to pursue homogeneity and ensuring a continuum among the different mediation practices within the organization.**

Second, the operational center can be completely eliminated, and its activities outsourced to other organizations, leaving the organization free to focus on development work. NASA did this in the 1960s, for example, when its focus was on the Apollo program, whose singular goal was to send an American to the moon before

1970. NASA has done most of the development work itself but subcontracts production to independent industrial companies. The two functions, quite simply, required very different organizational structures (Chandler and Sayles 1971:180).

Thus, a variant is obtained when the development work is subcontracted. One organization becomes the innovative antenna for another or a group of others. In this case, the Administrative and Operational Adhocracies join, because the organization that carries out the development is an Operational Adhocracy that works more for its clients than for itself.

The important conclusion that can be drawn from the above confrontation to justify our choice of the organizational structure in adhocracy to guide a mediation process is that:

First, in both types of Adhocracies, the relationships between the operational center and the administrative component are very different from what they are in the other configurations. In both cases there is little need for line managers to exercise close direct supervision over the operators. Instead, managers become full members of the project groups where they work, with a special responsibility for coordination. But in this capacity, they act more as peers than as superiors, and their influence comes more from their expertise and interpersonal relations capacities than from their position; **it is this framework of homogeneity, of complicity that is needed for the success of a continuous mediation process.**

Then, the Operational Adhocracy of experts in its support functions. There is no clear difference between the support functions and the other parts of the organization; experts are not placed on the margins, to intervene only if asked, as in bureaucratic configurations. **Rather, experts work together with line managers, form the central pool of talent and expertise from which the organization draws staff to assign to its projects, which is critical to the success of a continuous mediation process.**

Also, as Adhocracy does not rely on standardization to coordinate its activities, it needs little technostucture to develop regulatory systems. The Administrative Adhocracy uses analysts to adapt to the external environment, specialists in marketing research or economic forecasting for example. As we will see, it also makes some use

of action planning, although this is a fairly general form of planning. But these analysts are less there to develop systems to control other people than to sit alongside line managers and support staff in project groups. **Therefore, the administrative component of an Adhocracy appears as an organic mass of line managers and functional experts working together on ad hoc projects on the basis of constantly changing relationships; it is this dynamic coordination that is crucial for the success of multiple mediation missions, meaning continuous mediation functioning in parallel.**

## **C. A dynamic and iterative process**

### **C.1 A dynamic process**

In the professional bureaucracy, according to Mintzberg's vision, the formulation of strategy is essentially controlled by the professional associations located outside the structure, secondarily by the professionals of the operational center themselves, and finally by the administrative component. In fact, the process goes from bottom to top and from outside to inside. Then in all the other structural configurations presented in section II.1 of the thesis, the process proceeds clearly from top to bottom, and it is controlled from the top.

In sharp contrast, control over the strategy formulation process in Adhocracy is not clearly localized, either at the strategic summit or elsewhere. It is in fact more accurate to conceive of it as a strategy formation process: strategy is less consciously formulated by individuals than implicitly formed by the decisions they make, one at a time. Thus, the distinction between the formulation and implementation of strategy, one of the pillars of the Bureaucracy Mechanist loses its meaning in Adhocracy.

Indeed, in the organizational structure in adhocracy, the central objective of the organization being to innovate, the results of its efforts can never be predetermined: the organization can therefore not specify in advance a strategy, a coherence in the flow of its decisions. Second, because any process that separates conceptualization from action inhibits the organization's flexibility and ability to respond creatively to its uncertain environment. The use of action planning is therefore necessarily limited.

Consider the case of Operational Adhocracy, a mediation project, a structure that is never quite sure what it will do afterwards. Everything depends on the projects that

will come, and this in turn depends in part on the quality of what it does on ongoing projects. So, the strategy never really stabilizes, it changes all the time as projects change. To express it in a different way, when the strategy stabilizes, the structure ceases to be Adhocratic. A stable strategy means that the organization has determined which steps it will serve, how it will serve them, i.e. the cases it will treat and the standard programs it will use. It has in fact restructured itself like a bureaucracy, mechanistic if it focuses on a single program, professional if it remains open to a few. Now, if the strategy continuously evolves according to the projects carried out, as is the case in continuous mediation, it follows logically that the formation of the strategy is controlled by all those who decide which projects will be undertaken and how they will be carried out. And, in Operational Adhocracy, this includes line managers, functional specialists and operators: in other words, potentially everyone in the organization through various project groups and standing committees has a chance to influence the strategy that is formed.

### **C.2: Iterative process**

Operational Adhocracy is selectively decentralized, both vertically and horizontally. The decision-making power is widely distributed, in the most complicated forms, to managers and non-managers at all levels of the hierarchy.

Similar conclusions are reached in the case of Administrative Adhocracy, although the strategy development process is somewhat clearer. The Administrative Adhocracy tends to focus its attention on a smaller number of projects that involve larger staff and can last for years so its strategic vision is broader in time.

Moreover, as it undertakes projects for itself and not for a number of external clients, Administrative Adhocracy tends to have more concentrated operations in terms of products or markets. It follows from these characteristics that the efforts of the various specialists must be more carefully structured than in Operational Adhocracy. Consequently, the Administrative Adhocracy of a continuous mediation structure can take the form of a system of constellations of works; according to the line of value creation (destroying links, creating links) that it projects and thus the position of each of them depends on the types of functional decisions that it has to take afterwards.

The need to structure the efforts of specialists also suggests the use of action planning. The problem with such planning, however, is that while the purposes and goals of the

organization may be clearly defined, the means to achieve them are not: they must be developed as they occur, through trial and error. **That is largely the case in a multi-stakeholder mediation mission; what has been successful in the face of certain types of issues, certain types of stakeholders, does not mean that it will succeed in another combination.** There can therefore only be general planning, which defines the broad and flexible guidelines within which constellations can make their specific decisions. Here too, once again, strategies are only developed through the accumulation of specific decisions that determine project management.

This is how planning becomes a dynamic and iterative process. Inevitably, this disperses authority since there is no small group of experts, high-level planners who define strategy (Chandler and Sayler; 1971, p.7) but in return this dynamic and iterative process, which could be the weak link in the adhocracy, is rather the strong link in the mediation process steered by a structure in adhocracy. **Indeed, mediation in a multi-stakeholder context requires decisions that are adapted and synchronized to the context throughout the mediation process; in other words, an iterative process while retaining the characteristic of dynamism in order to adapt to the situations created by or around the stakeholders.**

#### **D. Internal and external contingency factors**

we will currently determine the contingency factors of a structure according to Mintzberg's reading by developing them in order to highlight their correspondences with mediation.

##### **D.1 Internal Contingency Factors**

- **Power (senior managers, mediators)**

Power itself is not a major condition of Adhocracy but all the characteristics of Adhocracy are very important for today's projects: the emphasis on expertise, the organic character of the structure, the existence of project groups, the decentralization of power without concentration anywhere in the organization, the matrix structure, the automated and sophisticated systems, the complex and dynamic environments.

It is the structure adapted to a population which is becoming increasingly educated and more specialized, and which is constantly urged to adopt a systematic approach; to see the world as an integrated whole and not as a

collection of parts weakly verses. It is the right structure for environments that are becoming more complex and demanding in terms of innovation, and for technical systems that are becoming more sophisticated and highly automated. **It is a structure that allows organizations to become more democratic and less bureaucratic which is the infallible context for sharing information and expertise, in a continuous mediation structure, without abuse of power.**

As has already been argued in section II.1, Adhocracy is an organic structure, i.e. characterized by the absence of standardization as well as flexibility, tolerance of ambiguity and consequently working relations are constantly redefined, which is the same for the holding of power by experts. (*Mintzberg, power in organizations*)

Thus, senior managers in Adhocracy must have skills of persuasion, negotiation, coalition and everything that can lead to bringing individuals together in multidisciplinary teams functioning smoothly. This is why senior managers must devote a large part of their time to project management, which is a necessary condition for team innovation work.

Also, the most important role of the general management in the Adhocracy is to liaise with the external environment to ensure a regular and balanced influx of projects and thus develop and negotiate contracts with potential clients.

We can conclude our discussion of power as a contingency factor by noting that external control, the power needs of the organization's members, are elements that all have a significant influence on the organization, and that sometimes encourage organizations to adopt structures that are inappropriate in relation to the requirements of other contingency factors (size, technical system and environment)

#### ▪ **Age and size (Youth of the Organization)**

According to Mintzberg, the more rigid an organization becomes, the more formalized its behavior becomes. An aging organization tends, all other things being equal, to repeat its work, and thus become more predictable and easier to formalize.

Adhocracy is often a young organization; because it is the form whose structure is the least stable. It is difficult to maintain a structure in this state for long, to prevent behavior from becoming formal, to ensure a regular flow of truly innovative projects. All kinds of forces push the Adhocracy to become bureaucratized as it ages.

It can therefore be concluded that the adhocratic structure tends to be associated with the youth of the organization and the early stages of the development of a structure.

Operational Adhocracy tends to have a short life. First, because it operates in a risky market: a downturn in the economy or the loss of a major contract can literally sweep it away from one day to the next. But, if some Operational Adhocracies have a short life because they fail, others have a short life because they succeed. Success and maturation encourage a metamorphosis of Operational Adhocracy, and lead it towards a more stable framework of existence and a more bureaucratic structure. The Operational Adhocracy is thus attracted towards the structure of Professional Bureaucracy it concentrates on some programs, sometimes even towards the Mechanical Bureaucracy if it localizes itself on only one program or only one invention. Also, the larger the size of the organization, the more behaviors are repeated; consequently, it becomes easier to predict them; and the organization is therefore more likely to formalize them.

**In mediation, the working group at the stakeholders' meeting has a lifespan equivalent to reaching an agreement between the stakeholders. Therefore, while it has a limited lifespan, depending on the time it takes to reach an agreement between the stakeholders, the structure does not change with age. Indeed, the working procedures can be enriched following the return of the stakeholders but the functioning of the organization (basic elements and flow system) should remain the same at the level of the administrative adhocracy as a guarantee of confidence, of reliability towards the stakeholders external to the mediation structure.**

- **Technical system (Regulation and Sophistication)**

Technology is an essential factor in the design of organizational structures. Mintzberg has defined the technical system in two dimensions: regulation and sophistication.

Regulation is the dimension of the technical system that represents the influence of this system on the work of the operators, the degree of control and regulation that the instruments exert on those who use them. When there is little regulation, the operator determines his own pace, his own procedures and generally controls his own work; the instrument is almost an appendix to the operator.

Sophistication, In the case of very strong regulation, if mechanization is very advanced for example, the operator has almost no room for maneuver.

**However, in a process of mediation between stakeholders, uncertainty reigns with regard to the interactions, the process or the outcome of the coordination between the actors. Therefore, the mediator should have the freedom of action throughout the process to ensure his mediation mission. That is why, in our case, we will favor the technical system in its regulatory dimension.**

## **D.2 External contingency factors (environment)**

The complex and dynamic environment has a profound impact on the structure and according to Mintzberg this environment can be analyzed according to four indicators which are: stability, complexity, market diversity and hostility.

- **Stability**

The stability of an organization's environment can range from the most stable to the most dynamic depending on factors such as instability, unpredictable economic events or high uncertainty regarding coordination between actors in a participatory approach. Noting that a dynamic environment makes the organization's work uncertain and unpredictable.



- **Complexity**

An organization's environment can range from the simplest to the most complex depending on the intermediate dimension that is the intelligibility of the work to be done. It becomes simpler if the knowledge required can be rationalized, broken down into understandable elements (Heyde-brand and Noell, 1973).

- **Market diversity**

An organization can have markets that range from the most integrated to the most diversified without forgetting the diversity of work. Market diversity can come from the variety of customers; or from the diversity of products or services; or from the diversity of regions. In the case of mediation, we can add the diversity of typologies of actors in the case of a project based on a participatory approach.

- **Hostility**

Finally, an organization's environment can range from the most welcoming to the most hostile. Hostility is influenced by competition, by the organization's relationships with unions, governments, and other groups outside the organization, as well as by the availability of necessary resources. **In a participatory approach, this hostility can be interpreted at the level of the stakeholders in the approach, either internal or external stakeholders. Hostility at the level of internal stakeholders will depend on the subject of the conflict, especially if this subject is combined with social injustice towards one of the typologies of stakeholders; while hostility at the level of external stakeholders can be analyzed by the latter's point of view towards an ongoing mediation subject that affects them but for which they have not been asked to participate, which is caused by the lack of representativeness of the actors. By emphasizing that a hostile environment is generally dynamic.**

So, the Adhocracy is located in an environment that is both complex and dynamic which requires a decentralized organic structure.

Indeed, innovation work, because it is unpredictable, is associated with a dynamic environment and the fact that innovation must be sophisticated means that it is difficult to understand so it corresponds to a complex environment. In fact, Toffler (1970) focuses on these two characteristics in his discussion of Adhocracy "when change is accelerated, new problems emerge and traditional forms of organization prove inadequate and it is the combined demand for more information at greater speed that is currently undermining the great hierarchies so typical of bureaucracy" (p. 135, 139).

Toffler suggests that the characteristics of the environment dictate the parameters of the structure and in all cases, Adhocracies are found everywhere where complexity and dynamism reign as in the case of projects in multidisciplinary teams organically structured to create new skills and knowledge.

**Therefore, adhocratic structure with its combined characteristics: long-short term vision, dynamic-iterative process, internal-external contingency factors permits to respond to the requirements of a “continuum mediation”; as it will enable the correlation of multiple types of mediations forms at different levels based on the mission necessities to advance; and where it is encouraged to selectively decentralize power to "work constellations" (Mintzberg, dynamic structure and organizations) in order to respond to stakeholders needs all along the communication process either upfront, during or post the mediation approach.**

**However, an adhocratic structure can't be sufficient by itself in the framework of a mediation mission in general, an intermediary structure in particular.**

**As in our vision of a dynamic “continuum mediation” we are keen to go beyond the simple organization of multiple mediation types at the same time; rather we elucidate the continuity between the different mediation types in a catalyser point of view (upfront a mediation approach), during a mediation mission and post a mediation approach (as the solution to one mission can lead to another mission).**

**That's why for the success of an adhocratic structure to a “continuum mediation” we pursue the miscibility factors with two other elements: Trust, Orchestra-man.**

## **E. Trust Factor**

In mediation, trust is an important factor in the mediator at a first phase and in the other stakeholders at a second phase in order to ensure a prosperous communication environment.

### **E.1: Forms and source of trust**

Zucker (1986) distinguishes three different types of trust<sup>28</sup> ( based on the person, relational, institutional) that can complement each other. Whatever its nature, trust remains an essential support for social relations.

Whether it is “based on the person” type, involving intangible assets held by a person, or the act of faith granted to him by his family or close friends, "relational" based on exchanges with colleagues or friends, or "institutional" based on a formal structure such as a company or a public body, trust is often approached as a mode of coordination between autonomous entities, which makes it a basis for successful cooperation and an essential support for social relations.

On the market, confidence is established thanks to the fixing of the fair price which reflects the real value of the good. This makes fraud irrelevant and establishes fair competition between contractors. But this idyllic conception is far removed from reality, because of the asymmetry of information, the risk of agreement between competitors, or the low transparency on prices. This is why it is necessary to preserve trust through institutional arrangements (insurance contracts, special clauses in the contract, etc.).

Moreover, trust is not necessarily innate but built. In the context of relational trust, it can be developed in stages through a process of mutual learning. In a first stage, it is built according to the degree of trust, first of all with partners of the first rank whose collaborative ability is already proven. In a second stage, it extends to second-tier partners whose loyalty has not yet been proven. At this level, the establishment of institutional trust based on neutral and independent consultative bodies is beneficial for confidence-building.

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<sup>28</sup> Zucker, L. (1986), «Production of trust : institutional sources of economic structure :1840- 1920», Research in Organization Behavior, Vol.8, pp 53-111.

Also, another source of trust, in the hierarchical organization, trust is built by the procedures put in place to control managers actions in order to reassure shareholders. However, these procedures do not necessarily prove to be a guarantee of effectiveness because they focus on evaluating the form and not the substance of the moral commitment. This favors the emergence of selfish behaviors in the "principal-agent" relationship, which makes individual interest prevail over collective interest.

As a result, stakeholders move towards a reliable, effective organizational structure convenient to our context of "continuum mediation".

## **E.2 Returns of trust**

If we revert back to the organizational structure characteristics, section III.1 in the current thesis, Mintzberg implicitly established a context of trust between stakeholders by establishing a list of structural configurations in different forms. These structural configurations represent the construction of a list of key elements (*basic elements, flow system, design parameters*) confronted with contingency factors (*age and size, technical system, environment, power*) to ensure the effectiveness of the design of organizations and its adaptability to contingency factors. This adaptability put forward by the organizational structure in adhocracy, an organic structure characterized by the absence of standardization, its flexibility and its tolerance to ambiguity.

So even if trust does not eliminate the risk of opportunism and only reduces it, it does provide major advantages, which Huault (2002) summarizes mainly by reducing the uncertainty associated with all transactions and by promoting a long-term vision. This reduces the risk of opportunism and treason, with the prospect of immediate gains. In the same logic, Wacheux (1994) presents trust as a key vector for a successful and effective alliance. In particular, it encourages stakeholder involvement, respect for the partner's interests and independence, and joint decision-making.

On the other hand, trust, generated by the multiplication of inter-individual relationships at various levels, seems to reduce the risk of opportunism inherent in the unique relationship. These long-term relationships can provide additional protection against opportunism. They promote the establishment of mutual learning processes

based on voluntary compliance with common rules, as well as on implicit commitments respected over time by stakeholders. The result is more reliable behavior, credibility of skills, confirmation of the goodwill of various stakeholders and security of their positive attitude in the event of unforeseen turbulence.

Therefore, the trust and reciprocity between stakeholders will allow a beneficial exchange of information for all parties. This generates a dynamic interdependence between stakeholders. A prosperous context to a dynamic “continuum mediation” approach: upfront, during and post a mediation approach.

## **F. Orchestra-man**

In the practice of mediation, there will be interview techniques, which can be inspired by Anglo-Saxon methods and that have proved their worth: "win-win" interest-based negotiation, or motivational interviewing, because let us not forget mediation is first and foremost a posture. The mediator guarantees the framework and freedom of expression of individuals; in other words, the mediator is an essential element in the trust necessary for successful mediation.

### **F.1 Role of the orchestra-man: informal authority**

**According to Mintzberg, integrators (integrating executives) are essential as a liaison mechanism,** when the "amount" of mutual adjustment that the organization has been able to obtain, through the use of liaison positions, project groups and standing committees, is insufficient, the organization can create integrating executive positions, that is, liaison positions that have formal authority.

The formal authority of integrating managers still includes elements of decision-making processes that affect other departments, but by definition does not extend to the overall formal authority over any unit.

**Therefore, the informal authority of the orchestra-man identifies him in the role of an integrator, a mediator but with a strategic role of orchestrating the mediation approach between multi-mediation forms and multi-stakeholders.**

## **F.2 Characteristics of the orchestra-man**

The work of the integrator is not easy, especially because it is about influencing people over whom it has no formal authority. Galbraith (1973, pp. 94-99) shows us the means available to achieve this objective:

- First "the integrator has contacts", he has the ear of the general management and is at the crossroads of several information flows... he exercises an influence which is based on access to information
- Then, "the integrator creates trust" because he has knowledge as well as an overall orientation that does not identify with the different chapels.
- Third, "the integrator manages the decision-making process", it is not he who decides... he must be able to listen to a proposal made from the marketing point of view and understand what it means from the engineer's point of view. In this way he manages to achieve coordination without eliminating the differences - in languages, attitudes - that are necessary for each unit to be effective.
- Fourth, in the decision-making domain, the integrator is an incarnation of power based on expertise, knowledge and information. It must act in a way that facilitates the flow of information and the resolution of problems.

It is difficult to find individuals who are able to do this kind of work, however, some personality traits have been identified that are associated with success in such types of positions: a high need for affiliation, and an ability to endure being between conflicting groups and being accepted by each without being absorbed by any of them.

**So, the integrator in Galbraith, Mintzberg perception corresponds to a mediator in our approach but with a strategic hat. A strategic mediator not in terms of objective rather in the fact of orchestrating the process to follow (mediation types to use, what time, for whom and why) enabling the multi-stakeholders to reach an autonomous decision in a dynamic context: upfront, during and post mediation approach**

## **Section III.2: Research questions**

Our main question in this research was how can the mediator operate in a new “common epistemic space” in the social sciences as putted forward by Olivier de Sardan in 2008; within a framework that Battistoni described as a “mediation continuum” in 2012, a “continuum” introduced by Lalonde, Bernard et al., Leflanhec et al., Chini in 2001 to express all mediations.

The weak conceptualization of “mediation continuum” and the lack of this transdisciplinary knowledge justifies our problem and that we have declined around three research questions.

### **A. Research question 1: an adhocratic configuration to a “mediation continuum”**

Our challenge in this case study is not to dissect each of the mediation practices but our objective is to determine if an adhocratic structure contributes to the continuity between the different mediation practices in a mediation process.

So as a first step, I have inventoried seventeen mediation practices applied nowadays (family, social, asset, consumer, professional, corporate, Ombudsman, socio-religious, transcultural, cultural, intercultural, transnational, environmental, educational, scientific, territorial, environmental knowledge) and which I have structured based upon five elucidated Mediation criteria's: Context, Objective, Linking, Process and Duration.

This initial phase was followed by the enquiry upon which configuration (particular arrangement of a group of related things) can permit the correlation between the identified mediation practices enabling the intended “continuum mediation” which led me to the exploration of Mintzberg structural organisations out of which I have chosen the adhocratic structure as the configuration that can enable the correlation between the different types of mediation practices, that can enable the “continuum mediation”.

Therefore, our first research question in the context of this thesis is: To what extent does an adhocratic configuration contribute to a “mediation continuum”?

## **B. Research question 2: Trust factor to a “mediation continuum”**

In our abductive research approach, we found that the success of the adhocratic organizational structure is an important element in our study but could not be the only element to ensure the mission of the structure.

This is why we have pursued our main questioning around the adhocratic structure to a continuous mediation by the importance of the Trust factor under its different forms.

Trust is not a fixed state or attitude over time, whatever the form of trust or the source of its acquisition. So, within the framework of a mediation mission that extends over time, we have explored Zucker three forms of trust: based on the person, relational and institutional. Three forms of trust that will emerge, at the level of each of the stakeholders, as and when they occur and in no precise order. Thus, trust in its three forms is considered to be a driving force in mediation in general and in the continuous mediation approach in particular. An important role for a perennial mediation process.

Hence our second research question is: To what extent does the trust factor promote a “mediation continuum”?

## **C. Research question 3: Orchestra-man to a “mediation continuum”**

To permit a “continuum mediation” after having identified two main pillars: Adhocratic configuration, Forms of trust; I have pursued the questioning around the pilot-man orchestrating the continuity between the different mediation practices. Thus, this pilot man, this man-orchestra, this mediator plays the role of project manager, architect, guarantor of the unity. These are crucial attributes to ensure a dynamic context of trust throughout the process of lasting mediation.

Hence our third and final research question on our problem: To what extent is the presence of an orchestra-man is decisive for a “mediation continuum”?

## **Section III.3: Abstract Chapter**

In the context of this thesis, we identify our problem with the formalization of a "mediation continuum" through our cumulative three research questions: An adhocratic structure as a configuration; orchestrated by an integrator, a pilot-man while abiding Trust in its three forms in order to permit a constructive continuity between the different mediation practices.



**SECOND PART**

**CONSTRUCTION OF THE CASE STUDY**

**FRAMEWORK OF THE RESEARCH PROJECT**

# **CHAPITRE IV**

## **RESEARCH ARCHITECTURE**

To answer our problem, we define in Chapter IV our methodology and the architecture of our research. In a first section, we present our epistemological positioning and our objectives. In a second section, we present our method of data collection, processing and analysis, and then present the methodological limitations of the research.

### **Section IV.1: Positioning and objective of the research**

Management sciences present a multitude of paradigms. This can be attributed to their youth. For Thiétart (2003), this plurality, which may be a symptom of a crisis of meaning, must be mobilized by researchers as an opportunity to clarify their epistemological positions, their approaches and the aims of their research. In addition, management sciences are subject to a double obligation: the obligation to produce actionable knowledge and instrumental and functional knowledge on the one hand, and to produce conceptual knowledge that enriches theoretical knowledge on the other. The validity of functional knowledge is strongly conditioned by the confrontation between practice and theory, whereas the new theoretical knowledge generated relates to theoretical confrontation and, therefore, encourages "dialogue" (Thiétart, 2003).

David (2001) conditions the attainment of this double finality by the necessity to admit the possible coexistence of two epistemological visions divergent by their nature: the constructivist vision and the positivist vision. To achieve this dual goal, two other levels of cleavage must be overcome. One lies between inductive and deductive approaches. A recursive loop in an abductive approach (abduction-induction-deduction) favors its overtaking. The other relates to the competing and antinomic characters of the different search methods. The integration of different approaches into the same conceptual scheme promotes its overcoming.

Without acceptance of this dual purpose and its consequences in terms of the "duality" of epistemological positioning, the researcher finds himself chained by philosophical considerations that are difficult to overcome. Marchesnay (2004, p.56) translates this crystallizing dilemma for research work in management sciences « *en économie comme en gestion, le problème est donc crucial, car il conduit à ce que deux conceptions de la recherche s'opposent. La première voudrait que la théorie soit neutre de toutes considérations normatives, que les prescriptions découlent, dirait Kant, de l'exercice de*

*l'endettement propre à chaque individu, à la recherche de l'expression de la Raison Pure. La seconde conception suppose que les pratiques sociales, en perpétuelle évolution, soient le fondement de la recherche menée dans ces (nos) disciplines. Bref, nous voilà ramenés aux questions épistémologiques (...) entre la vision d'un Monde harmonieux, rationnel, à découvrir et celle d'un monde chaotique, complexe, à interpréter ».*

## **A. Epistemological positioning**

Although our research project is subject to the requirements of developing organized action plans, this is not its primary objective. Beyond the design of the action mechanisms, the main objective of this project is to participate in theoretical reflection on these mechanisms, their emergence, as well as on the logic of the actors who mobilize them. Therefore, our research project adopts "interpretationism" or "moderate constructivism" as epistemological positioning. This epistemological orientation corresponds to our own convictions regarding the value, status and modalities of knowledge production, as well as the nature of the knowledge produced. Our research project is, therefore, oriented towards this purpose.

### **A.1 Nature of the knowledge produced**

In positivism, knowledge is objective and non-contextual. Knowledge is considered an external reality governed by mechanisms and conditioned by universal laws (Thiéart, 2003). Thus, the work of seeking knowledge consists in targeting facts by reducing phenomena to their simple elements, in seeking the fundamental laws that govern the targeted reality and in understanding the causal links around it. This approach then leads to the formulation of robust hypotheses whose validity will be "tested" (Usunier et al., 1993).

For constructivism, reality does not exist. It is only the fruit of representations of the experience of reality that can be modelled in models deduced from our experiences of the world. Thus, knowledge is necessarily constructed and the truth around it results from the adequacy between models already established and this same experience (David, 2001).

The work of seeking knowledge then consists in understanding the meaning of the phenomenon that occurs, observing all situations and developing by induction models based on data and ideas (Usunier et al., 1993).

Between these two extreme epistemological positions, the interpretativist posture, which we adopt, presents itself as a middle way. Interpretationism apprehends reality through the hypothesis of relativism. Although this hypothesis is also mobilized by constructivism, there is divergence in the meaning given to it. For constructivism, it is the non-existence of reality, whereas for interpretativism, it is the impossibility of reaching the meaning of reality (Thiétart, 2003). Thus, the research work on knowledge does not aim to construct the meaning of reality (constructivism), but to understand the meaning that the actors give it, to interpret it in space and time and to identify the different possible explanations (Thiétart, 2003).

Our objective is not then to reveal an objective reality (positivism), nor to build it (constructivism). We seek to interpret the actions and logics of actions, according to the facts observed in our research, but also through the perceptions revealed by the heard speeches.

We are aware of the subjectivity inherent in our epistemological positioning. It is consequential to the subjectivity of the speeches and facts analyzed, as well as to our subjectivity as researcher, observer and interpreter. We will adopt this epistemological positioning in the production of knowledge and value of knowledge.

## **A.2 Knowledge production modalities**

Interpreters adopt posture close to that of constructivists where the "intentionality" hypothesis replaces the positivist principle of subject-object independence. As a result, the world can be made of a multitude of possibilities. However, subject-object interdependence is mainly linked to the motivations of the actors and less to the purpose of their actions (Thiétart, 2003).

Consequently, interdependence is accepted in so far as it makes it possible to analyze and understand the motivations of the actors, beyond the purposes of their actions.

Interpretativism does not seek to understand how reality is constructed by actors, as argued by constructivism. Rather, it is about understanding actors' interpretations through their behaviors (Thiétart, 2003). We are then aware of the subjective character of our approach given our interdependence with our research object, which influences our approaches, our modes of reasoning, our postulates, as well as our interpretations. However, our objective is not to identify universal laws or to construct a representation in relation to a given purpose. Rather, we seek to give meaning to the

phenomenon under study, while admitting that other researchers may formulate other readings as relevant as our own.

### **A.3 Status and value of knowledge**

Interpretativism, pathways of induction and deduction are relativized. Priority is given to the effort of understanding and empathy that pushes actors to reveal their experiences (Thiétart, 2003). The validity of knowledge is determined by the effort to interpret phenomena modulated by their context and singularities. Therefore, it is the specificity of each science that is decisive and not the criteria of a universal, timeless and immutable scientificity that does not exist (Thiétart, 2003).

Consequently, it is our ability to translate the phenomena studied in their temporal and spatial context, as well as the relevance of our conception of the approach, that determine the value of our proposals. Therefore, the objective of our research is to propose a mediation approach and then to analyze as faithfully as possible the interaction logics of the actors through this approach. In this perspective, we respect the requirements imposed by our positioning as a researcher, from the presentation of our research object and throughout our work.

## **B. Choice of the object of study and formulation of the research problem**

### **B.1. Choice of the subject of study**

The issue or central question targeted by the research is the subject of the research. The knowledge project backed by the researcher is the objective to be achieved (Thiétart, 2003). The initial question aims to describe and understand a phenomenon, to interpret it correctly, and to bring to light observable events or processes that allow its "understanding" (Quivy and Van Campenhoudt, 1995).

The object of research is required to respect a multitude of scientific requirements in order to constitute a coherent guideline for the research project (Quivy and Van Campenhoudt, 1995). The purpose of the research must be clear, precise, concise and unambiguous; this allows the researcher's intentions to be accurately reflected and protected against multiple interpretations. Moreover, it must be feasible with achievable goals and precise ways of achieving them. To correspond to the purposes

of science, the research object must meet fundamental requirements in terms of relevance, namely description and explanation (prescription).

The research object must also link and integrate, in its formulation, theoretical, methodological and/or empirical concepts (Thiétart,2003). There are a multitude of ways to construct the research object (Thiétart,2003). The insufficiency and/or contradiction between existing theoretical concepts, or the application of existing theoretical models to new contexts or phenomena, may constitute a starting point for constructing the research object. The adoption of new methodologies, approaches and tools to study phenomena or to analyze the limits of what already exists and propose recommendations for renewal can also constitute starting points. In the context of action research, the analysis of a problem-concept is also a possible starting point for constructing the object of research.

However, and independently of the chosen construction path, the research object is essentially formulated by a question that allows the researcher to discover, interpret or construct reality (Thiétart, 2003). It translates the researcher's project, respecting his epistemological positioning and the aims of his research. Therefore, and in respect of our epistemological positioning, our research project aims to understand a phenomenon through the understanding of the motivations and logics of actors' actions and the meanings they attach to them.

Our research object is constructed in an active and passive observation logic, given that our problem is a catalyzed action then consequent to the observation of the phenomenon. Although the choice of theme (Continuum mediation through an “adhocratic configuration”) and research field (the Sino-French association A.C.E.S.F: Association de la Communication Educative Sino-Française) is defined a priori, it is the documentation and literature review phase that allows us to clearly define our problem and the various research questions.

## **B.2. Formulation of the research problem**

Beyond the interest of strategic steering through a mediation approach as a research theme and the A.C.E.S.F association as a structure as a research field, our research work focuses on the combination of these two factors and, as such, our research object is composite.

After the identification of the multitude of forms and approaches of mediation, the first question is the following: how to integrate the characteristic of continuity between the mediation practices? This question is complex and the answers can be considered under three main phases: upstream of the meeting; the meeting; downstream of the meeting. We make the choice of the approach by paying our attention to the points of view of actors involved in projects piloted by an organizational structure the A.C.E.S.F. How do they perceive it? How do they describe it? How do they justify it? Thus, the central question which constitutes our problem and to which we devote our research, and for which we seek to bring proposals of answers, is the following: **How to catalyze a constructive continuity between the different mediation practices?**

We then formulate three research questions:

- **To what extent does an organizational structure in adhocracy promote a “mediation continuum”?**
- **In what measures is the presence of a man-orchestra determining for a “mediation continuum”?**
- **To what extent does trust ensures a “mediation continuum”?**

To answer these questions, we structure our analysis around the attributes of the organizational structure in general, then around the attributes required in the construction of the organizational structure in adhocracy to allow continuity in the mediation process. Then, we question ourselves on the forms of trust and finally we are interested in the attributes of the man-orchestra and his characteristics for a “mediation continuum”.

It is therefore a question of studying the contribution of these three objects of study to a durable mediation approach. We pay our attention to the perception of the actors involved along the mediation process, to their interest in it, to their understanding of the functioning of the association, to the trust that gives it and to the reactions (negative or positive) that it generates, as well as to their perceptions on conflict resolution along the mediation process between the different stakeholders.



## **C. Objectives and research design**

The aim of the research design is to articulate the reasoning and to progressively direct the reflection towards the answers to the questions formulated. This makes it possible to propose robust and convincing answers to the research problem. The research design is based on a framework of elements ensuring the articulation of the constituent stages of the research project: the definition of the problem, the presentation of the data, the analysis of the data and the presentation of the results (Thiétart, 2003). The validity and reliability of the overall research and the results obtained depend on the quality and consistency of the design of the research.

We adopt a processual research strategy, and adopt as research design, the unique holistic case study. This design is adapted to our epistemological positioning, our research approach and our field. It is refined according to the research, as far as possible and when necessary, in order to answer in the most coherent way possible three main questions: what to study, for what purpose and how to study it. This routing allows us to meet the objectives of our research.

We are interested in the context, content and process of the phenomenon studied, to respect the needs of description and understanding. We therefore favor hybrid exploration, which simultaneously uses empirical facts as well as theoretical works dealing indirectly or directly with our research subject. We also pay our attention to the complexity of the studied phenomenon, thanks to a mastery of the mobilized theoretical framework. This ensures the relevance of interpretation and generalization.

### **C.1 A process research strategy: A unique holistic case study**

Yin (2003) identifies four types of case studies single holistic case (type 1) single embedded case (type 2) multiple holistic case (type 3) multiple embedded case (type 4). As part of this work, we are particularly interested in the type 1 case study. The unique holistic case study (type 1) which is a particular type of case study that focuses on a single case and has a holistic design, a single unit of analysis (Yin, 2003).

But dynamic and complex phenomena, such as learning or organizational change, are neither linear nor singular and extend over time and space. Furthermore, organizational processes are strongly interwoven in the contexts in which they occur

(Musca, 2006). As a result, they trigger multiple beams of causality (Pettigrew, 1990). Qualitative process-oriented research is well suited to understand them because it allows theoretical understandings to be extracted from the mass of confused data in the real context (Langley, 1999) and complex organizational processes to be reported in a detailed manner (Musca, 2006).

The unique holistic case study is well suited to an abductive research approach (Koenig, 1993), where the comparison of data and micro-events allows the progressive construction of theoretical knowledge rooted in reality, which will be generalizable analytically and not statistically (Yin, 2003).

This research design also adapts to mixed research, both content and process, through the combination of a variance methodology and a process methodology of the same complex phenomenon (Musca, 2006).

Although our research is long-term, given that we have studied the Sino-French association A.C.E.S.F and the evolution of its partners since 2012, we cannot present our research as longitudinal. A longitudinal study is generally punctuated by three phases of investigation: an exploratory phase, which will be completed by an intensive investigation phase, followed by a control phase (Charreire Petit, 2003), a scheme that we have not followed. Although the first phase of research, initially conducted in 2012, allowed us to get to know the field, which facilitated the choice of analysis units afterwards, we have analyzed at posteriori the interviews conducted with the association's partners, using the various markers defined for this research. Furthermore, we did not conduct a control phase.

## **C.2 Process and Content: purpose of understanding and description**

In Management science, there is a distinction between process research and content research. Process research involves studying the characteristics, behavior and evolution over time of the process, which equates it to research in terms of flows (Thiétart, 2003). The researcher then seeks to describe, explain or predict the evolution of one or more variables. It is either to study the profile of evolution over time intervals, by measuring duration, periodicity, as well as the pattern of evolution; or to study the profile of all the variables composing the process, by paying attention to their sequence in time, as well as to the regularity of their behaviors.

Content research involves exploring the composition of the object under study (Thiétart, 2003). It is a question of studying a given phenomenon without taking into account the time factor and the transformations in time undergone by the object of research. As a result, content research may have either a descriptive or an explanatory purpose. Descriptive research is based on an exploratory approach with the objective of describing and understanding either the object as a whole or all of its components, paying attention to the interdependencies and interactions that constitute it. The explanatory approach is based on a deductive approach in order to find causal links between variables that have an explanatory aim and other variables that are explained.

These two approaches complement each other, although they are different. They can be combined to address a phenomenon as a whole when necessary and possible. Thiétart (2003) emphasizes this complementarity by noting that content cannot be studied without addressing its structure over time, and the process cannot be approached without having an idea of its content. Consequently, explanatory and descriptive approaches cannot be completely dissociated, and priority must be given to the dynamics of the phenomenon studied as well as to the time factor. As a result, we have chosen to approach our research with a joint focus on content and process.

Indeed, the mediation process driven by an organizational structure in adhocracy around three phases is a dynamic subject that is part of an evolution over time and therefore, the time factor is an important variable. It is a question of looking at the temporal context of the launch of the mediation process (upstream), the meeting between the actors (meeting), and its implications for the short, medium and long term (downstream of the meeting). Also, it is a question of looking at the perceptions of the actors, as well as the dynamics of change and its content at a given moment. This content/process orientation inscribes our research towards a second mode of reasoning: the hybrid path of exploration.

### **C.3 Research approach**

Like complementarity between research on process and content, the construction of knowledge can be carried out in two complementary, though different, ways (David, 2004). The first path is the deductive path which aims to test and demonstrate a theoretical element in the reality of the field. The second path is the path of theoretical, empirical or also hybrid exploration and is often associated with inductive reasoning and sometimes also with abductive reasoning.

The deductive reasoning considers that the formulation of hypotheses occupies a central place in the process of knowledge production, and the quality of the hypotheses formulated conditions the quality of the conclusions drawn. In the formal deduction, the objective of the approach is to confirm or refute the hypotheses formulated, without necessarily highlighting new facts. This is pure logical reasoning, where the conclusions are a logical translation of the original proposals (Thiétart, 2003). In the constructive inference, priority is given to the new contribution of the conclusion to the assumptions made at the outset. Beyond pure logic, it is a question of combining the effort of reasoning, making it possible to link between conclusions and premises, with the effort of demonstrations leading to conclusions referring to the content of hypotheses (Thiétart, 2003).

While deduction is a demonstration question, induction is based on observation and observation. David (2004) considers that induction is a reasoning that ensures the transition from effects to causes, from facts to laws, from the individual to the general, and from consequences to principles.

Moreover, the multidimensionality of the subjects treated, their diversity, and the plurality of paradigms make the hypothetico-deductive approach, traditionally favored in management sciences, poorly adapted and favor other approaches where several paths of reasoning coexist, such as abduction.

The abductive approach makes it possible to continually adjust the problem to the field. It is not only a question of starting from theories to predict, explain and/or test within the framework of conceptualization and a Hypothetico-deductive approach. It is not also a question of pure induction whose objective is to conceive a posteriori universal laws or theories, starting from the observation of the ground. Therefore, the abductive approach corresponds well to our research project.

Indeed, we adopt a hybrid exploratory approach involving multiple round trips and permanent crossings between observation and theory, throughout our research begun with the first exploratory phase conducted in 2012. In keeping with abductive logic, this first phase approached from the perspective of the catalyzing factors of educational partnerships allowed us to detect other factors, even the one-man orchestra, confidence and to revise our theoretical framework in function.

This back and forth between the field and theory enables us to achieve our objective, which consists in proposing explanations of phenomena observed in the field thanks to the theories and concepts, in order to give meaning to observations (Charreire-Petit and Durieux, 1999). In addition, we approach our research subject with prior knowledge from various academic works dealing directly or indirectly with our theme, as well as secondary data. Our objective is to observe facts and analyze phenomena in their context and with their particularities, with a view to an interpretation based on theories and knowledge established *a priori*, allowing to characterize them *posteriori*.

Our approach is therefore aberrant given that our objective is above all to understand, explain and conceptualize based on facts observed with a non-predictive but analytical aim. The abductive approach makes it possible to propose a structured interpretation using the theories mobilized. The objective is not to predict or demonstrate. Rather, it is a question of establishing *a posteriori* links between theories and observed facts, in order to formulate relevant generalization proposals. Thus, we structure our work of description, analysis and explanation so as to make possible an interpretation as well as a theoretical generalization in the light of the three phases of the structured mediation approach: upstream, meeting and downstream.

#### **C.4 Objective of the interpretation**

Lessard-Hebert et al (1997, p. 80 ;89) define interpretation as "*the attribution of meaning to reduced and organized data through the formulation of relationships or configurations expressed in proposals or models*", and thus presents itself as a theoretical discussion that focuses on "*key relationships leading,... empirical assertions (...) to general theoretical assertions*".

The ultimate objective of our approach is to propose an interpretation, based on the theoretical framework we have chosen, while respecting our choices in terms of

research design. Our theoretical interpretation support provides us with a global vision, allowing us to integrate individual and collective levels, content and container, formal and informal aspects, or motivations as well as concrete actions that translate it, or even the actions and action logics that relate them.

The approach of, mediation driven by an organizational structure in adhocracy is then mobilized as a theoretical framework and as an analytical framework, to observe a phenomenon without however having a confirmatory aim. It is not a question of making hypotheses that will be invalidated or confirmed, but of defining a grid of reading and theorization that will serve to interpret a phenomenon inscribed in a given space and in a given time, and consequently, strongly linked to experiences, and to a context that we decrypt and work to conceptualize them, using the chosen theoretical framework, without being able to verify their validity on another field. Thus, the ambiguity generated by the adjustments implemented by multiple actors along the three phases of mediation is an important factor.

Our research is therefore conducted within the framework of an abductive hybrid exploratory approach, composed of continuous back and forth between empirical observation and theory, where attention is focused on both process and content. We adopt the unique holistic case study as our research design. In the following section we detail the methodological implementation of our empirical approach.

## **Section IV.2: Data collection, processing and analysis**

The objective of the empirical survey is to make a return on the research problem, while taking into consideration the conditions of data collection and analysis, relative to the specificity of the research object. Consequently, data collection procedures are required to meet a number of scientific requirements (Thietart, 1999).

First of all, it is a question of making a thorough description of the phenomenon under study, thanks to the rich data collected, making it possible to identify the relevant variables. Then, it is a question of encouraging the contextualization of the phenomenon studied, by paying attention to the environment, relationships, interactions and interdependencies. Finally, it is a question of facilitating the comparison by identifying points of divergence and convergence with regard to the object of research.

Thus, responding to our problem leads us to respect three imperatives: to take an interest in the organizational structure of the association studied by the A.C.E.S.F; then to study the perception of the stakeholders of the A.C.E.S.F on questions of membership to the association, the sources of trust associated with this association, their understanding of the functioning of the organization and conflict resolution, and their opinions (strengths, weaknesses) on the association and finally, to retain the investigation tools adapted to collect and process the information sought.

Grawitz (1993) identifies two types of empirical approaches to this investigative work: the quantitative approach and the qualitative approach. The quantitative approach aims to explain a phenomenon by paying attention to the statistical relationships between explanatory variables and variables to be explained. The qualitative approach aims to describe, explain, explore, and/or analyze a phenomenon in its context. These two approaches can study the same phenomenon, but from two different angles. They can, from the same empirical material, generate different or similar understandings, depending on the logics of interpretation.

Thiétart (2003) identifies three types of parameters that differentiate the two types of surveys. The first distinction is made in the nature of the data processed. The latter may be numerical in nature, the purpose of the processing of which is to identify proportions, intervals, etc. They may also be of a non-digital qualitative nature, the treatment of which is intended to explore and explain complex phenomena. A distinction can also be made at the research orientation level, where quantitative data are mobilized to test and qualitative data are mobilized to explore or construct a theory (Miles and Huberman, 2003). Another distinction can also be made in the objective or subjective nature of the results, where the quantitative approach is better suited to the search for objective results, and the qualitative approach is better suited to the search for subjective results, tolerating the researcher's subjectivity and requiring an effort of interpretation. Finally, a distinction can be made on the basis of research flexibility, where qualitative data allow more flexibility to adapt to unexpected events, as opposed to quantitative data.

Although these two approaches can be complementary and can be combined in the same research design, we consider that the qualitative approach is more adapted to our research object and our ambitious objectives: the description, characterization and analysis of the phenomenon studied. We use the qualitative approach as a data collection method because it ensures a better understanding of the complexity of the phenomenon under study. Because of

the importance given to behavior and speech in a given context, the qualitative approach allows a better understanding of complexity (Miles and Huberman, 2003).

### **A. Data collection: constitution of the empirical material**

It is the objective of the research and the epistemological positioning of the researcher that determines the choice, sources and nature of the data. If the epistemological positioning considers that reality is objective, then representations will be considered as data and discoveries. If epistemological positioning approaches reality as subjective, then representations will be considered true or false inventions (Thietart, 2003).

As a result, data formation is presented as a process based on evaluation, selection and choice, involving multiple round trips between practice and theory, and subject to the constraint of coherence between research objectives, purpose and data (Thietart, 2003).

Because of our epistemological positioning, the data in question are necessarily accepted representations of a reality that is difficult to grasp in its entirety. Therefore, they are subjective, because of their source and our subjectivity as researchers. However, to maintain the validity of our empirical material, we mobilize and cross-reference three types of qualitative data: primary data from interviews and participant observation, and secondary data. The former aim to understand the phenomenon in depth with regard to the actors met, and according to the perception of the researcher. The second aims to identify objective elements of the phenomenon and its context (Thietart, 1999). Thus, gaps in primary data are filled by secondary data and vice versa, in terms of flexibility, accessibility, and external and internal validity.

#### **A.1 Secondary data**

This type of data provides several advantages, including good accessibility, low cost, positive impact on external validity or also historical value. Within the framework of our research, we mobilized several secondary data from several sources such as the association's internal documentation (the association's charter, the association's brochures, the association's presentation documents, etc.), or documentation obtained from the Chinese Ministry of Education, or documentation obtained from the French Ministry of Education and finally, documentation obtained from the various partners of the A.C.E.S.F. association.



The crossing and the combination of all these general and specific secondary data, internal and external, make it possible to reconstruct past, present and future actions related to the studied phenomenon. Moreover, it also allows us to have an official reading of the phenomenon studied, making it possible to make comparisons with the perceptions of actors in the field. The mobilization of these data took place before and after the empirical survey.

They allowed us to shed additional or different light on the aspects discussed in the interviews or observed during the observations conducted.

## **A.2 Primary data**

Primary data reinforce the validity and flexibility of the approach by their appropriateness and fidelity to the research object, as well as by their status as truth because they constitute representations delivered in the raw state (Grawitz, 1993). However, they encounter difficulties, particularly in terms of accessibility and the risk of subjectivity of the researcher. The main primary data collection tools used in case studies, intervention research, or also in certain types of surveys are: “participant” or “non-participant observation”; “non-directive”, “semi-directive”, or “directive interviewing”; and the questionnaire constructed mostly with open-ended questions. As part of our research, we mobilize the “semi-directive interview” tool and the “participant observation” tool. This is justified by their compatibility and complementarity with secondary data (Demers, 2003).

### **➤ *Maintenance***

The "interview" tool allows access to data reflecting the representations of interlocutors, on all topics addressed. It allows interviewees to express their opinions, and to answer the researcher's questions, expressed in a more or less directive manner (Blanchet, 1990). This data collection tool is generally used for the analysis of a problem, for the preparation of quantitative surveys, or for placing in context the results obtained thanks to the mobilization of other tools such as the questionnaire or documentary sources. It can also be the main source of information in an empirical survey, or complete a survey.

In our empirical survey, we shifted from the non-directive interview and the directional interview, or also the questionnaire, to the semi-directive interview. This is justified by the composite nature of the phenomenon studied. Because of the theoretical vagueness and incompleteness of the data available around a mediation approach piloted by an organizational structure, we felt that it was not appropriate to use the directive interview or the questionnaire as survey tools. Despite the advantages that these tools provide in terms of neutrality, validity and ease of analysis, they prove to be poorly adapted to multidimensional, complex and poorly dealt with subjects in the literature, as our case. Our approach does not aim to provoke answers, depending on the existing reference worlds, through the internal coherence of the information sought, required by the directive interview or by the questionnaire (Blanchet, 1990). Although we have retained themes that we wish to address and that are derived from secondary data and our theoretical readings, there is no prior choice of discriminating factors (Blanchet, 1990).

Furthermore, the non-directive interviewing technique also seems to be unsuited to our research project, since we do not have the necessary skills to conduct this type of interview and our empirical investigation cannot be satisfied with exploring without orientation towards predefined themes.

We consider that the semi-directive interview carried out in an individual way is best adapted to our research project, because it allows the construction of discourses that relate a concrete or imaginary experience, that have not been fabricated, nor provoked by questioning, despite the fact that they are co-constructed by the interlocutory process (Blanchet, 1990). Our objective is not to judge *a priori* the internal consistency of the data collected, or to retain *a priori* discriminatory elements, but to reveal the logic of actions, their functioning and the principles that regulate them. We aim to identify elements relating to the phenomenon studied, as well as rationalities specific to the actors, differentiable *aposteriori* (Blanchet, 1990).

Moreover, the principle of semi-directiveness seems to be the most suitable for our research because it is a good compromise between the possibility of identifying new themes and the definition of themes *a priori*.

The semi-directive interview helps to obtain a global description of the phenomenon studied and to develop predefined or emerging themes during the interview. This technique makes it possible to collect the data sought with precision, where each interview constitutes an opportunity favoring the emergence or the relativization of new themes, which will be recorded in the interview guide. Thus, through the interview, the researcher can appreciate the different themes at their fair value.

In addition to the factors mentioned above, the face-to-face interview imposed by the individual interview compensates for potential ambiguities in the interview guide, by making it possible to avoid semantic biases, which generate misunderstandings capable of tainting the validity of the results. Thus, thanks to face-to-face contact, the researcher can provide the necessary insights so that all respondents can have a similar understanding of the terms used and the themes addressed. Also, thanks to the empathic attitude that the researcher is obliged to adopt, the interview favors the discernment of aspects, beyond speeches. These aspects may refer the researcher to analytical elements concerning the phenomenon being studied (Baumard et al., 1999).

Thus, the semi-directive individual interview is retained as our main data collection tool, because of its ability to look back. It allows us to collect past, present and future data related to our research purpose. Therefore, our perspective is interpretative and not only functionalist, because our objective is to base ourselves on the discourses of the actors involved and their representations of the phenomenon studied (Demers, 2003). Like any organizational phenomenon, the people we meet may perceive our object of study in different ways.

- **The interview guide**

The interview guide is used to guide the interview, in order to address all the themes predefined by the researcher. Its degree of formalization depends on the multidimensionality or not of the object of study, the use of the survey (complementary, main or exploratory), and the type of analysis to be conducted (Miles and Huberman, 2003). Whatever the use of the survey, the structure of

the interview guide must be consistent. This structuring will be strong when maintenance is a primary source, and less dense when it is exploratory maintenance (Miles and Huberman, 2003).

In addition, the interview guide is constructed on the basis of theoretical readings and secondary data. As part of our abductive approach, we have enriched our interview guide as our understanding of the phenomenon has progressed.

The construction of the interview guide must take precautions, especially with regard to the choice of themes and the wording of questions (Demers, 2003). It must respect the conditions of spontaneity and simplicity that encourage exchanges. We have therefore built our interview guide in compliance with this requirement, where we have reflected our research problems and our questions, while integrating formal considerations, in order to guarantee the accuracy and richness of the data collected.

The final version of our interview guide consists of four parts. The first part is introductory, where we present our research subject, as well as the objectives of the empirical survey conducted and the usefulness of the information that the interviewee can provide us. We also formulate details on the use of maintenance and possible follow-up that could occur.

The second part of the interview guide includes questions of identity in terms of profile of the entity, seniority within the partnership, the accession process with a view to creating individual identity cards for the interviewees. This detailed description of the interviewee's profile allows us to focus the interview on his position within the partnership, in order to explore his points of interest.

The third part is the body of the interview guide. The questions are formulated in an open manner around the reasons for its membership in the association; the sources of trust against the association; their understanding of how the association works as well as their knowledge about ways of resolving conflicts; and finally, the views of stakeholders about the strengths and weaknesses of the organization. The purpose of formulating open-ended questions is to encourage the interviewee to express himself spontaneously and freely,

addressing the different points of each topic in the order and in the terms he finds appropriate. Our intervention in the course of the interview is limited to the introduction of reminders, aiming to return to points considered as weakly developed by the interlocutor.

Although we adopted only one version of the interview guide for all types of actors, we made adaptations when conducting the interviews. The diversity of respondent's profiles led us to adapt elements as the interview progressed: although all interviewees addressed all of the questions, some were more or less in-depth, depending on the interviewee's profile.

➤ ***Participating or active observation***

Since 2012, the support of the members of the ACESF association has enabled us to observe the different forms of communication around the association, whether in France or China. We attended several professional days organized by the ACESF, around the integration concerns of Chinese students within the host university in France. We also attended meetings, seminars and events dealing with the challenges of partnerships between public universities in France and China to structure the passage of students and accompany them throughout their passage to their host university. During these events, we had the opportunity to hear several testimonials and feedback. In addition, we had the occasion to accompany, as a participating observer, ACESF key person, REN Shulei, during several meetings he led with potential actors during the inter-entity meetings organized by the ACESF.

The data collected thanks to the notes taken during these various active observations and the documents provided or consulted, made it possible to enrich our understanding of our research object, and to deepen the data collected within the framework of the interviews

Moreover, and beyond the definition of the data collection techniques used, the coherence of the research design also requires great rigor in the constitution of the sample.

### **A.3 Sample selection**

It is necessary to approach the sample issue from a qualitative and quantitative perspective (Thietart, 1999). In qualitative terms, it is a question of identifying the interlocutors to be included in the sample, according to the roles and characteristics of each category of actors. This is required to reinforce the accuracy of the data collected in relation to the reality of the phenomenon under study. In quantitative terms, this involves identifying the interviewees, paying attention to the representativeness of all the actors concerned in the sample, and pointing out the limits of the population. This consists in collecting a sufficient number of representations concerning the phenomenon studied. Moreover, it is the reliability of the quantitative and qualitative representativeness of the interlocutors concerned by the phenomenon under study that will condition the reliability of the answers given to the various questions. At this level, Thietart (1999) proposes to define the contours of representativeness, according to the informant status of the different interlocutors in the different populations and sub-populations, capable of providing different information with diversified status.

Faced with these scientific imperatives, the researcher may encounter obstacles in terms of accessibility to the targeted empirical ground, where he is obliged to make compromises. Should qualitative representativeness be favored by selecting a sample that is well representative but limited in terms of number? or quantitative representativeness, by enlarging the sample size, at the risk of seeing certain profiles over- or under-represented?

To overcome this dilemma and identify qualitatively and quantitatively the sufficient sample size capable of giving sufficient confidence to the results obtained, Thietart (1999) points to two major principles: the principle of replication and the principle of saturation. The principle of replication relates to the extent of the differences observed and the degree of certainty targeted. The saturation principle considers that the optimal sample size is justified by its ability to achieve the theoretical degree of saturation.

#### **➤ *Replication principle***

This principle aims to determine the quantitative sample size, based on the degree of confidence sought and the extent of discrepancies to be distinguished and similarities to be confirmed. Respondents in the sample are selected on the

basis of either literal or theoretical replication. Literal replication aims to confirm similarities; theoretical replication aims to highlight discrepancies.

Given that the phenomenon we are studying has a transversal character, we have chosen to include three main categories of actors in the sample: potential actors, on the one hand, current actors, on the other hand and finally confirmed actors. In each category, a criterion relating to integration within the circle of partners is retained, with a view to identifying new subcategories. For feasibility reasons, we focus on the players in France and China. This allows us to refine the representativeness of the sample and, consequently, the richness and validity of the collected data.

Beyond the diversity of territories, we were interested in different profiles. At the level of the identity of the actor, we were interested in the nature of the entity under study; a university, an educational association, a language center, a government entity, etc.

The identification of similar profiles of the entities, evolving on different territories and in structures of different complexity (size, age, mission...), made it possible to determine a critical sample size, taking into consideration the proportional representativeness of the different actors. This allowed us to respond as faithfully as possible to the conditions of theoretical and literal replication, and thus to the reality of the status of the different entities along the mediation process in three phases.

In order to increase the relevance of the approach, it is useful to focus our attention on the principle of saturation, which helps the researcher to draw the boundaries of research.

➤ ***The saturation principle***

While the replication principle aims to determine the number of respondents needed, the researcher is interested in the optimal sample size justification, through the saturation principle. This involves judging the sample's ability to reach theoretical saturation. This situation is considered to be reached when the addition of a new respondent will not be a source of new data, capable of further enriching the understanding of the phenomenon studied and the theory. This optimal size is judged to be reached as interviews and surveys progress, and

cannot be predefined in advance. It is then a finalization stage occurring at the end of the investigation process.

Depending on the constraints of access to the field and the methodological rules defined in our research design, we estimated *a posterioriori* that to develop a sufficiently clear vision of the phenomenon studied, the minimum number of interviews required would be thirty. Despite the fact that this empirical material remains quantitatively limited compared to the population concerned, we considered it to be significantly sufficient, given the importance and volume of the primary data collected, as well as the external and internal secondary data mobilized. In the case of our research, our objective is to provide an empirical basis for analytical, explanatory and descriptive purposes. We therefore considered that our goal is achieved as soon as we have succeeded in identifying all the problems related to the phenomenon studied.

Consequently, our sample seemed sufficient to us, not only because it allowed us to take into consideration all the categories and factors identified and to represent them, but also because of the possibilities of access to the studied field.

Our sample was built gradually. In a first step, we established a list of existing actors/partner entities in the ACESF association's contact circle. This list has evolved several times, depending on the positive, negative, or non-return of the various interlocutors. In a second step, we contacted the various targeted entities/persons to make appointments for interviews.

Our solicitations generated thirty interviews with the directors of the selected entities, as well as with the director and the team of the structure ACESF.

Throughout the investigation, we ensured the confidentiality of the data and the protection of anonymity, where the recordings of the interviews are destroyed after their transcriptions.

As we have already noted, the data from the interviews are our main source. Data from other data collection methods, even participant observation and secondary data, enriched the data from the interviews, in order to better respond to the complexity of our research object. In the data processing phase, which we present in the following section, this structuring between the "main data" and the "additional data" was respected.



#### **A.4 The specificity of access to the field in the context of the unique holistic case study**

The unique holistic case study aims to understand and explain organizational processes in their context, often complex.

##### **➤ *The researcher's relationship with the field at the time of data collection***

The epistemological positioning of the researcher points his position towards the field (Hlady-Rispal, 2000), where the positivist researcher tends to keep a distance from the field, unlike the constructivist researcher, co-constructor of reality with the actors, who tends to approach strongly his field. Thus, epistemological realism (Koenig, 1993) is decisive in research design.

With respect to our epistemological positioning, interpretationism or moderate constructivism, the researcher's objective is to propose constructs elaborated on the basis of detailed observations of the terrain, which can be discussed and amended, without seeking to formulate theories of general scope. These constructs are likely to explain aspects of the problem (Musca, 2006).

For the collection of data within the framework of a single holistic case design, the researcher mobilizes ingenious combinations of methodological devices, chosen according to the objective of the study and the nature of the planned analyses, and not by a specific data collection method (Charreire Petit, 2003). This is justified by the fact that process data are complex and multiform (Van de Ven and Pool, 1995).

Generally, the data collection tools used in this type of design are non-directive interviewing, semi-directive interviewing, direct observation in meetings or also in informal situations, which will be transcribed in the research journal. Various documents (internal notes, reports, minutes of meetings, etc.) can also be used as secondary sources (Musca, 2006).

To collect this data, the researcher must try to meet all the people concerned by the problem and occupying various hierarchical levels and positions, while questioning the periodicity of meetings at the level of the analysis units as well as at the level of the overall case, without losing sight of the question of the feasibility of the study (Musca, 2006).

Given the specificity of our research object, where we distinguish several typologies of actors, and in order to avoid shifts between the different postures and data

collection tools, we voluntarily mobilized the same data collection modality, the “semi-directive” interview, at the level of the different actors, on the different territories, and in the different “typologies” of actors.

Given the complexity of the long-term mediation process, this tool seemed to us to be the most suitable in order to collect the most explanatory and richest possible data on our research object. At the same time, we made several non-participating observations, with a view to supplementing, confirming or invalidating the data collected by means of interviews.

## **B. The processing and analysis of data**

Strauss and Corbin (1994) and Miles and Huberman (2003) describe several data processing methods, such as interview or meeting summary sheets or coding. Musca (2006) notes that different methods can be combined for processing data from a single holistic case study, such as monographs and coding. For our study, we use these two methods: monographs and coding.

The monograph consists of presenting the data collected at the unit and overall case level in a narrative form, where the researcher synthesizes the observed situation and its evolution over time. The monographs bring out basic elements that facilitate comparison, reveal points of convergence and divergence between the units observed, and inspire patterns of interpretation, even the first elements of theoretical generalization (Forgues and Vandangeon-Derumez, 1999).

Coding is a data processing process, which consists of first defining the processing unit (word, sentence, theme, etc.), then ordering the collected data according to the processing unit, and then systematically comparing them in order to generate interpretations. Within the framework of a moderate, even abductive inductive approach, the conceptual and theoretical reading grid points to data collection (Mbengue and Vandangeon-Derumez, 1999). The coding process results in continuous back and forth between identified data, literature and new data.

At the level of data analysis, Miles and Huberman (2003) distinguish three types of activities conducted in a qualitative approach: "data condensation"; "data presentation"; also “development and verification of conclusions”.

To succeed in these three activities, Boutigny (2005) proposes two phases of work: the phase of coding, segmentation and organization of data, with a view to their decontextualization; the phase of categorization of data with a view to their recontextualization.

It is then a work of identifying themes, developing hypotheses from the collected data, and clarifying the link between the themes, data and hypotheses developed (Boutigny, 2005). As part of our work, we have included the different types of data collected in these two phases.

At the primary and secondary data processing level, the distinction between the collection, analysis and coding stages is clearly possible. But at the level of the processing of the data resulting from the observation (participant), the cross-checking of the data is ambiguous, which does not make it possible to guarantee a great validity. As a result, data triangulation poses difficulties in terms of internal validity during the treatment phases (Drucker-Godard et al., 1999).

Therefore, we chose to focus the data processing on the primary data collected during the interviews, to ensure the consistency of the whole. We started with coding and data analysis. Secondary and observational data were then integrated to enrich the analysis in the final analysis report or theoretical conceptualization. This choice is justified in light of our research aimed at interpretation and not direct verification.

## **B.1 Condensing Data**

### **➤ *Interview processing***

Analysis of qualitative or quantitative techniques can be used for content analysis of semi-directive interviews (Thietart, 1999). Qualitative techniques can be used to understand, describe and explain. They aim to break down the discourse of the actors encountered in order to identify the dimensions of the phenomenon studied and to analyze them according to research needs. Quantitative techniques aim to survey frequencies by systematically counting categories, themes, words or units of analysis, with a view to verifying, validating and confirming the hypotheses issued.

Although quantitative and qualitative techniques are complementary, for our research we chose the qualitative technique for two reasons. On the one hand, the diversity of profiles in our sample makes qualitative content analysis better suited to the use of the empirical data collected and to our objective of describing, understanding and characterizing. On the other hand, the qualitative technique is consistent with our data

collection tool, the semi-directive interview based on an interview guide built *a priori* although evolving. Beyond these two reasons, qualitative analysis seems more appropriate when cross-checked with other data sources, or even primary data from observation and secondary data from the documents used (Demers, 2003).

The processing of the qualitative data collected followed the following process: coding followed by data analysis. Coding consists in structuring the collected data in order to constitute an analyzable empirical corpus. The aim is to structure speeches in such a way as to enable the researcher to find representations of the phenomenon under study (Allard-Poesi, 2003). In this corpus, the researcher is supposed to find convergent or divergent, but coherent answers.

Following coding, the data analysis stage aims to establish links and inferences between the content of the interviewee's speech and the subject of the research, in two ways that can be mobilized either jointly or exclusively (Allard-Poesi et al., 2007). The first modality consists in inferring the meanings of the discourse, based on a detailed analysis of the words of their association and their occurrence (analysis of lexical content combinable with a lexical coding technique). The second modality consists in analyzing the thematic content of representations, with the objective of identifying rules for organizing words, themes or sentences, identifying common characteristics in relation to the research object (analysis of the thematic content combinable with a thematic coding technique) (Allard-Poesi et al., 2007).

Given the specificity of the phenomenon studied, our research objectives and the design chosen, the thematic coding technique combined with a thematic content analysis seems to us better suited than the lexical coding technique combined with a lexical content analysis.

At the results analysis level, we chose not to use data processing software, and we carried out a classic analysis where we conducted vertical (by interview) and horizontal (by theme) analyses. We sought to understand the process under study, to explain its mechanisms and to describe it, based on a thematic analysis, which classifies the representations communicated in the interviewees' speeches. Consequently, we subjected all interviews to a vertical analysis (by interview) according to a thematic grid based on the interview guide, and enriched by the hindsight and progress of coding. Then, this vertical analysis grid was completed by a

horizontal analysis grid (by theme), in order to identify elements of divergence or concordance between the speeches of the different interviewees.

Finally, we conducted an overall horizontal synthesis analysis which is presented as a conclusion at the end of each part.

### ➤ *Vertical Analysis*

The objective of vertical analysis is to identify in the interviewees' speeches the different categories of analysis established *a priori*, mainly thanks to the interview guide. This is an essential step in refining and enriching the analysis categories, and will subsequently guide the horizontal analysis. To do this, the researcher must analyze each interview separately, in order to identify the representations of the actors interviewed in relation to the predefined themes, and possibly identify new ones.

After an in-depth reading of each interview, the vertical thematic analysis continues with a second re-reading. The objective is to perceive the richness of the discourse in relation to the different themes addressed. The third stage of this analysis consists in writing a report covering the main elements emerging from the interviewee's speech, the answers given to the various questions as well as the shortcomings of the interview.

Subsequently, coding work is conducted using the interview guide built on the basis of theoretical readings and secondary data found. In addition, the coding work is evolving by being enriched with categories and themes *a posteriori*, following the emergence of new data during the realization of new interviews.

The analysis process consists of breaking down the speeches and integrating them into the established vertical thematic analysis grid. The latter is required to comply with coding rules which consist, in a first step, in identifying categories and themes in relation to the research problem, then in dividing the discourse into units of analysis; then in integrating parts of the discourse within the different categories (Allard-Poesi, 2003).

- ***Identification of themes, sub-themes and categories of analysis***

Allard-Poesi (2003) identified two main methods of categorization with respect to the research strategy adopted. These are the *a priori* method and the *a posteriori* method, which are two extreme methods between which intermediate methods are interposed, defined according to four

dimensions: (1) the deductive or inductive logics that underlie the research; (2) the verificationist or generative objectives of the research; (3) the constructivist or interpretativist character of the analysis; (4) the subjective or objective character of the construction modes of the categories.

Our research approach being abductive, it is therefore at the intersection of these different dimensions, and the categories are elaborated *a priori* and *aposteriori*. We begin by drawing on theoretical readings and secondary data collected to understand the phenomenon under study. Subsequently, empirical data deepen, enrich and verify this deductive understanding. Although the categories are defined *a priori*, they are revised *aposteriori* based on the empirical results obtained.

Since we have chosen the technique of thematic analysis, the final grid must include the units of meaning corresponding to the themes addressed. We therefore used our interview guide to define our analytical categories, respecting the same thematic logic.

As a result, all the themes in the interview guide are considered analytical categories, which we have enriched based on the empirical data collected. These different categories will be articulated as follows and the complete interview guide is in appendix:

Theme 1: Organizational structure in adhocracy

Theme 2: Trust

Theme 3: Man-Orchestra

### ➤ ***Horizontal analysis***

With vertical analysis, each interview will favor the progressive consolidation of the understanding of the phenomenon studied, thanks to the highlighting in the interviewees' speeches of the analysis themes that the researcher has defined *a priori* (Rouleau, 2003), but also by bringing out new themes that will enrich the analysis grid. The final consolidation of all the themes, defined *a priori* and *aposteriori*, allows

the construction of a horizontal analysis grid, resulting from the progressive evolution of the reflection and understanding of the studied phenomenon. Its main objective is to promote the emergence of a consolidated empirical material based on individual interview data. In this perspective, each discourse is analyzed in relation to the other discourses, through the consolidation of empirical qualitative data.

Rouleau (2003) defines two types of strategies for horizontal analysis: the strategy of crossing stories and the strategy of summing stories. The first strategy is appropriate for a population that has experienced an identical phenomenon. The second strategy is suitable for a heterogeneous population, where the researcher will try to find a consistency for interpretation according to the identified theme. In the case of our research, our population is heterogeneous but has also experienced the same phenomenon. Consequently, the two strategies are mobilized jointly. We worked through the horizontal analysis which adopts a comparative purpose, to identify the points of divergence or convergence, conducting a comparison between the different interviews and at the same time drawing a global understanding.

Thus, after identifying the elements of divergence and convergence, the specific elements emerging in the discourses, in relation to the different meta-themes, themes and sub-themes identified through vertical analysis, we highlight their dissimilarity or corroboration. At this level, the summation strategy favors the deepening and enrichment of certain themes, thanks to the precision and exhaustiveness of certain interviews. Also, the strategy of crossing allows the reinforcement of the understanding of the phenomenon studied.

At the level of data processing, we respected the three phases, both iterative and intermittent, proposed by Miles and Huberman (2003). After having condensed the collected data, thanks to an effort of selection, simplification and abstraction, in order to elaborate usable results from raw data, we present them after having crossed the primary data collected during the interviews with the rest of the data, in order to carry out a coherent restitution of the whole of the data. Then, we identify causalities, regularities and explanations, through the elaboration of data, with the objective of authorizing interpretation and conceptualization.

## **B.2 Horizontal data presentation and consolidation**

The consolidation and reporting stage are considered very important in qualitative analysis. Miles and Huberman (2003: p.29) describe data presentation as an organized assembly of information that allows conclusions to be drawn and action to be taken. They then propose a multitude of qualitative data presentations that can be combined according to the needs of the study, such as graphs, tables, diagrams or matrices. However, these formats are not restrictive and the researcher can draw inspiration from them or also create his own formats (Musca, 2006).

Within the framework of a single holistic case study, the sharing made it possible to confirm the division made, but sometimes made necessary the evolution of certain meta-themes, for three reasons: to maintain the coherence of the coding, to structure the empirical material in a more relevant way, and to facilitate the identification of divergences and convergences in speeches. This evolution has led us to refine our analysis grids.

## **B.3 Development and verification of analyses: identification of points of divergence and convergence**

The objective of this stage is to identify the different representations held by the actors concerning the phenomenon under study, through the search for divergences and convergences. It is then a question of explaining the divergences and convergences observed, according to elements of context identified in the speeches, or also from other secondary and/or primary data.

Moreover, this exercise makes it possible to identify singular elements in each interview that are difficult to compare with others. To explain them, we rely on our theoretical readings, on secondary data, but also on contextual data. These particularities, whether they are individual or contextual elements, reinforce the reliability of the data. This confrontation between the various interviews made it possible to highlight particular elements and generic elements related to the same phenomenon studied, but relating to varied experiences.

The elaboration of the conclusions resulting from a processual study comprising several units follows a do-it-yourself process, mobilizing a multitude of formats and device retained according to the objectives of the study and not according to a



particular technique (Charreire Petit, 2003). Thus, matrices are well adapted to systematic comparisons and facilitate the understanding of the evolution of phenomena; unit monographs make it possible to summarize a multitude of information; the drafting of the overall case facilitates the establishment of a clear and well-structured overall vision, where the insertion of verbatim and diagrams provides the reader with raw and living data enabling him to build his own understanding of the case (Musca, 2006). Taking into account the progress of the three phases, within the framework of a unique holistic design, allows the researcher to simultaneously analyze the units as well as their reciprocal interactions. This can help to formulate recommendations around certain phenomena that are difficult to understand with a holistic design (Musca, 2006).

The great difficulty of procedural studies lies in the need to transcend the mass of interwoven and multiform data, towards a form of theoretical generalization potentially useful to others (Langley, 1999).

To succeed in this exercise of theoretical generalization, Miles and Huberman (2003) propose tactics for interpreting data that are particularly useful in our unique holistic case: grouping them into patterns by attributing meaning to them; calculating the frequency of their appearance (themes, words, etc.); and making contrasts and comparisons.

As part of our data interpretation work, we have chosen to group the collected data into patterns, at the level of each theme and sub-theme, each time relating them by parts of the interviewees' speeches translating them.

We have also produced and mapped contrasts and comparisons, and we have focused our attention on the frequencies of occurrence of themes and sub-themes, drawing on convergences and differences of opinion around each theme and sub-theme.

This analysis enriched our reflections and enabled us to propose a first interpretation of the phenomenon studied, as well as its context and its components. This allowed the elaboration of a detailed report, combining the horizontal analysis grids relating to the interviews conducted, and which we present in the following chapter.

However, the methodological limitations of our research, which we develop in the next section, should be presented first.

### **Section IV.3: Methodological limitations of the research**

All research must respect scientific criteria according to the epistemological positioning of the researcher, his discipline and the purpose of his research. Marchesnay (2004) identifies two categories of criteria: validity criteria and reliability criteria. The validity criteria question the scientific conformity of the design, as well as the external and internal validity of the results. Reliability criteria are intended to demonstrate that research results are immutable in all circumstances, regardless of the researcher who conducts them and when they are conducted (Thietart, 1999).

Beyond the criteria of validity and reliability, Laufer et al (2001) identify criteria of novelty in relation to the theoretical debate, which aims to enrich knowledge and propose new avenues of research. These criteria address the relevance and originality of the subject, its interest and the contribution of positioning in relation to the literature (invalidation, confirmation, reorientation of research). Moreover, Marchesnay (2004) defines criteria of elegance and strength of conviction. These criteria address the pedagogical quality of the restitution and formalization of research processes and results.

Our research work, which pays attention to the criteria of continuity between mediation practices in a mediation approach, is a subject that is poorly addressed in theory and therefore meets the criteria of novelty in relation to the theoretical debate suggested by Laufer et al (2001). Also, our process of restitution of the data collected via comparative tables, as well as their confrontations with the reading of an academic expert, have for objective to reinforce the strength of conviction of our results suggested by Marchesnay (2004).

Therefore, we will study the validity and internal and external reliability of our results.

#### **A. The validity of research**

Through the evaluation of the internal and external validity of the research, the researcher pays attention to the coherence of the research, the rigor of the demonstration, the effectiveness of the tools used and the robustness of the method (Laufer et al., 2001).

##### **A.1 Internal validity**

The internal validity of qualitative research depends on the internal consistency of the results, their descriptions, explanation, causality relationships according to the phenomenon studied and the research objectives, or their understanding (Drucker-

Godard et al., 1999). For our research, we explore, in particular, the validity of our object of study and the mobilized data collection techniques.

To guarantee the validity of the research object, the researcher works to reinforce the correspondence between the mobilized theoretical concepts and the operationalized concepts around the research object. Indeed, the coherence of the results around the research object depends on the coherence of the transposition between the theoretical field and the empirical field. To reinforce this coherence, Drucker-Godard et al (1999) define four conditions : (1) careful formulation of the research object, guiding data collection and processing; (2) identification of central concepts in phase with the object of observation; (3) adoption of a methodological orientation targeting the characteristics of the field in phase with the object of research; (4) adequacy between the constituent elements of the object of research and the methodology adopted.

To comply with these conditions and given the exploratory and abductive nature of our approach, we are conducting a theoretical research phase that we present in the first part of this thesis. Its objective is to provide elements of understanding necessary to explain our research object. We present data on our research field, the ACESF association and its partners. To respond to the specificity of our research object, our approach is not exhaustive but adopts as broad a vision as possible, through the adoption of work from various disciplines.

### ➤ *The validity of data collection*

To ensure the validity of primary data collection techniques, it is necessary to ensure that the data collected reflect the phenomenon under study as accurately as possible. Through these data, the researcher is required to develop a faithful and convincing representation of reality, while identifying the limits of this representation. However, whatever the collection technique or source used, the observer/observed relationship makes it difficult to produce objective data (Thietart, 2003).

To reduce the impact of this bias, we combine, within the framework of this thesis work, several sources and data collection methods. We mainly use two data sources: "secondary data" and "primary data" collected mainly using two tools: semi-directive interviewing and non-participating observation. Despite the limitations presented by each category of data, the multiplication of sources and collection tools contributes to improving the internal validity of our research work.

### ***Semi-directive interview***

Semi-directive interviewing is our primary source of primary data. This type of interview applies to problems whose objective is to confirm or refute hypotheses, based on the discourse of the interviewees, while encouraging the identification of unexpected factors (Gangloff-Ziegler, 2005). This type of interview overcomes the methodological problem usually posed by a research interview : « *obtenir à la fois un matériel discursif fiable, c'est-à-dire correspondant effectivement à ce que pense réellement la personne interviewée et à la fois valide, c'est-à-dire conforme aux objectifs de la recherche* » (Blanchet et al., 1985 : p.50).

The non-directionality reinforces the reliability of this survey tool, because the information collected is supposed to correspond effectively to what the interviewees actually think. This survey tool has the advantage of promoting the authenticity of the authentication of the data collected, thanks to the possible *a posteriori* consideration of the researcher's ethical neutrality and his concrete interventions, and thanks to the taking into account of the related context (Blanchet, 1990).

On the other hand, "validity" implies that the information produced must be immutable regardless of the interviewer conducting the survey. This implies a well-controlled maintenance. To reinforce the "validity" of the data, the "directivity" of the interviews requires a very precise definition of the investigative tool, a neutrality of the interviewer, and a "control of its use" (Blanchet, 1990).

As a result, the researcher is subject to a double constraint: on the one hand, the risk of error increases with a non-directive posture that provides freedom of judgment to an interviewer systematically seeking underlying attitudes. On the other hand, a directive posture that focuses on factual facts, precise information, as well as contextual elements, increases the risk of distortion and the data orientation.

Beyond this double constraint, the interview itself involves several biases and risks: a semantic bias arising from differences in the representation of concepts between, on the one hand, the researcher and, on the other, the interviewer; a sampling bias arising from problems of representativeness of the selected sample; a bias arising from the interview guide and the interview itself; a risk of distortion due to the researcher's misinterpretation of the interlocutor's representations a risk of a lack of in-depth study due to the duration of the interview a risk of rationalization *a posteriori* according to the supposed expectations of the interlocutor etc. (Marchesnay, 2004).

The semi-directive interview, which we mobilize as part of this research work, allows us to partially overcome these limitations. Indeed, the maintenance was mobilized in a flexible way. Even if the interview guide is constructed with predefined themes to be addressed, it is constructed in such a way as to deepen certain aspects or to bring out new themes, according to the profile of the interlocutor. Although this has advantages, it does not exclude the heterogeneity bias resulting from the great diversity of profiles included in our sample. Indeed, the heterogeneity within our sample has generally forced us to deepen certain themes according to the interlocutors.

However, we have been careful to make the themes explicit to all our interviewees so that they have a common understanding of them. All these precautions have contributed to improving the validity of the data collected. This validity has also been reinforced by the mobilization of other primary data sources.

### ***Participant (active) observation***

The difficulty with this data collection tool lies in the researcher's ability to maintain the separation between observation and participation. Good control of the relationship between observation and participation conditions the validity of the data (Lessard-Hebert et al., 1997).

In our empirical research, we have faced this dilemma, where our experience could reduce the objectivity of our analysis, and we admit the existence of bias at this level, despite the precautions taken. To guard against this, we tried to understand the perceptions of the various actors we met by placing them in a given context, and not to form a personal opinion.

Also, beyond perceptions, we placed the related elements within a broader framework, which allowed us to distance ourselves from our object of research.

### ***Secondary data***

We have had access to a large number of books and reports on our research topic, structured mediation approaches, and on our research field, the ACESF. Although the abundance of secondary data on our research theme is certainly a source of considerable empirical wealth, secondary data meet a main limitation related to their oriented nature, since they were produced for a different purpose from that of the

researcher who mobilizes them. To preserve and strengthen the validity of research, special precautions are needed.

In the framework of our research, we mobilized secondary data as complementary data, in order to describe the context, to develop comparisons with primary data or to fill their gaps, or even to enrich the analysis.

In addition, we ensured the veracity of the links between the secondary data mobilized and the research object. These precautions reinforced the validity of the results. Despite the fact that the results of qualitative research are constrained by the researcher's interpretation of his empirical material, objectivity in interpretation is necessary to preserve scientific rigor. To do this, we have been careful to base our conclusions on objective elements unsealed in speeches as well as in secondary data, where we have favored contextual data in particular. Thus, to guarantee the external validity of our conclusions, we relied on the convergence of discourses and on our reflections based on contextual data as explanatory variables.

#### ➤ *Validity of data processing*

Beyond the inherent limitations of data collection techniques and the nature of the latter, qualitative approaches meet a limit in the coding of the data collected.

The human coding limit stems mainly from suspicion of a lack of rigor on the part of the researcher in coding the themes or ideas identified in the text (Boutigny, 2005). This lack of rigor can weaken the established codes, and consequently, the units of analysis, because units of different meanings can be classified in the same category (Duyck, 2003).

We have therefore chosen to base the processing of our data on manual content analysis, despite the fact that this may expose us to criticisms regarding the validity of the coding. Despite the interest of computerized processing by dedicated software, we have chosen to manually analyze our data for two main reasons: the specific nature of our research object makes computerization risky, because of the diversity of profiles, the lack of semantic homogeneity and the particular nature of the data. We then made the choice to consider units of meaning. In addition, the limited sample size makes word quantification irrelevant.

We have taken several precautions to limit the impact of the limitations inherent in our methodological choices. In terms of coding, we followed all the recommended steps

very rigorously, for a better transparency. Finally, a third verification of our coding was carried out before our final report was written. We also made sure that our vertical analysis grids were validated by the interviewees, according to a logic of *"refutation research"* (Glazer and Strauss, 1967), and in accordance with the *"principle of validation of results by subjects"* (Miles and Huberman, 1984; Lincoln and Guba, 1985).

To verify and reinforce the internal validity of our research, we mobilized the criteria recommended by Charreire-Petit (2003): data triangulation, where we ensured coherence between our research object, our data collection process and the mobilized theoretical framework; data saturation, where we qualitatively and quantitatively identified the sufficient size of the sample, capable of giving sufficient confidence to the results obtained; long presence in the field, where our survey was established over time since we started to focus on this field in 2012, and that this facilitated the choice of analysis units; the validation of interpretations by respondents, as advocated by the *"principle of validation of results by subjects"* (Miles and Huberman, 1984; Lincoln and Guba, 1985), where we submitted our vertical analysis grids to the various interviewees to verify the conformity of our interpretations with their state of mind and to obtain their validation.

## **A.2 The external validity of research**

The external validity of the research relates to the conditions of generalization and transferability of results. In the case of a qualitative approach, this triggers special considerations (Drucker-Godard et al., 1999). Because of the focus on description and context, the resulting interpretation reduces the possibility of generalization and transferability (Thietart, 2003). This is reduced as internal validity increases and contextualization increases. Thus, the qualitative approach struggles to authorize in a broad way the transferability and generalization of results, despite the wealth of data it generates. Therefore, in order to protect itself as much as possible, the approach is required to present the multiple points of view around the observed phenomenon.

➤ ***The conditions for generalization***

At the level of our research object, generalization is facilitated thanks to the structural and cultural homogeneity of the organizations studied and the pilot structure. However, there are two important limitations: on the one hand, the political and organizational characteristics may be different, even if the cultural and structural characteristics are similar; and on the other hand, the heterogeneity of the profiles of the actors interviewed reduces the possibility of generalization.

To reduce as far as possible the limitations of political and organizational heterogeneity, we have relied on contextualization, with a view to bringing out elements of convergence and divergence, while identifying the conditions for generalization. In terms of the impact of the heterogeneity of interviewees' profiles, we are aware of the disadvantages arising from the heterogeneous composition of our sample. However, we are more interested in the qualitative than quantitative representativeness of our sample. Also, in order to increase the objectivity of our survey results and their potential generalization, we have included in our survey population, a researcher expert in network management.

➤ ***Conditions of transferability***

Beyond the question of generalization, external validity also refers to the question of transferability of results to other organizations and research fields (Thietart, 1999). In this research work, we emphasized the particularity of the ACESF association as an organizational structure. However, throughout our research, we relied on contextual elements to explain the actions and attitudes of the actors, without however obscuring the fact that these elements do not have unique consequences. Therefore, the extension of our proposals to other organizational structures that can be described as adhocratic could be possible.

Our particular interest in the actors allows us to point out their reactions, motivations and actions. These actor logics, although appreciated according to the specificity of their organization, can also be reproduced with regard to other organizations. This reinforces the validity of portability.

To verify and reinforce the external validity of our research, even if it is conducted at multilevel, we followed the recommendations of Eisenhardt (1989) for the single case



study, by supporting our explanatory constructs on the data, while making sure to link them to the literature in order to increase their credibility, and facilitate their transposition to other parental contexts (Passeron, 1991). In addition, we made sure to document the procedures followed and to present all the research steps and data, while avoiding sources of error that could weaken the researcher's findings (Miles and Huberman, 2003; Charreire Petit, 2003).

## **B. The reliability of research**

The reliability of the research reflects the reproducibility of the results. In a quantitative approach, it is the reliability of the measurement instrument that ensures the reliability of the research. In a qualitative approach, it is the ability of the researcher to construct a relevant interpretation, to propose a coherent explanation, to account for the phenomenon studied, that determines the reliability of the research (Drucker-Godard et al., 1999).

### **B.1 The reliability of the measurement tool**

Generally, it is the correlation between replicated measures of the same phenomenon, resulting from the mobilization of the same instrument. This replication can be achieved by different people or over time (Thietart, 1999). As part of a qualitative approach, semi-directive maintenance as an empirical measurement tool raises difficulties in terms of reliability (Blanchet, 1990). The reliability of the tool is ensured by its ability to ensure the collection of the required data.

At the level of our research, the main limitation lies in the diversity of profiles and the rather small sample size. However, the interviews conducted allowed us to collect a large number of data, which enabled us to answer our problems and our various research questions. These data were subsequently cross-referenced with other data derived from the mobilization of other collection tools, such as passive observation, to increase their reliability.

## **B.2 Research reliability**

It refers to the reliability of the results obtained in space and time. Reliability would be greatly reduced if the results reflect only specific study conditions and a researcher-specific way of conducting research (Thietart, 1999). Therefore, we ensured that the scientific conditions were respected throughout the research process. We then set rules, whether in the design of the research protocol, or in the formulation of conclusions, in order to improve the reliability of our approach and our results.

In the interest of transparency in the argumentation and reasoning, our questions and reflections have been clarified to reproduce as faithfully as possible the research approach followed. However, we are aware that despite all the precautions taken, our research is biased. These stem mainly from the nature of the data, the specificity of the research object, the limitations of the data collection tools used and the processing methods deployed, as well as the conditions for generalizing the results.

At the level of our research design, the unique holistic case study, the criticisms formulated generally concern its lack of rigor, the inadequacy of its scientific basis for generalization, as well as the length of the process over time, source of a mass of illegible documents (Yin, 2003). Therefore, to increase the reliability of this type of approach, it is necessary to pay attention to the methodological mechanisms for data collection and analysis (Musca, 2006). This requirement is all the more necessary as the researcher collects and analyses a multitude of heterogeneous data, collected at several levels.

## **Section IV.4: Abstract Chapter IV**

Our epistemological positioning is "interpretativism". Our objective is not to reveal an objective reality (positivism), nor to construct it (constructivism), but to interpret actions and logics of actions according to the observed facts. This epistemological orientation corresponds to our own convictions regarding the value, status and modalities of knowledge production, as well as the nature of the knowledge produced. Our research project is, therefore, oriented towards this purpose.

Conducting a research project requires defining a research object that essentially translates into a question. This question, also called problematic, allows the researcher to discover, interpret and/or construct reality. In order to move our thinking progressively towards the formulated question, we define the design or architecture of the research. Its objective is to articulate our reasoning throughout the research project.

To produce knowledge around the chosen problem, we do not seek to understand how reality is constructed by the actors (constructivist vision). Rather, our goal is to understand actors' interpretations through their behaviors and discourses. We are especially interested in their motivations. The status, value and validity of the knowledge produced are determined by the effort to interpret certain phenomena, their singularities and their contexts. As a result, we prioritize the effort of understanding and empathy that push actors to reveal their experiences.

We combine process and content research to address the targeted phenomenon as a whole. As a result, we adopt as our research design, the unique holistic case study that focuses on the mediation approach driven by the organizational structure in membership of the ACESF. Our knowledge construction is based on a hybrid exploratory survey, conducted according to an abductive approach that admits the continuous back and forth between theory and the field. This approach corresponds to our objective, which is, above all, to understand and explain, based on facts observed with a non-predictive but analytical aim. This allows us to propose a structured interpretation of the results in the light of theory, while respecting our choices in terms of research design. Beyond the condensation, data presentation and verification of results activities, we also ensure that the limitations of our research are presented in terms of validity and reliability.

**CHAPTER V**

**THE FIELD-RESEARCHED CASE STUDY**

In this chapter, we present the context of our study. The objective is to bring out elements that can be significantly determining in terms of success factors for a “mediation continuum”.

We present in a first section, the context of education and intermediary agencies in China. In a second section, we define our choice mediation practices enabling a Sino-French educational collaboration and in the last section we focus our attention on the structural configuration and context of educational partnerships of one of the educational intermediary agents in China and that is the Organization of *Communication Educative Sino-Française* (A.C.E.S.F).

## **Section V.1: A mass education system**

China, the most populous country in the world, has human resource development as its 21st century priority measure. Thus, China is "the object of all the attention of education professionals throughout the world and is perceived as (...) setting up a mass education system" (The observatory on borderless higher education, 2009). Chinese institutions, because of their shortcomings and the lack of qualified personnel, cannot ensure the massification of education alone, sending students abroad therefore helps to achieve this objective (Chinese Perspective, 2009).

We will begin by presenting the structure of the current school system, then we will select key dates in which the Chinese education system has turned upside down; this transversal look is in order to identify the conditions for the emergence of what are today called intermediate agents or intermediate educational agents. A currently booming sector in China.

### **A. Structure of the Chinese educational system and Chinese student mobility**

#### **A.1: Chinese student mobility**

According to the notes of Campus France punctual Paper #19 - June 2018<sup>29</sup>: « France is the 3rd European country hosting students from Asia-Oceania and the 10th in the world. In 2017, France welcomed 323,933 international students, 51,796 of whom were from Asia-Oceania (16%, +3.7% in 5 years) (...) out of which 28,760 students are Chinese » and as per UNESCO, education theme, indicator total outbound internationally mobile tertiary students studying abroad<sup>30</sup>, the number of Chinese students has risen from 698 401 in 2012 to 869 387 in 2017 and it's continuing to rise under the strategy of mass education system.

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<sup>29</sup> LES NOTES DE CAMPUS France HORS-SERIE N #19 – JUIN 2018

<sup>30</sup> <http://data.uis.unesco.org/Index.aspx?queryid=172>

## A.2: Structure of the Chinese educational system

Nowadays, instead of the initial centralization of the education system, a source of inertia in administration and management, there is a redistribution of the roles of the state despite the risk of the regional disparities generated<sup>31</sup>.

This redistribution of roles can be displayed in the following way: the central government fixes the strategic choices and the steering of the education system with the possibility of focusing on certain specific educational projects (1). The provincial government monitors the Ministry of Education's guidelines and their implementation with funding from higher education institutions across the province (2). The district and lower levels are responsible for material and human organization of primary and secondary education (3). This is why the district mobilizes local authorities and other local partners to ensure the required budgets (local taxes, business funds, school fees from high school...) for basic education as well as for high schools.

The Chinese education system is divided into four pillars which are:

**Preschool:** compulsory phase and is for children over the age of three.

**Nine-year compulsory schooling:** for children aged 7 to 15. The nine-year period is established according to a division of six years in primary and three years in lower secondary. Being compulsory, neither the primary school nor the college no longer practice the entrance examination and, except for the experimental schools or classes, it is a sectorized access such as district in the cities or common to the countryside.

**Upper secondary education** for young people aged 15 to 18, which is divided into general (three years) and which grants access to the *gaokao*<sup>32</sup> competition or specialized and vocational or technical training (three to five years).

*Gaokao* takes place each 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> of June each year throughout the country. the marks from this competition are not just indicators of success or failure; they are indicators of the student's life opportunities and potential» income for the rest of life as the *Gaokao*'s grade will «determine the choice of higher education institutions.

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<sup>31</sup> In 2005, the budget allocated per child in Shanghai was 50 times higher per child between a school in Shanghai and a rural school in Henan (Compulsory Education Law under amendment, 26 February 2006).

<sup>32</sup> The competition is held on the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> June each year throughout the country.

Government's main argument to justify the intense competition for access to higher education is that all social categories should have the same opportunities of access to elite» Chinese institutions. But facing this equality, *Gaokao* exam and grades are strongly correlated to the student's socio-economic status given the ability of the wealthy family to offer intensive courses with the best teachers to their child; thus, meritocracy is not the determining» factor in *Gaokao's* success.

**Higher education** beyond the age of 18 is provided along two paths. The first is through higher general education institutions (institutes or universities) delivering short *dazhuan* courses (three years) and *benke* general degrees (four years) opening to *Shuoshi* masters (three years) then to "*boshi*" doctorates (three years). Noting that the passage from a bachelor's degree to a master's degree or from a master's degree to a doctorate is conditioned by the success of a very selective competition. The second in higher technical and professional institutes delivering short courses of two to three years. At this level we are no longer in the compulsory schooling.

As we can see, the difficulty of accessing higher education level is a viable justification for the objective of mass education system.

## **B. Key dates in the Chinese educational system**

### **B.1: Centralized educational system (up to 1995)**

In the past, traditional Chinese teaching was highly moralized, even politicized, because of the adoption of Confucianism as the dominant principle. Teaching was limited to the interpretation and explanation of the classics<sup>33</sup>, hence obvious shortcomings in the scientific field especially as the learning methodology was based on memorization and the student was subject to the almost absolute authority of the teacher.

**In 1904**, the penultimate Chinese emperor Guangxu enacted a reform law to create the new school by introducing the Western educational system into Chinese education.

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<sup>33</sup> The five moral virtues, pillars of maintaining social harmony: ren (benevolence), yi (righteousness) li (decorum), zhi (wisdom), xin (loyalty). The ideal of this education is social integration.

Since then, education in China, including schools, has become increasingly similar to that in other countries, but with an enormous contrast between urban and rural.

**The period of 1949 and 1978,** After the founding of the People's Republic of China, was a period of rebuilding Chinese "governance". Motivated experiments for the creation of a modern and China's own scientific education system emerged but without success until the policy of reform and openness, in 1978<sup>34</sup>, gave new life to the economy and education in China several regulations were proven including the university entrance examination and the university degree system.

**In 1982,** Article 19 of the 1982 Constitution<sup>35</sup> states that the "State shall develop socialist education to raise the scientific cultural level of all 'the people'"

**In 1986,** the promulgation of the "Compulsory Education Act" of 12 April 1986<sup>36</sup> also known as the nine-year compulsory education requirement concretized and completed Article 19 of the 1982 Constitution. This law decentralized the educational role of the state between the different levels of government (central, provincial, district, city, village). This redistribution of roles has been able to expand sources of financing and introduce "market economy" mechanisms.

Since **1990**, higher education in China has become internationalized in the wake of globalization (Yang, 2002).

**In 1992,** the government adopted the principle of the "socialist market economy". This principle states that to meet the challenges of modernization, the development of the economy and education must be based on forces other than those of the state.

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<sup>34</sup> At the end of 1978, Deng Xiaoping, who had recently come to power, launched the policy of "reform and openness", through which he intended to restore vitality to the Chinese economy by adjusting the socialist economic model that had hitherto been in force. It thus opens the way to private economic activities for individuals.

<sup>35</sup> Constitution of the People's Republic of China, Beijing, Foreign Language Editions, 1983

<sup>36</sup> Compulsory Education Law of the People



## **B.2: Democratization of the education system (Since 1995)**

**In 1995**, Article 25 of the Education Act of 1995 embodies the principle and states that *"the State shall encourage enterprises, institutions, public and social organizations and citizens to establish and manage schools or other training institutions"*. To legalize and authenticate the work of these entities, the state requires that they obtain a labor agreement from the Chinese Ministry of Education and a labor license from the Chinese Labor Ministry.

**In 1998**, another turning point took place with two major government decisions. The first is to increase the share of education in the national budget by 1% each year until 2002. The second is the launch of the policy entitled: Making the country prosper through science and education; and developed the following year in the: Promoting education on the threshold of the twenty-first century program.

**In 2000**, in pursuit of the objective of massification of higher education nearly 612 higher education institutions had merged to create 250 larger institutions<sup>37</sup>.

**In 2002**, a system of university loans and scholarships for students in difficulty was created and the State awards merit scholarships for qualified students in financial difficulty. Also, the 2002 Law on Non-Governmental Education allows the development of private initiatives for the cycles of education that are not compulsory in order to better respond to particular social demands; in field terms, this law can be understood in the form that private schools are all those that are not funded state.

**By 2012**, the Chinese Ministry of Education no longer grants labor agreements for organizations that want to establish and manage schools or other training institutions (*as was the case from 1995 to 2012*); from 2012, the labor license of the Chinese Ministry of Labor is sufficient to exercise labor in this sector. Thus, the government pursues its educational policy on the basis of the principle of the socialist market economy.

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<sup>37</sup> Davis Chen Yunchao, « china's large-scale university mergers in Restrospect

Thus, transversal reading of these key dates, we perceive the will of the government to have a strategic role, a function of macro-regulation and control that is operational in the education sector at the national level. This trend towards delegation has been accompanied by the internationalization of the Chinese education system since 1990.

Consequently, having the ambition to provide the educational opportunity to everyone through the direct application of the principle of the socialist market economy where the development of education should be based on forces other than those of the state; any official body or organization holding a labor license from the Chinese Ministry of Labor has the right to offer its services directly (courses, training,) or indirectly (assistance in the preparation of official registration documentation, assistance in the choice of an educational organization...) in the educational sector.

## **C. The actors of the internationalization of the Chinese education system towards France**

### **C.1 Campus France**

In 1998, France established a structure dedicated to international mobility called "EduFrance" then renamed Campus France. This Agency is placed under the supervision of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of National Education and the Ministry of the Interior and has a vocation to promote French higher education in the world.

There are seven "Campus France" areas in China with sub-structures in other regions called Antenna (orientation meetings and educational events) and that are also seven. The Campus France areas have a double function: the reception and promotion of studies in France (1) and the fight against fraud and consular formalities (2). Their task is to welcome and guide students; an Internet site, partially accessible in Chinese and advisers available by appointment, accompany students in their research of training in France, without forgetting the operations of promotion of French culture during cultural events. Also, in China, visas for France are required, so Campus France also checks and verifies student applications as part of its mission of consular formalities and the fight against fraud.

## **C.2 Alliance Française**

Alliance Française are centers for the promotion and teaching of the French language and French-speaking cultures. In China, the Alliance Française had to, because of its association status, a status that is prohibited in China, form partnerships with Chinese universities. The network has grown at a rapid pace and is located in 13 cities<sup>38</sup> in mainland China.

The thirteen entities of the Alliance Française in China are self-financed non-profit institutions. Within the institution, French language training courses are given for the TCF and TEF exams.

## **C.3 Private language centers**

The introduction of the TEF (French evaluation test) as a condition for obtaining a study visa generated a strong demand for French language courses, which was commonly known in the past as "500-hour courses".

In the beginning "these 500-hour courses were largely granted by the Alliance Française, whereas now these courses are offered by a large number of private language centers or university dependents. For many universities teaching French in their traditional courses makes an interesting financial contribution both for the institution and for teachers. One of the examples of its types of structure for teaching the French language would be "Crelune" thanks to its wide distribution<sup>39</sup> on the Chinese territory.

## **C.4 Intermediate agents, intermediate educational agents**

With rapid growth in the internationalization of higher education in China, education agencies experienced an explosion in the late 1990s. Hundreds of agencies targeting the middle classes opened across the country to accompany the mass of students in the preparation of their mobility abroad. Education workers are considered by parents and students as education professionals who are fully familiar with the education system and the institutions of the country to which it operates. The registration process, the cost of studies, the quality of the education system, the different university degrees, are all areas where the agent is perceived as an expert.

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<sup>38</sup> [www.alliancefr.org](http://www.alliancefr.org) (accessed July 25, 2017)

<sup>39</sup> Shanghai, Pékin, Nankin, Hangzhou, Wuhan, Shenzhen, Suzhou, et Tianjin

- ✓ This accompaniment can be summarized in the steps below:
- ✓ Presentation of a list of institutions to help students in their choice of destination and institution
- ✓ Once the choice is made, the agency's reference person assists the student in preparing the necessary documents for enrolment in the institution he has chosen.
- ✓ Then, the intermediary agency contacts the admission services for the language school abroad and for the higher institution where the student will continue his studies.
- ✓ French translation of all documents in Chinese (letter of recommendation, Gao Kao note, high school diploma, passport, bank resource certificate, Hukou).
- ✓ Assistance with the Campus-France online procedure. (Training for language tests: TEF, TCF, Embassy interview).
- ✓ Help for integration in France

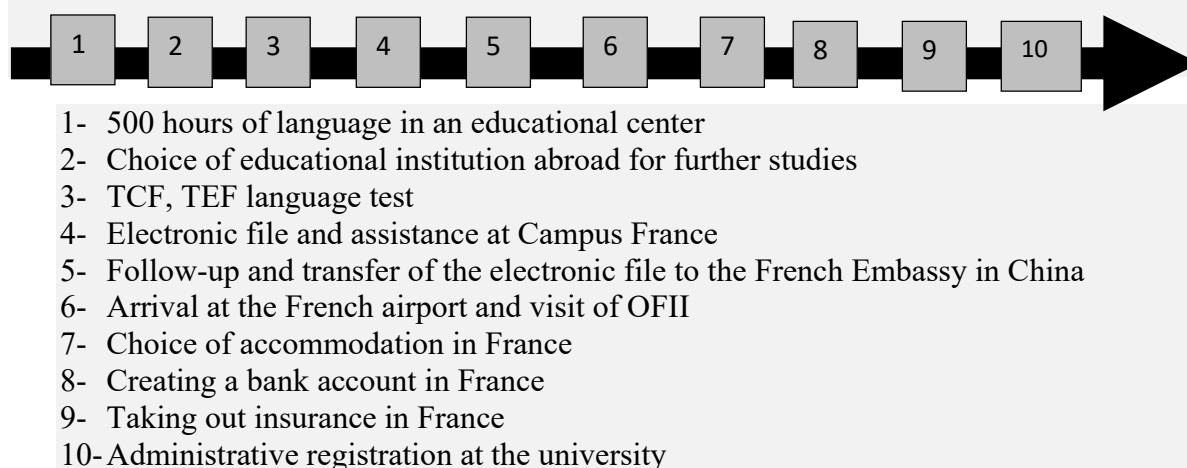
## D. Abstract section V.1

Following the presentation of the structure of the Chinese education system, the internationalization movement of the education system and the conditions of passage and context of the *Gaokao* contest in China, the statistics stated by Campus France in its report in 2016<sup>40</sup>, less than 20 000 in international mobility in 1999, more than 900 000<sup>41</sup> in 2015 is not surprising.

This rebound can also be supported by the rapid emergence of the middle class in China. According to the China Forbes report, in 2012, nearly a quarter of the population, or about 300 million people, had a significant purchasing power equivalent to 1.3 million yuan (\$213,900 million) per person. Thus, parents want to offer their unique child the best opportunities and they have the means to do so.

In parallel to this reality, the Chinese government has the will to have a strategic role, a function of macro-regulation and control instead of an operational/ execution role in the education sector at the national level; from where the development of the mass education system had to rely on other forces than those of the state

Therefore, the government has allowed any organization holding a labor license from the Chinese Ministry of Labor to have the right to offer its direct or indirect services at the level of the sequential approach (below) of a student wanting to pursue his studies abroad:



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<sup>40</sup> Campus France special issue number 15 - June 2016

<sup>41</sup> Significant discrepancies can be observed between MENESR figures and other sources such as UNESCO and OECD, as the latter do not consider non-diploma training.

## **Section V.2: Choice of Mediation practices in an adhocratic configuration for Sino-French Educational Mediation approach**

In the first part of the thesis we have correlated the mediation practices to the characteristics, indicators of each of the forms of mediation pre-established and justified. The two forms of mediations were: Mediation to manage a dispute illustrated here below:

<i>Mediation Forms</i>	<b>Mediation to resolve a Dispute</b>			
	OBJECTIVE	LINKING	PROCESS	DURATION
<b>Mediation Practices</b>	<b>AGREEMENT</b>	<b>INTERPERSONAL RELATION</b>	<b>STRUCTURED MEDIATION</b>	<b>SHORT &amp; ACCURATE</b>
Family/Conjugal Mediation	X	X	X	X
Social Mediation (citizen mediation, neighborhood mediation)	X	X	X	X
Heritage mediation	X	X	X	X
Consumer mediation	X	X	X	X
Professional mediation	X	X	X	X
Corporate mediation	X	X	X	X
Ombudsman	X	X	X	X
Socio-religious mediation	X	X	X	X
Transcultural mediation	X	X	X	X

And mediation to catalyze links illustrated here below:

<i>Mediation Forms</i>	<b>Mediation to create links</b>			
	OBJECTIVE	LINKING	PROCESS	DURATION
<b>Mediation Practices</b>	<b>COMMUNICATION</b>	<b>PARTNERSHIP RELATIONS</b>	<b>STRUCTURED APPROACH</b>	<b>LONG &amp; UNDETERMINED</b>
Cultural mediation	X	X	X	X
Intercultural mediation	X	X	X	X
Transnational mediation	X	X	X	X
Environmental mediation	X	X	X	X
Educational mediation	X	X	X	X
Scientific mediation	X	X	X	X
Territorial mediation (or territorial dialogue)	X	X	X	X
Mediation of environmental knowledge	X	X	X	X

As can be seen, 17 mediation practices widespread in the field have been identified and out of which 9 forms to manage a dispute and 8 forms to create links have been deduced.

Aware that Mediation to resolve a dispute form is a set of sequential steps of mediation led by a mediator for a small group of people and whose objective is to reach agreement on a common conflict through a frontal dialogue between the parties involved through the development of a short and precise interpersonal relationship over time.

And that the form of Mediation to create links is a configuration of structured "objects" piloting a mediation process whose objective is to develop a circular communication context for a large group of people with the objective of forging long-term and indeterminate partnership relationships over time.

Our ambition is to catalyze a constructive continuity between all the different mediation practices that we have identified. But in the context of this thesis, our field choice was restrained to a particular time and phase in the development of the chosen structure to catalyze educational and intercultural communications. And as catalyzing links is upfront a mediation process, we have chosen to restrain our choices to the list of mediation practices identified in the form of creating links, whatever their field of application is or theme, and which are: Cultural mediation, Intercultural mediation, Transnational mediation, Environmental mediation, Educational mediation, Scientific mediation, Territorial mediation, Environmental knowledge mediation.

Then, if we compare our objective with the list of mediation practices catalyzing links, we raise the following remarks in order to establish the ponderation between the elements of the list under the order of primary axis, secondary axis:

**A. Concerning *cultural mediation*** "refers to the process of linking the spheres of culture and social life, the construction of new links between politics, culture and the public space. It oversees a wide range of practices from audience development actions to participatory and community art. Ultimately, it aims to make each person, visitor or spectator, a true cultural actor. »<sup>42</sup>

By the fact that this type of mediation is not developed with the objective of developing intercultural partnerships, it would be left out at first sight. But since cultural enrichment is a path of discovery and understanding of the other, we will not eliminate it from our list of potential mediation practices for the establishment of educational and intercultural

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<sup>42</sup> [www.culturepourtous.ca/professionnels-de-la-culture/mediation-culturelle/](http://www.culturepourtous.ca/professionnels-de-la-culture/mediation-culturelle/)

communications and we will consider this practice of mediation as a secondary axis in our approach.

**B.** With regard to **intercultural mediation**, as it has already been presented, it is the establishment of sociability links between people from different cultures who reside on the same border territory.

In our case, this practice of mediation is perfectly in line with our ambition and we will include it, as a primary axis, in our list of potential mediation practices for the establishment of educational, intercultural communications.

**C.** Concerning **transnational mediation**, the fact of establishing social links between people who do not reside in the same territory. So, we notice that it is the same approach as intercultural mediation with the exception that people do not reside in the same territory. In our case, this practice of mediation is perfectly in line with our ambition and we will include it, as a primary axis.

**D.** Concerning **environmental mediation**, it is a dialogue between stakeholders who represent interest groups or individuals concerned by environmental issues. Its field of application ranges from conflict management to spatial planning.

By the fact that this type of mediation is not developed with the objective of developing educational communications in itself given its field of application in conflict management and land use planning, it will be included as a secondary axis in our list of potential mediation practices since the theme of environmental "Mediation" can be a catalyst for inter-university.

**E.** With regard to **educational mediation**, Avanzini<sup>43</sup> defined it in the education register as *"this concept refers to the enterprise of the one who develops and facilitates the relationship between culture and a subject who has, until now, failed to assimilate it and whose situation is being remedied (re-mediated). Mediation]... is essential to the learning activity. (op. cit.: 14)"*

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<sup>43</sup> Guy Avanzini Professor of Educational Sciences at the University of Lyon II (in 1987) - Professor Emeritus of the Department of Educational and Training Sciences and Practices (in 2003).



Educational mediation is to facilitate the linking of culture to a subject that can be explicitly linked to an innovative pedagogical approach/mediation to catalyze an intercultural communication between two educational entities and therefore we will consider it as a primary axis

**F.** Concerning **scientific mediation** is the mediation of scientific knowledge with the aim of restoring a dialogue between science and society and creating knowledge that is accessible to citizens.

This accessibility to knowledge for all is not a driving force in the development of transcultural communications, but it could be considered a key field of action for the development of intercultural communications and that is why this practice of mediation will be left as a secondary axis for local actors.

**G.** With regard to **territorial mediation**, it is *"a set of practices of consultation, mediation and negotiation on environmental and territorial issues"* (Barret, 2003), knowing that this definition was adopted as part of our inventory of mediation practices, provided that the negotiation is integrative according to the typology of Walton and Mac Kersie (1991). Territorial dialogue is not directly linked to our project of educational, intercultural partnerships, but it remains a major axis in the policies of the municipalities and we could mobilize this practice of mediation as an intermediate axis of trust for the establishment of solid links between stakeholders from different cultures. Therefore, we will mobilize this practice of mediation as a secondary axis in our current thesis.

**H.** Finally, for the **mediation of environmental knowledge through the ePLANETe** platform, which *"is an online platform for the mediation of knowledge in the fields of the environment, sustainable development and the ecological economy"* (ePLANETe.blue). A mediation driven by an online platform; this practice of mediation will not be considered as a priority axis for the time being but will remain a secondary axis carrying a high level of interest in terms of information sharing and especially in terms of overcoming the language barrier, since the various stakeholders will be able to navigate in the platform according to their subject of interest and their preferred language.

## I. Feedback loop section V.2

Thus, following this assignment of mediation to catalyze links between the primary axis and the secondary axis, we find ourselves with the following distribution:

Mediation to catalyze Links	Primary axis	Secondary axis
Cultural mediation		X
Intercultural mediation	X	
Transnational mediation	X	
Environmental mediation		X
Educational mediation	X	
Scientific mediation		X
Territorial mediation (or territorial dialogue)		X
Mediation of environmental knowledge		X

Following this summary table represented in two axis. Primary axis as it could represent the main target of the structure and the secondary axis that can be considered more as an operational approach to the structure mission. The choice of this configuration (primary axis, secondary axis) is in the objective of leading a process of sustainable socialization (*objective of continuous communication, linking partnership relationships, for a long and indeterminate period*) for a “continuum mediation”.

We will use this analysis grid to study an organization. Highlighting that the choice of primary axis is related to a specific phase in our study and we do recognize that the distribution can and will vary with time based on the organization development and nature of projects. But for the time being we choose this angle as an entrance point.

### **Section V.3: Choosing an Intermediate Education Agency – Mediation Structure**

With an exponential and continuous increase in the number of students wishing to pursue their studies abroad accompanied by the liberalization of the services market at the educational level by the state, the market of intermediate educational agents expanded quickly either in France (*Foreign students destination*) or China (*Highest number of students studying abroad*).

Intermediary agencies operate under a wide range of status, from recruitment agencies on behalf of large institutions to independent agencies working with a wide range of universities in all countries. In the first case, the agency may recruit for only one institution it represents; this agency would act as a representative office for a school or university. This scenario exists as some large institutions wanting to keep complete control over their image and their recruitment policy opt for this solution. In the second case, the agency signs agency contracts with different partners for varying degrees of collaboration, and this is the most common case in China.

This intermediate market presented a high risk of fraud, but with the introduction of the first regulations in 1999, the sector was more strictly controlled and the agencies with the most questionable practices were forced to close. The Ministry adopted a series of measures such as: the publication of a list of approved educational institutions that can be consulted on the Ministry's website, which has more than 419 legal<sup>44</sup> agencies throughout China; the establishment of an alert system in the event of fraudulent activity reported by a student or his family; systematic media revelation of fraud; and the creation of an information and monitoring site for students abroad. On the other hand, the Chinese government has expressed the need for greater concentration in the sector in order to strengthen the professionalism of the agencies (*Academic cooperation association, 2005*).

Thus, by selecting the intermediary agency as part of our thesis work, we selected a recognized intermediary agency, distinguished by its legal status of NGO in China to study its organizational structure for a «mediation continuum».

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<sup>44</sup> A list of intermediary agencies translated in appendix

## **A. An adhocratic structure**

Founded in 2013, in France, the “Association de la Communication Educative Sino-Française (A.C.E.S.F.)” had the objective of helping Chinese students integrate in France by providing them with personalized support such as: physical welcome, guidance and advice on integration into socio-cultural life during their studies.

Its founder Shulei REN came to France in 2006 as part of an exchange program between Dalian University of Foreign Languages and the University of Montpellier 3. After experiencing all kinds of integration difficulties, he assisted the other Chinese students upon their arrival in France following the request of his Dalian University.

But following the disproportionate increase in the number of students requiring his help, he decided to structure the coaching skills in an association framework, in a framework of continuous mediation to correlate the expectations of Chinese students to the expectations of entities in France whatever their typology is. In other words, it is the structure that would be in continuous adaptation to allow lasting mediation between the different stakeholders.

Thus, this bridge of transition ensuring educational and intercultural exchange programs would be between stakeholders of different natures, of different nationalities can be classified into three types: Public bodies (universities, municipalities), private bodies (language institutes, schools, intermediary agencies) and members of the association.

To achieve this goal of mediating bridges between Chinese entities and French entities with the objective of responding to the passage process of a Chinese student (from his request to continue his studies abroad to his integration in France for his studies) this entity has an interdisciplinary team organization by mission that was officialized in an organigram:

- A mission of sponsorship whose principle is the mobilization of the members-beneficiaries of the association to accompany the new students in their insertion. Thereafter, beneficiaries can, in turn, bring their supports and experiences to the newcomers. Each new volunteer is interviewed by a former member who becomes their referent. A one-day training session is held each quarter and offered to each person who wishes to participate in the association's assistance activities.
- Also, there's a mission of database creation. It is to create a database on French universities, Chinese universities in order to identify common educational interests; this same database can be based on another indicator and which is the indicator of influx of Chinese students.

- A mission to accompany Chinese students in their social integration upon their arrival in France by creating groups of meetings with other Chinese students. This social meeting will reassure newly arrived students and help them in their socialization while avoiding the risk of being confined in their accommodation; the meetings can be film outings or simply a discussion over a cup of coffee.
- A mission of partnerships creation: with insurance organizations in order to simplify the membership of Chinese students (1) with educational entities, language entities to adapt the pedagogical approach to a familiar approach to Chinese students (2) with municipalities such as the creation of a twinning between a commune in France and a commune in China, in order to allow the socialization of members from a young age (3) with banks to facilitate the creation of bank accounts.

An exhaustive list of missions is almost impossible as a new mission can be created daily in order to respond to an identified need but what is certain is that all missions are in the objective of accompanying the Chinese students in their passage and integration during the pursuit of their studies. Most importantly, missions by each team follow an approach of respecting the identity of each of the stakeholders involved in the partnership creation process with the objective of achieving moderate communication between stakeholders.

Thus, this entity is a constellation of missions, mutually adjusted, following an informal communication system with the objective of assisting the Chinese student all along the way from China to France. This allows us to deduce a system of ad hoc decision-making processes where authority and communication are not objectives in themselves but are flows that aim to facilitate other flows. Also, decision-making is not following any formal system, nor any formal regulation of work standardization but follows a flexible flow of ad hoc decision-making. This allows us to say that we are in an organizational structure that is adhocratic.

## **B. Mediation continuum**

Each of the structure missions is to create value through the association's activities for its stakeholders, whatever their identity is. The horizontal sum of each of the missions will determine the social value vis-à-vis the association's members, while the vertical analysis of the partnership mediation missions will determine the social value vis-à-vis each of the stakeholders, be it a university, a municipality or a language center...

Thus, the constellations of work of the association represent a social value creation towards Chinese students through a continuity of different types of mediations (formal, informal) in order to ensure the successful transition of Chinese students from their hometown to pursuing their studies in France.

Following these two observations, one could say that the A.C.E.S.F association is an organizational structure in adhocracy which the sum of the constellations of work, the sum of its missions will generate a chain of social value creation either by the horizontal analysis of the various missions vis-à-vis its members or by the vertical analysis vis-à-vis the various social partners. Hence it corresponds to an adhocratic structure, to an adhocratic value chain within the framework of our thesis allowing a «mediation continuum».

### **C. Association identity**

Founded in 2013, the Association de la Communication Educative Sino-Française (A.C.E.S.F.) is a French association under the 1901 law, whose initial objective is to help Chinese students integrate in France by providing them with personalized support such as: Physical welcome, Orientation assistance, Educational tutoring (French as a foreign language and various specialties) and advice on integration into socio-cultural and professional life. This structure is an intermediary agency that provides intermediation at multiple levels, between a multitude of Sino-French cultural, educational and academic entities in order to meet the needs of Chinese students.

#### ➤ **Founder**

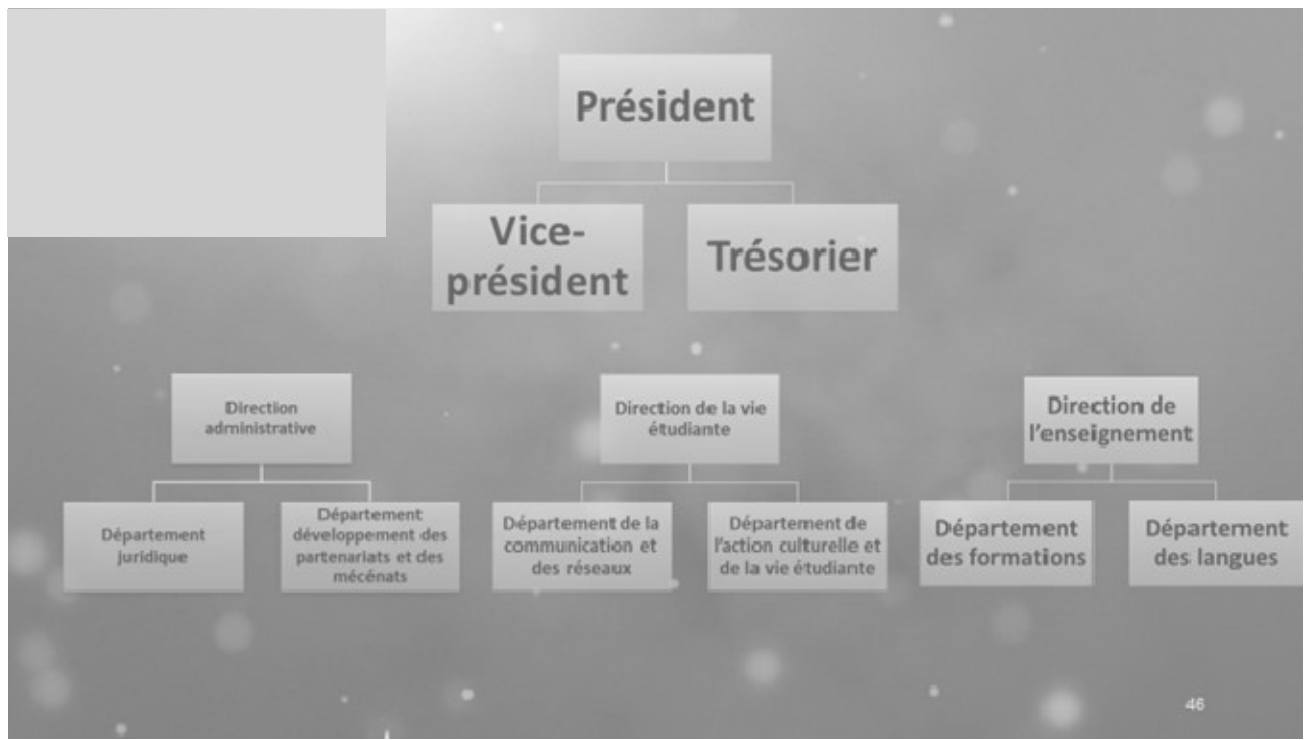
REN Shulei came to France in 2006 as part of an exchange program between the Dalian University of Foreign Languages and the University of Montpellier 3.

After having experienced all kinds of integration difficulties, he decided to offer his services to Chinese students arriving in France.

In 2013, REN Shulei decided to structure the services offered to the students in a formal entity considering the high number of students requesting his service specially that the existing official structures weren't adapting or personalizing their services to respond to the Chinese students.

Noting that the associative structure created in 2012 is in the process of changing its legal status in view of the need to increase its size and the need to formalize skills in order to maintain the same quality of support offered since 2006.

➤ **Association Organigram**



To formalize its structure scheme upon the creation of the official structure of association in 2013, ACESF developed above organigram in order to articulate one department to another.

- ✓ The administrative department includes a legal department and a department for the development of partnerships and sponsorships.
- ✓ The Student Life Directorate has a Department of Communication and Networks, as well as a Department of Cultural Action and Student Life.
- ✓ The teaching department has a training department and a language department.

➤ **List of universities assisted by ACESF for student's integration (as at 2017)**

Universités Françaises	Universités Chinoises
第三大学 Université de Paris 3	Beijing University of Chinese Medicine (Beijing)
第四大学 Université de Sorbonne - Paris 4	Beijing Post and Telecommunications University (Beijing)
第六大学 Université Pierre et Marie Curie—Paris 6	Beijing University (Beijing)
第九大学 Université Paris Dauphine—Paris 9	Sichuan University (Chengdu)
第十一大学 Université de Paris-Sud—Paris 11	South-West University of Finance and Economics (Chengdu)
赛大学 Université de Versailles à Saint-Quentin-en-Yvelines	
政治学院 Science Po – Paris	University of Electronics and Technology Science (Chengdu)
艺术装饰学院 École nationale supérieure des arts décoratifs/ Montpellier	Chongqing University (Chongqing)
拉斯堡大学 Université de Strasbourg	University of Southwest (Chongqing)
多第一大学 Université de Bordeaux 1	Dalian Polytechnic University (Dalian)
多第三大学 Université Bordeaux 3 Michel de Montaigne	Dalian University of Foreign Languages (Dalian)
兹第二大学 Université de Toulouse 2 le Mirail	Dalian University (Dalian)
兹第三大学 Université Paul Sabatier—Toulouse 3	Fudan University (Shanghai)
第二大学 Université de Lyon 2	University of Guilin Electronics and Technology (Guilin)
利埃第二大学 Université Montpellier 2	University of Jilin (Changchun)
利埃第三大学 Université de Paul- Valéry Montpellier 3	Heilongjiang University (Heilongjiang)
第一大学 Université des Sciences et Technologies de Lille—Lille 1	Université de Wuhan (Wuhan)
第三大学 Université de Lille 3	Université des Sciences et Technologies du Zhejiang (Hangzhou)
提埃大学 Université de Poitiers	Université Chinoise de HongKong Hong Kong)
第一大学 Université de Rennes 1	
第二大学 Université de Rennes 2	



## **Section V.4: Abstract Chapter V**

The massification of the education system in China and the continuously increasing number of Chinese students pursuing their studies in France encouraged us to focalize the case study on the educational mediation between French and Chinese entities.

Then I have chosen the organization “Association de la Communication Educative Sino-Française (A.C.E.S.F)” as a platform to answer the research questions; since the association essence is to mediate between Chinese entities and French entities with the objective of simplifying the passage process of a Chinese student, from his request to continue his studies abroad to his integration in France for his studies. This intermediate entity has an interdisciplinary team organization by mission that was officialized in an organigram; however, each member can switch from a mission to another based on the organization need at a specific time, at a specific phase. Knowing that the same team member can be working on different missions, different roles at the same time.

Missions of each team follow an approach of respecting the identity of each of the stakeholders involved in the mediation action with the objective of achieving moderate communication between stakeholders.

Thus, this entity is a constellation of missions, mutually adjusted, following an informal communication system with the objective of assisting the Chinese student all along the way from China to France. This allows me to deduce a system of ad hoc decision-making processes where authority and communication are not objectives in themselves but are flows that aim to facilitate other flows. Also, decision-making is not following any formal system, nor any formal regulation of work standardization but follows a flexible flow of ad hoc decision-making.

This allows me to qualify the organization of ACESF structure as an adhocratic configuration suitable for our case study regarding a “continuum mediation” between the choices of mediation practices: Cultural, Intercultural, Transnational, Environmental, Educational, Scientific, Territorial and Environmental Knowledge mediations; orchestrated by an integrator, the association president while respecting the suitable form of Trust in order to permit a constructive continuity between the different mediation practices.

**THIRD PART**

**LESSONS LEARNED FROM THE CASE STUDY AND  
THEIR INTERPRETATIONS**

## **CHAPTER VI**

### **CASE STUDY**

In this chapter, I present the results of the empirical survey. Among the internal actors met in the A.C.E.S.F are the president, the vice-president, the director of student life, the director of teaching, the management of the partnership development department, students formerly and/or currently members of the association. Among ACESF's external stakeholders, we met mainly with representatives from Chinese and French universities, as well as Chinese language institutes and intermediary agencies related to the higher education sector in China. The empirical survey made it possible to explore the perception of the actors in the field with regard to the subjects set out in the interview guide.

The presentation of the results is organized around three identified themes: the factors justifying membership of the ACESF, the coordination by the ACESF, the binder within the ACESF.

## **Section VI.1: Theme 1 – Factors justifying the membership in ACESF**

The exploration around this theme revolves around two questions: "Why do you join this association the ACESF?" and "Why do you trust this association ACESF? ».

### **A. Why do you join this association ACESF?**

We summarize below the reasons given to justify membership to the ACESF (Association Culturelle Educative Sino-Française), by higher education structures in China, by Chinese students and by higher education professionals in France. Overall, they reflect an active and necessary role due to cultural differences, language barriers, efficiency and regulatory constraints. We summarize these motifs around four axes which we have detailed here below:

- ▶ The complexity of the French educational and administrative systems
- ▶ The need to have a sufficient level of mastery of the French language
- ▶ The regulations around the pursuit of studies in France for Chinese students
- ▶ The difference in cultural codes and practices between France and China

### A.1. The complexity of the French educational and administrative systems

Chinese students seem to lack autonomy and need personalized support to adapt to the requirements of the French education system. And this accompaniment is described by the interviewees as continuous and evolving according to their needs. They mentioned that this support is very intense, especially during their first year in France.

Also, a category of interviewees mentioned that in comparison with other intermediate structures either Chinese or French, ACESF is efficient in their work. They mentioned that over years their university tried to collaborate with official French structures but the process was long and they didn't perceive a quantitative result which wasn't the case with ACESF.

During this first phase of support, some interviewees indicated that they benefit from the choice of language center in China. Student members noted that this was of great importance to them, due to the lack of confidence at this level in China. They then mentioned cases where, following their enrolment at certain language education centers in China to prepare them for the TCF language test, the EFT essential to obtain the student visa through Campus France, they were either abandoned in the middle of the process, or found themselves under an obligation to pay additional fees.

Interviewees also reported that in parallel to their language studies from China, they were obliged to choose the educational institution in France for the continuation of their studies. At this level, neither Campus France nor their Chinese university provided them with explicit information at this level. Beyond the language barrier, they are not familiar with the structuring of the enrolment process and the organization of studies, as they are very different from the Chinese education system.

*"It's not the ACESF that finds the students but it's the students who find it. (...) if we want to take a concrete case, that of a Chinese student wishing to do a master specialized in France, there are 3 reasons to join the ACESF: (1) we do not understand the steps and requirements of universities in France... all in French....(2) you also have to find the right university .... (3) you have to apply at the right time and present a lot of documents for the file...(...) it's too complicated for us.... there are always papers missing and you don't always understand what it means and where to find the documents (...)"*

*« Quand j'essaye de coordonner avec une université Chinoise à travers le système traditionnel, le rythme est lent et c'est rare d'atteindre une collaboration permanente »*

*I respect French structures but it's not easy to coordinate with them (...) I'm still trying to understand the procedures worksheet they sent me*

*I don't know any educational institutions in France and I needed help, the ACESF helped me a lot (...) the ACESF has a large database on educational institutions in France and it helped me a lot to find my university ".*

## **A.2. The need to have a sufficient level of mastery of the French language**

Interviewees reported that the language barrier began to pose a problem even before they arrived on French soil. Indeed, in the absence of aid from Campus France and their Chinese universities, the use of the Internet should theoretically help them. However, the vast majority of the websites of French universities are in French and are therefore difficult to access for these students, who are still just beginning to master the French language.

They also pointed out that even after their arrival on French soil, their basic mastery of the French language (level B1) makes it very difficult to carry out the administrative and official procedures (banking, insurance, residence permit, property rental for their student stay, university registration, etc.).

Interviewees reported that ACESF offers support to student members at various levels. The interviewees pointed out, for example, that the ACESF offers them travel offers to come and discover potential establishments in France according to their study project, in a given region, with the aim of helping them make their choice based on concrete elements. These visits prior to official registration via Campus France include a discovery of the institutions in question, meetings with Chinese and French students already enrolled, meetings with teachers specializing in their disciplines, etc.. This process carried out prior to their choice of establishment in France helps them to engage in a sector that really corresponds to their objectives and their skills. In parallel, through this first contact with France, the members of the association try to encourage students to practice French (examples of situations mentioned by some interviewees: buying bread in a bakery, ordering in a restaurant, etc.). It is a form of upstream immersion in their future environment.

Interviewees also mentioned that the communication was relatively acceptable in English in order to facilitate the primary communication but that created a noticeable gap bridging the process to the following phase due to the accent, the choice of words and their comprehension

*"There are hard regulations in China for students who want to study abroad... For France it is necessary to have a minimum level of mastery of the French language to obtain the student visa (...) French is difficult, to understand, read and speak it... Even if we work a lot, sometimes we get the impression that people in France don't understand our accent and what we want to say (...) the ACESF helps us communicate more easily with people in France".*

*"J'admets que la première difficulté d'intégration des élèves Chinois est leur maîtrise de la langue française ; c'est dommage vu qu'ils seront capable de beaucoup plus en la maîtrisant »*

*"if it takes me 20 minutes now to clearly comprehend the message with them (...) how are we going to coordinate with them (...) if we pursue our communication with them."*

### A.3. The regulation around the pursuit of studies in France for Chinese students

Interviewees pointed out that the steps that Chinese students are obliged to take prior to their arrival in France involve two major obstacles: the creation of the electronic file and the interview with Campus France & the complex connections between Campus France and the French Embassy in China concerning the monitoring and transfer of the student's electronic file. The ACESF seems to support student members to better overcome these two major obstacles. The support provided by the ACESF seems to be based on the creation of the electronic file and the preparation for the interview, or on the follow-up of the file until the end of the process.

Some interviewees mentioned a certain easing or even a growing willingness of Chinese students to pursue their studies abroad. This has encouraged the development of a new education system that is pushing Chinese students to massively pursue their studies abroad, with the aim of bringing new expertise and knowledge back to China.

This context has led to the emergence of new structures called "Intermediate Educational Agent": the ease of obtaining authorization for the creation of such a structure has led to the emergence of a very large number of institutions, or even a market for intermediate agents. In the end, this had a perverse effect and complicated the path of the Chinese student wishing to pursue his studies abroad, instead of simplifying it.

Interviewees noted that the ACESF has helped them to better generate the complexity of this emerging system in China.

*"There are hard regulations in China for students who want to study abroad... It is not easy to have a student visa in China to come to France (...) the ACESF helps us to make all the steps... (...) with the ACESF it is easier to come to study in France (...) my cousin who didn't use ACESF service paid 1000 euros before coming to France and he had the guarantee that it would cover the registration fees to the French university. But when he arrives at the airport, the person who receives him asks him for an extra 1000 euros to complete the university registration formalities".*

*"c'est difficile d'accompagner les élèves dès la création de leur dossier d'inscription en Chine, je sais qu'ils y font face a des soucis pour l'obtention du visa je crois ; mais ma mission commence avec quand ils obtiennent le feu vert »*

*Out of all the list of agents I know, ACESF is a credible one. I didn't see any negative feedback upon from other universities (...) my colleague from another university introduced me to the association*

#### **A.4. The difference in cultural codes and practices between France and China**

Some interviewees pointed out that the Chinese are, because of their culture, generally very reserved and are afraid/unhappy to show that they have not understood, or that they need more explanation. They face this difficulty both in their studies and in their daily lives. They also noted a difficulty in seeking help.

The majority of interviewees pointed to the rigidity of the French education system and also of teachers who do not show a willingness to adapt to the particular needs of foreign students. They also noted their impressions that these teachers or incurred the administrative body does not imagine or understand that students encounter difficulties, or even some logic or culture "it is up to the student to adapt and not the other way around".

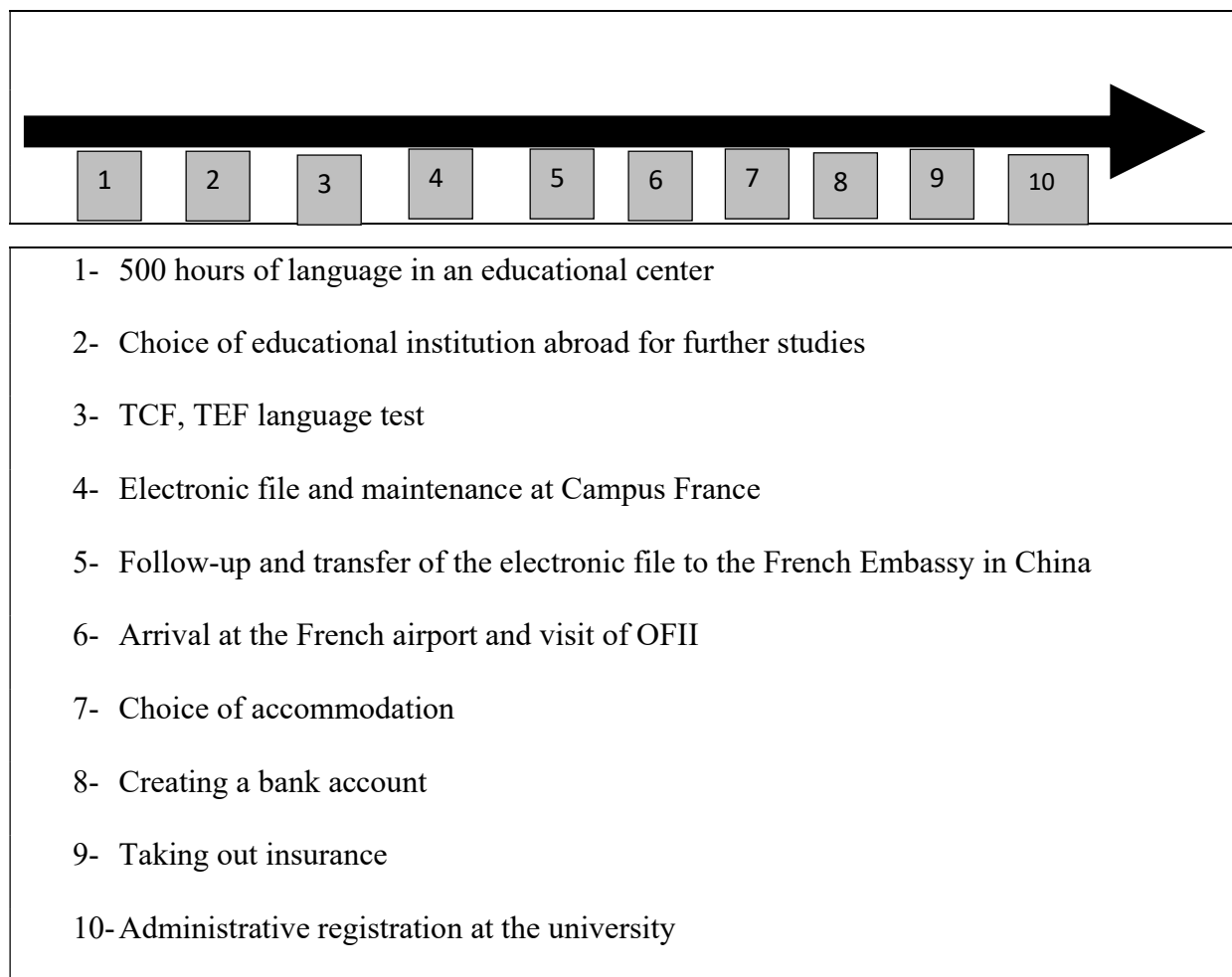
Another difficulty pointed out by some interviewees: the difficulty in the working method generally used in France at Master level. These include group work, which seems to be a problem for them because of their low oral proficiency. This same difficulty is attributed to cultural differences by some other interviewees.

At this level, the ACESF seems to provide valuable support. Interviewees reported communication with teachers on behalf of students, coordination with the school's administrative and pedagogical teams, support in the implementation of projects, etc.

The majority of interviewees mentioned "from A to Z" support as the added value of ACESF over other intermediary agents who seem to organize themselves by specialty: the majority of other intermediary agents in China are specialized in a particular stage of the process (e.g. organization of language courses, support in choosing a foreign establishment, support in preparing for the interview with Campus France, etc.) and do not offer full support throughout the process, as ACESF does. It was also reported that the ease of obtaining authorization for the creation of an intermediate agent structure has led to fraudulent situations, where student applicants have been the victims.



We summarize in the figure below these different actions evoked, and which seem carried out in a sequential and successive way in time:



*"sometimes we don't understand what people mean in France (...) even if we understand the word, we don't always understand the real meaning (...) the French have different habits (...) it's nice in France but sometimes we don't understand what to do (...) in China the habits are different (...) as the people in charge of the ACESF have been living in France for a long time, they understand better than we do and that helps us*

*I couldn't find accommodation, a former member of the ACESF put me in contact with the Direction de la vie étudiante at the university who helped me (...) I didn't understand how to do the administrative registration procedures at the university and there they helped me (...) I understood that in France insurance is compulsory but did not understand how to do (...)"*

*"les élèves Chinois manquent d'autonomie, ce qui est normal je crois vu qu'ils sont dans un pays différent du leur ; mais ils ne sont pas des mineurs, l'adaptation au système doit se faire avec le temps"*

*ACESF has a large database well organized (...) and from which I chose the university I'm interested in communicating with at the light of the courses they give (...) and the educational methods that they have presented on their website and that the association attracted my attention to (...)*

## B. Why do you trust this association ACESF?

The following is a summary of the reasons given by interviewees for joining the ACESF. We noted a difference between the opinions of Chinese students and structures on the one hand and the opinions of the French actors we met on the other hand.

At the level of ACESF student members and Chinese partner structures, we found that what inspires their confidence in ACESF are the leaders of this structure. Also mentioned are the history of the activity of this association and that it has always been trustworthy, or the fact that these leaders have lived in France for several years, or also the fact that they have studied at university in France and that they master both French and Chinese and understand very well the procedures to follow in France. The fact that this structure is approved by the Chinese authorities and officially present in France is also mentioned as a reassuring factor.

*"my cousin has known xxx (the leader's name) for a long time and it is for this reason that we are with the ACESF (...) I heard about xxx (the leader's name) that he studied himself in France, that he lives in France, that he knows a lot from the world and knows a lot from the university (...) and then xxx (the name of the leader) speaks Chinese and we can easily communicate with him (...) my parents asked and everyone recommended us the ACESF because they have a good reputation (...) and then it reassures me and my family that the ACESF is authorized by our country".*

*"j'ai tout d'abord fait la connaissance de Shulei à travers un étudiant qui m'a raconté l'aide que Shulei lui a accordé pour poursuivre ses études et après j'ai vu la qualité de suivi de l'association (...) »*

At the level of the French actors, we noted a unanimity on the fact that their confidence in this structure is justified first of all by the endorsement of the French and Chinese authorities for its action, then by the network of knowledge of the leaders of this association, both in China and in France. Also mentioned is the good mastery of the leaders of this association of codes in both China and France, or that we can easily exchange with them because they speak both Mandarin and French.

*"ACESF is an association officially registered in France and its action falls under the 1901 law and this justifies our collaboration with it (...) we have been dealing with it for a few years and we have not had any problems... (...) they respect the procedures and this is very important for us ... (...) the fact that they are Chinese and that they master both French and Chinese facilitates communication and exchanges... (...) and then the leader of this association seems reliable, it is a facilitating element for us".*

*"j'ai tout d'abord fait la connaissance de Shulei à travers un étudiant qui m'a raconté l'aide que Shulei lui a accordé pour poursuivre ses études et après j'ai vu la qualité de suivi de l'association (...) »*

*« c'est la qualité de leur travail qui est très bien ; efficace en un temps record »*

## **Section 2. Theme 2 – Coordination by ACESF**

The exploration around this theme revolves around two questions: "How does this association work? "How are conflicts resolved? ».

### **A. How does this association ACESF work?**

At the level of the mode of operation, we noted through the interviews that the action of this association is articulated in three stages:

- (1) A preparation phase in China including French language learning, language testing, as well as an educational trip to identify the higher education institution in France that best fits the student's project. The ACESF seems to act as a mediator between the students and all the structures and institutions involved in the process, from China to France;
- (2) An essential intermediate phase, Campus France: the creation of the electronic file on the Campus France website and the preparation for the interview. The ACESF also acts as a mediator between the student and Campus France;
- (3) A long-term support phase, throughout the period of study in France, for members in order to meet their academic (in connection with their studies), administrative (in connection with their residence permits in France), and daily (linked to the needs of daily life, particularly in terms of housing) needs. The support provided by the association begins as soon as they arrive at the airport in France where they are welcomed, passing through the visit of the OFII (French Immigration and Integration Organization), the choice of accommodation, the creation of the bank account, the subscription to insurance, the administrative registration at the chosen university establishment. This support continues at least during the first year of their stay in France. Even if these student members subsequently gain in autonomy, however, the ACESF remains attentive to them and available to support them in case of need. ACESF acts as a mediator between the students and the multitude of structures in France.

*"(...) I have known the ACESF for a very long time, first they helped me learn French and pass the required certification, then they helped me find and enrol at the university in France, then they welcomed me and accompanied me throughout my stay in France... (...) the ACESF was there from the beginning in China until now".*

*"je n'ai pas une idée précise mais j'estime que c'est un système collaboratif vu le mode de coordination que j'ai perçu entre les membres de l'association (..) » "travail par projet"...*

Interviewees also mentioned innovative practices implemented by the ACESF to accompany them in a personalized way, according to their needs. This includes support in academic learning, where personalized teaching support is organized if the student indicates a need. Cultural and tourist entertainment is offered to help them make the most of their stay in France and enrich their cultural horizons.

In particular, they reported thematic visits to historical sites (Versailles Palace, Rambouillet Palace, etc.); educational visits (visits to the national sheepfold in Rambouillet as part of the biodiversity discovery project, where members have built virtually elements of biodiversity existing in this place visits to wine estates to learn the art of French wine) the introduction of language courses at night the establishment of supervised study forms to accompany student members in their study projects. Moreover, this personalized support aims to compensate for the lack of adaptation of the French education system and teachers to the needs of Chinese students.

Some interviewees noted the existence of a multitude of support mechanisms, designed to provide personalized support and to help members in the event of unforeseen circumstances. This includes a logistics team accessible on Wechat or a red number available 24 hours a day; an educational workshop dealing with specific topics (accounting, management, logistics, etc.); forum conferences to facilitate the orientation of future members: offer internships in France.

*"the ACESF has made my life easier... (...) thanks to them I did not have any difficulty to lodge me and if I have a problem I call them directly... (...) they organize us during the holidays trips in all the regions of France... we visited domains for the manufacture of wine and we were shown how wine is made... (...) if I have a problem in a matter, they find me a teacher to help me (...) they organize meals for all the members and it is very nice, we have fun and we get acquainted with the others".*

*"pour chaque réunion avec des acteurs Chinois, je n'avais pas besoin de d'intégrer mon équipe dans les préparatifs ; l'association organisait tout et c'est toujours efficace (...) les acteurs correspondent parfaitement au domaine de notre université et aucune perte de temps entre une activité et une autre (...) »*

The dynamism of the association's leaders is mentioned as a facilitating factor for the students' stay in France, where a logic of continuous improvement seems to reign within the structure. This makes it possible to adapt to changes in regulations in both France and China, as well as to the different needs of the many specialization courses.

*"At first I didn't understand the procedures and formalities to do to get the visa and to come to France, they helped me a lot (...) it was complicated to enroll in university, they helped me (...) the rules in China and France change every day, so they help us a lot with that".*

*"It was never easy to locate a potential university to coordinate with in China (...) but ACESF facilitated the access to the information with its large database (...)"*

*"Je n'ai pas besoin d'expliquer le système éducatif à Shulei, il le connaît très bien »*

*"I tried to coordinate before with (...) an official French structure in order to create a partnership with French universities (...) but I never received a positive response (...) my efforts and administration efforts failed (...) somehow I had the impression that the little size of our university was the cause of the problem (...) till I heard about ACESF and I'm glad of my coordination with them (...)"*

ACESF's journey and evolution from a small student association is pointed out as an illustration of this agility, where its size and objectives have constantly evolved to adapt to the changing needs of Chinese students and the regulatory and social contexts in both countries. To illustrate this, some interviewees mentioned the structuring of the association into different departments, each of which has different competencies:

- International Relations Department, which provides legal assistance
- Language Department, which assists them in learning the French language through classroom courses and field trips that encourage them to practice the language.
- Department of Cultural Action, which helps them integrate into local associations to encourage them to communicate better with other students
- Partnership Development Department, which aims to establish contacts with higher education institutions in France.
- Communication Department, whose mission is to disseminate the association's image both in China and in France.

*"At first I didn't understand the procedures and formalities to do to get the visa and to come to France, they helped me a lot (...) it was complicated to enroll in university, they helped me (...) the rules in China and France change every day, so they help us a lot with that (...) there are a lot of departments, every day there are new things (...) I had a problem in finance and they did a workshop with a teacher to explain to me".*

*"leur support est complet pour les étudiants inscrit dans notre université ; et d'ailleurs s'il y a quelque chose qu'ils ne savent pas, ils l'apprennent rapidement pour assurer leur mission »*

## B. How are conflicts resolved?

Those interviewed as student members reported that there were no conflicts with or within the structure, in particular thanks to the continuous and direct communication between the association's leaders and all its members and external stakeholders. Regarding possible conflicts with external stakeholders in China or France, they noted the lack of information on this subject at their level. They also noted that they have no information about the conflict resolution methods adopted by the association.

*"I've never had a problem with them...(…) no one has ever talked to me about a problem with the ACESF... (…)  
personally I haven't noticed conflicts, I don't know how they deal with problems (…)  
they are good and always try to solve problems, they don't make a fuss for nothing".*

*« je n'en ai jamais entendu qu'ils avaient un problème ou souci avec un des acteurs » ; « je n'ai pas une idée sur leur procédure interne mais moi je n'ai pas fait face à un problème avec eux »*

*« C'est vrai, il n'y a pas très longtemps j'ai eu forcément beaucoup de malentendus à gérer mais ça s'est vite  
régler avec toutes les questions qui sont posées où il y avait des interrogations d'un côté ou de l'autre. C'est le  
dialogue, chaque côté s'explique et essaye de comprendre l'autre »*

Interviewees related to institutional stakeholders in China and France pointed out that the resolution of potential conflicts will be done according to the prevailing laws in both countries, however we found unanimity on the very low incidence of conflicts with the ACESF, where potential disagreements are generally settled amicably, or even thanks to well mastered communication by the association's leaders.

Some interviewees evoked that the main causes of divergences are linked to different management practices between the two countries: in France, the preparation of upstream action is essential, whereas in China action is always immediate. ACESF appears to play a mediating and facilitating role to address potential conflict situations.

*"Frankly, I have never had problems with them (…)  
if conflicts happen, well it is the law that will decide... (…)  
it is the law that will judge, if we have problems with them, but so far we have not had such situations... (…)  
they communicate very well and that helps us to find solutions to problems, we always manage to find a solution  
together (…)  
once he asked me at the last minute and to present it to him an hour later, of course I refused, it is  
not acceptable to work without preparation (…)  
in my work I am very reactive and I work everything, right  
away, it is not necessary to prepare everything before (…)  
why waste your time to prepare".*

### **Section 3. Theme 3 – The Binder within the ACESF**

The exploration around this theme revolves around two questions: "What are the strengths of this association? "What are the weaknesses of this association? ».

#### **A. What are the strengths of this association ?**

Our survey enabled us to identify four factors that represent assets for this structure:

**A.1 The mastery of both languages (French and Mandarin)** by the association's leaders is a factor of great importance and facilitator for the ACESF's action, both in France and in China. Interviewees told us that thanks to the bilingualism of the association's leaders, the language barrier was easier to overcome and to coordinate with the other party.

*"he is Chinese and speaks our language, and that reassured me... (...) when I arrived in France, I already had the required level in French, but I missed the practice, fortunately he spoke my language... (...) at first I was afraid to speak French, I was afraid, I didn't dare so it's good that they speak both languages... (..) at first people didn't understand my accent, they helped me a lot".*  
*"c'est Shulei (..)"*

**A.2 The codes of China** (country of birth of the leaders of the association) **and France** (thanks to a long period of presence on French territory). The interviewees explained to us that a good understanding of the cultural practices of both countries contributes greatly to preparing them well for change before leaving China and to accompanying them well in France.

*"In China, we have different habits... In France people behave in a strange way for us (...) xxx (the name of the leader) explained to me what to do and how to work French (...) they made us meetings to explain a little how people do here".*

Moreover, this ability to manage intercultural dimensions helps managers to manage managerial issues and to reconcile different managerial practices between the two countries. According to the interviewees, this faculty facilitates the procedures from the beginning of the process in China, until their graduation in France.

*"In France people work differently than in China....in China, it's always the chief who makes the decision, and to respect it is necessary and important (...) I don't know how xxx (the leader's name) manages to work, it's very different". "les faux pas ne sont pas permis et l'association m'évite ce souci-là par rapport aux acteurs Chinois »*

**A.3 The existence of an extensive personal network of ACESF leaders,** both in France and China, appears to greatly facilitate its action in China and France. Indeed, interviewees noted that the quality and breadth of the personal network of the ACESF leaders reinforces the strategic and prospective vision of this association, by placing it in a virtuous logic. Moreover, this ability to adapt to students' needs is pointed out as a major asset of this organization.

This network has led to the creation of a platform with multiple resources (databases on training courses and the institutions providing them). The result was an integrated system comprising publishing houses, public and private universities and administrative support. It has also addressed the problem of the lack of French language teachers in China by sending French teachers.

*"they are strong...they know a lot of contacts (...) thanks to the xxx network (the name of the leader), we managed to carry out the xxx project very quickly, everyone was surprised (...) every time there is a problem, he has always the right contact to solve it (...) he knows very well the French educational system (...) serious and professional program (...) diversified activities (...) platform (...) varied to meet the needs of students (...)"*  
*« l'association a des contacts diversifiés et ils savent bien répondre aux profils de chacun »*

**A.4 Attributes held by the officers or even by the President of the ACESF.** The interviewees cited charisma, patience, flexibility, ability to convince and solve problems, constant presence at all levels and continuous listening, a long experience in the field in question.

*"without him nothing will work well (...) if he is not there, it is a catastrophe (...) he is always patient and never gets angry (...) he finds a solution to everything (...) he knows how to adapt to all situations (...) he always has the right word to convince (...) he is always calm even when I get angry (...) he never gets angry (...)"*  
*“il est humble et efficace. Il ne fait pas d'histoires pour rien »*



## **B. What are the weaknesses of this association?**

The majority of interviewees expressed concerns about the structure's sustainability because of its heavy dependence on leaders. This association seems to be the life work of the founding directors, who remain strongly involved in its operation, both at operational and strategic levels. This broad involvement seems to be seen as both a strength and a weakness.

A majority of interviewees noted that association status is a weakness for ACESF. For the Chinese, the association is not a "big brand" and therefore has no influence.

We also noted a convergence of opinions on the lack of staff, considered as a sign of weakness of the structure. Also, the position of mediator seems to harm the leaders of the association, who suffer the impact of the cultural misunderstandings of some and others, Chinese and French. This is also mentioned as a factor of weakness, even ineffectiveness.

Some interviewees compared the speed of ACESF's action to other equivalent structures in China and described it as less rapid. But this can be justified by the scope of the program proposed by the ACESF and the reduced staff.

The association's youth is also reported as a factor of weakness by some interviewees.

*"The ACESF is xxx (the name of the officer) and xxx (the name of the same officer) is the ACESF... (...) he created it and manages everything! ...(...) if he isn't there, I don't know if it will hold... (...) I work with the ACESF because xxx (the leader) is there, I know him and I trust him... if he leaves I don't know if I will continue to work with them... (...) the team is very small (...) they are slow sometimes".*

*"L'association est relativement jeune et ce facteur n'es pas à leur avantage »*

**CHAPTER VII**

**CASE STUDY ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATIONS**

In this chapter we analyze the results of the empirical survey in the light of theory. Our approach adopts an abductive reasoning, involving back and forth between theory and empirical results.

At the theoretical level, our analysis takes as its starting point the theoretical reading grid defined in the first part of the thesis. In order to answer our problem, we confront the findings of our empirical investigation with theoretical knowledge and we will seek in a first step to understand why the establishment of a «mediation continuum» is necessary for a successful mediation process; then in a second part we will seek to identify the necessary conditions for continuity between mediation practices, through our answers to our three research questions, which constitute the explanatory variables of our problem.

### **Section VII.1 : Why the establishment of an adhocratic configuration is necessary for a «mediation continuum»?**

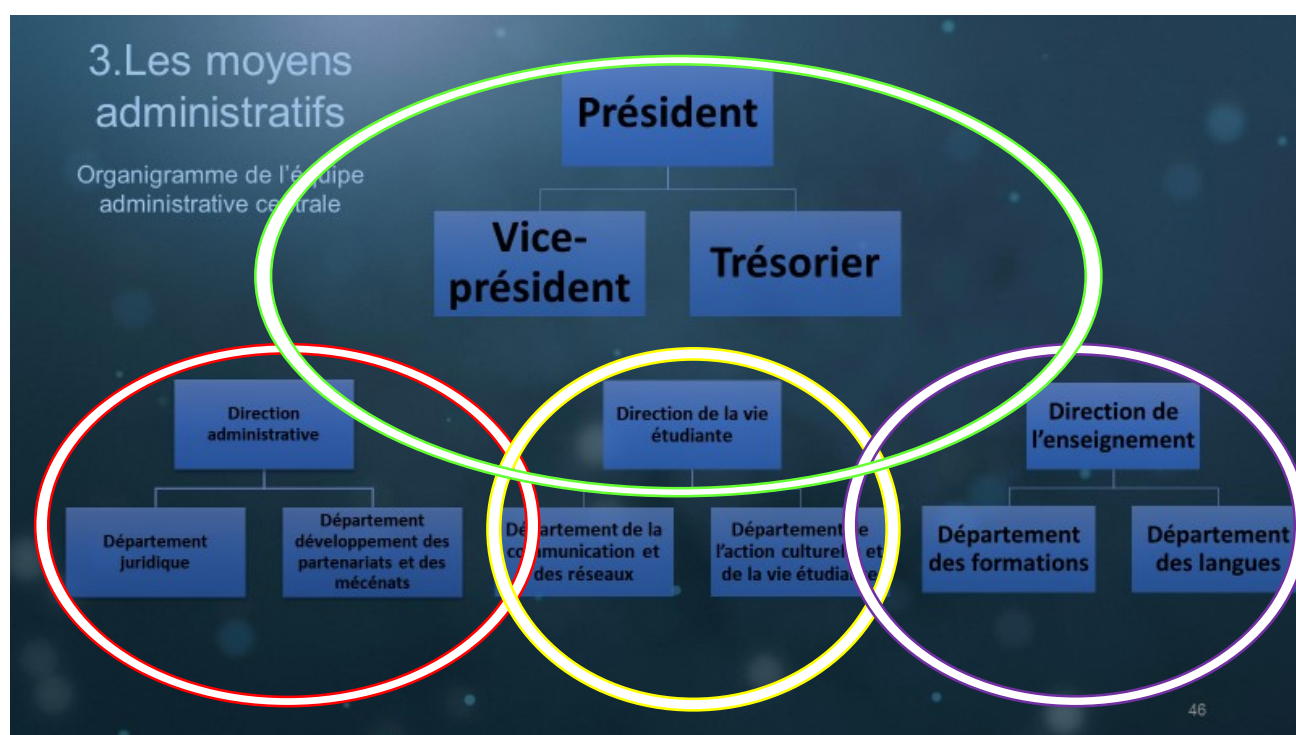
The literature review enabled us to identify a broad typology of mediation, some of which are to catalyze links, while others have a dispute management perspective. We have justified this choice in the second part of this thesis, where we retain only the forms of mediation that catalyze links in an educational approach. This choice proved to be appropriate to this case study, where similarities in meaning, mediation tasks were apparent.

At the level of objectives, the ACESF demonstrates a very prominent decision-making capacity, which takes on a democratic look. Each member and/or external partner can propose an idea or a project. The feasibility of the various ideas and projects is analyzed collegially within the governing team of the ACESF. These ideas and projects seem to take many forms without restriction. These can be new coordination projects with new actors, or new facilitating services for student approaches, or also new educational mechanisms, or even cultural events. Cross-disciplinary communication facilitates information sharing between the various internal and external actors, where different tools are mobilized (weekly and annual meetings, forums, a website, etc.). The lever of communication is further strengthened by the creation of representative offices within various universities that are partners in the ACESF, which facilitates the flow of information in a transversal manner.

The A.C.E.S.F management initiated an initiative to bring the players closer together, facilitated by the communication tools already mentioned. It is manifested by a structured approach rooted in the practices of the association, which seems to be articulated in three intertwined phases, the main one being not the meeting with the potential partner, but rather those linked to the steps before and after this meeting. The logic of transversality in communication reinforces this approach to «mediation continuum».

At the development level, the A.C.E.S.F is structured around "directions" with clearly identified and demarcated missions and each of these directorates has well-defined departments with specific missions as we have already presented in the association identity second part of this thesis.

We illustrate the initial association organigram in the diagram below:



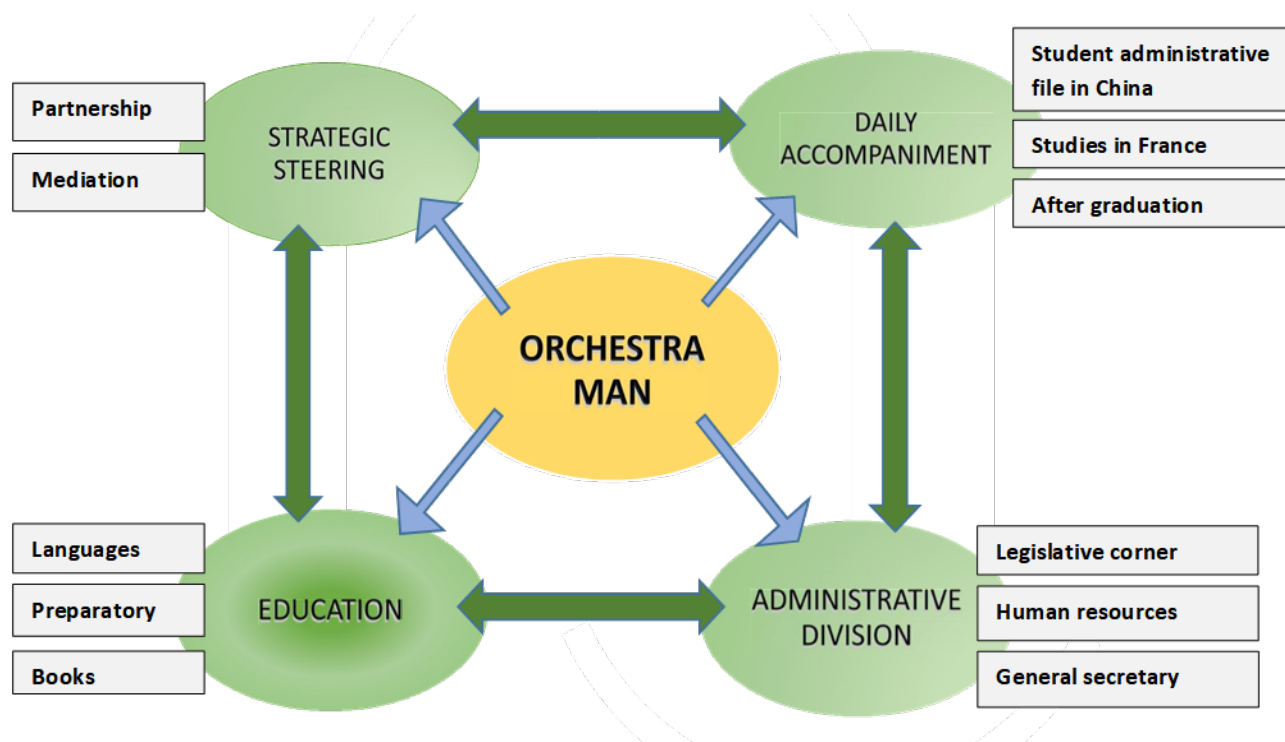
This structuring of the organization of the A.C.E.S.F allows for a structured, but not necessarily linear, mediation approach. Indeed, its flexibility seems to allow an entangled approach, where multiple actions are carried out both upstream and downstream of the meeting with the potential partner. The mobilization of a multitude of communication levers seems to facilitate the smooth running of their projects.

This seems to be part of a virtuous logic, where a multitude of new projects are constantly being added to existing projects (opening towards high schools, closer links with publishing houses or UNESCO, partnerships with municipalities and local authorities, etc.).

Over time, A.C.E.S.F initiates ongoing and sustained interaction with and between internal and external stakeholders. This leads to the emergence of partnerships initiated either by members on behalf of the A.C.E.S.F or by the management of this association. This approach contributes to the rapid enrichment of the association's partner base. The increased involvement of associate members in the future of the A.C.E.S.F seems to be a major asset.

All these elements lead us to conclude that mediation within the A.C.E.S.F is rather entangled in creating value and not a simple mediation with the sole aim of resolving conflicts. The result is a «mediation continuum» in the sense of Eric Batistoni (2012), which seems essential for the durability and effectiveness of this approach.

Highlighting that during our active participation to the association actions we have identified that the hierarchical organigram doesn't represent the reality on ground and after discussing with the association president regarding the difference between the coordination mode on ground and the hierarchical organigram of the association, we have agreed on below structure modulation.



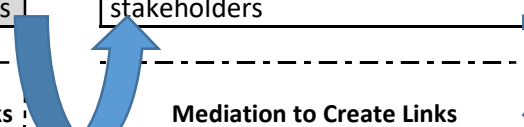
In the following section, we will seek to identify levers that would reinforce this «mediation continuum» dynamic. All of these elements are summarized in the table below.

<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Characteristics</b>		<b>ACESF</b>
<b>OBJECTIVE</b>	<b>AGREEMENT</b>	<b>COMMUNICATION</b>	<b>COMMUNICATION</b>
	Low decision-making potential due to lack of integration  Objective to reach a decision	High decision making potential for integration  Information Sharing Objective	High decision-making potential within the ACESF. Internal and external stakeholders are involved in decision-making. Information sharing is continuous and permanent, through multiple channels
<b>LINKING</b>	<b>INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIP</b>	<b>PARTNERSHIP RELATIONSHIPS</b>	<b>PARTNERSHIP RELATIONSHIPS</b>
	*Ephemeral relationship  Direct dialogue between mediator and stakeholders	Constructive reports  Circular communication via tools	A culture of internal and external transversal communication between stakeholders and actors  Establishment of a database accessible as an online platform
<b>PROCESS</b>	<b>STRUCTURED MEDIATION</b>	<b>STRUCTURED APPROACH</b>	<b>STRUCTURED APPROACH</b>
	Set of sequential steps  *led by a mediator  for a small group of people  to resolve a common conflict	Configuration of structured "objects"  driven by an intermediate mechanism  for a large group of people  to transform individuals and their relationship to the world	The structure is already organized into departments with well-defined and demarcated missions. A database is established comprising all universities and their training offerings. Its updating is the responsibility of well-identified individuals a well-established mechanism for the organization of educational events  a business model with a virtuous perspective
<b>DURATION</b>	<b>SHORT AND PRECISE</b>	<b>LONG AND INDETERMINATE</b>	<b>LONG AND INDETERMINATE</b>
	Efficiency of the process by the respect of a short duration of time	Effectiveness of the approach by the degree of maturity of the ideas	Constant and sustainable interactions with and between stakeholders

Mediation to resolve disputes

Mediation to create Links

Mediation to Create Links



## **Section VII.2: The conditions necessary for a “mediation continuum”**

To identify success factors, and even facilitating levers for the "«mediation continuum»" in the sense of Battistoni (2012), we will seek in this section to answer our three research questions. Ultimately, this analysis will lead us to respond to our research problems, or even how to catalyze a «mediation continuum» approach that creates value?

- ▶ In what measures is the presence of an orchestra-man is decisive for a «mediation continuum» approach?
- ▶ In what measures does Trust ensure a «mediation continuum» approach?
- ▶ In what measures does an adhocratic configuration favor a «mediation continuum» approach?

### **A. To what extent is the presence of a pilot/ an orchestra-man decisive for a «mediation continuum» approach?**

The practices mobilized by the ACESF can be assimilated to a "win-win" approach to reasoned negotiation. This seems to impose itself as a cultural posture, even as a cultural paradigm for this association, which is thus a guarantor of the freedom of expression of its members and external partners. The result is a climate of trust, particularly in the eyes of the founding director of this association, which seems to facilitate its mediation action.

This founding director seems to be assimilated to an "integrator" in the Mintzberg sense, who initiates liaison mechanisms with a view to better adapting the ACESF to the needs of its members. These mechanisms are illustrated, for example, in the creation of positions for integrating managers, heads of departments, with formal authority and ensuring a link, or even a link between the various actors. The formal power of the integrating managers of the different directorates and departments impacts the other departments, without however being accompanied by an overall formal authority between them.

The work of this director-founder-integrator seems to encounter difficulties, particularly because of the need to influence people over whom he has no formal authority, such as partner universities in France and China, or institutional bodies in France and China, or also members.

Our empirical investigation allowed us to understand that this director-founder-integrator possesses the attributes of a pilot in the sense of Galbraith (1973), which are essential for the sustainability of the ACESF's action, which is part of a «mediation continuum» approach. These attributes include the following:

- The mastery by the pilot of the official languages of the countries concerned by the organization's action (French and Mandarin in the case of ACESF) is essential
- A good understanding of cultural practices related to the countries concerned by the organization's action (France and China in the case of ACESF).
- The existence of a personal pilot network in the countries concerned by the organization's action (in France and China in the case of ACESF) is essential. This enables it to position itself at the crossroads of exchanges.
- The ability to reconcile different management practices between different countries. It is about acting as a buffer. He orchestrates decision-making within the organization and guarantees its collegiality. Thanks to its coordination, differences become a wealth and not a weakness.
- The capacity to be a catalyst, capable of initiating ideas and projects and to federate actors in a sustainable way. This is facilitated by his knowledge and overview. The result is a climate of trust, of which it is the center. His power is justified in part by his expertise and knowledge.
- The ability to be flexible and patient. It is the ability to endure the fact of being between groups sometimes having divergent opinions and objectives and to be accepted by each of them without their objectivity being affected.

Thus, this director-founder-integrator seems to play the role of pilot within the ACESF, even a man-orchestra who plays (1) the role of project manager by building the borders of the association and by managing the entries and exits of the members (2) the role of architect, by building the rules of operation within the ACESF and with its external partners ; (3) the role of guarantor of unity, by working to establish a climate of trust, adherence and loyalty to the ACESF's action, through the various cultural, educational and administrative support activities (before arrival in France and throughout the stay on French soil); (4) the role of



mediator, by guaranteeing transparent and transversal communication towards and between members.

All these attributes seem to be crucial for creating a context of trust throughout the intercultural educational mediation process.

## **B. To what extent does trust ensure a «mediation continuum» approach?**

Our survey revealed a difference in the reasons for trust between internal and external Chinese stakeholders on the one hand, and external French stakeholders on the other.

On the Chinese side, the first source of trust is that linked to the people, and in particular to the person of the project leader, the director-founder-integrator, or the man-orchestra pilot. It is a trust linked to the person of the pilot-man in the sense of Zucker (1986), relating to the intangible assets he holds (expertise, knowledge network, good mastery of codes in France and China, bilingualism, patience, etc.).

In a second level comes the relational trust in the sense of Zucker (1986), induced by the intensity of the exchanges within the association. This generates mutual learning, where members become ambassadors for ACESF and seek to contribute to the development of its network. Although young, the history of the ACESF's action reinforces relational trust. Also, the rich personal network of the pilot contributes to intensify the changes within and around this organization. The result is greater trust in the ACESF, both for potential student members and their families, as well as for higher education structures in China and for Chinese public and state organizations.

In a third level, institutional trust in the sense of Zucker (1986) arises, based on standards, official regulations both in China and in France (compliance with regulations around higher education in France - Campus France, enrolment process...-regulations around the pursuit of studies abroad for Chinese students, etc.). Institutional confidence can also be justified within the ACESF by structuring the association in management and in department, equipped with procedures that facilitate control. This is the trust arising from the organizational structure in the sense of Mintzberg (1986).

So, for Chinese stakeholders, trust is justified successively by:

- ✓ Trust in the person of the man-orchestra pilot is considered the most important.
- ✓ Relationship trust comes second
- ✓ And finally, institutional trust

On the French side, trust is an institutional priority. Universities and higher education institutions in France trust and work with the ACESF because its action is officially authorized by the French authorities and because it respects French laws and regulations. The French partners do not seem ready to make concessions at this level and expect the ACESF and its leaders as well as its members to respect all the formal processes in force. If this is not done, collaboration will not be able to take place.

Thereafter, relational trust becomes explanatory. A first successful experience will encourage the French partner to renew the cooperation. Any failure can have an impact on the sustainability of cooperation, where the history of relations becomes decisive. The ability to adapt to the dominant registers in both countries is an essential attribute carried by the pilot: when he presents himself in China, it is his person who will be the basis for making contact, where first- and second-degree links are facilitating. When he is in France, however, he is obliged to change his stance by emphasizing the official presence of his organization on French territory and its action.

Then comes confidence in the pilot, which is important, but not paramount.

So, for the French stakeholders, trust is justified successively by:

- ✓ Institutional trust is the most important.
- ✓ Relationship trust will then follow
- ✓ Then finally comes the confidence in the person of the man-orchestra pilot

Although "trust" did not necessarily eliminate the risk of opportunism and only reduced it, it did provide major advantages, particularly in terms of reducing the uncertainty associated with the ACESF's action and promoting a long-term vision as predicted by Huault (2002). This reduces the risk of opportunism and betrayal, with a view to immediate gains and

promotes the commitment of the partners of the ACESF, respect for the interests of the partners and their independence, or also joint decision-making. Trust then becomes a key vector for a successful and effective alliance (Wacheux, 1994).

On the other hand, trust, generated by the multiplication of inter-individual relationships between internal and external stakeholders at various levels within the AESF, appears to reduce the risk of opportunism inherent in the unique relationship. These relationships, which seem to take hold over time, can provide additional protection against opportunism. They promote the establishment of mutual learning processes based on voluntary compliance with common rules, as well as on implicit commitments respected over time by stakeholders. The result is indeed an increase in the reliability of behavior within this association, a credibility increase in the skills of both the leaders and the members, a confirmation of the good will of the various stakeholders who have established their collaboration with the ACESF over the long term (certain collaborations have been transformed over time into partnerships, where certain universities now welcome a large number of Chinese students who are members of the ACESF) and a securing of their positive attitude in the event of unforeseen turbulence.

Trust and reciprocity between universities and higher education institutions in France is manifested through their welcome for Chinese students and the ACESF, which sponsors educational and cultural activities (such as study seminars in China for students). This generates a dynamic of interdependence between stakeholders.

However, trust is not a fixed state or attitude over time, whatever it is the form of trust or the source of its acquisition. It is the responsibility of the ACESF to maintain it, at the risk of losing it.

In the context of a mediation mission that extends over time, we can therefore see that the three forms of trust (personal, relational and institutional) are essential and essential. Trust in its three forms even seems to ensure a leading role in the creation of partnerships for the ACESF, in its development and in its durability.

We summarize in the table below all our findings related to the confidence factor:

<b>Trust</b>	
<b>For the Chinese</b>	<b>For the French</b>
<p>*Trust in the person of the pilot/man-orchestra is the most important.</p> <p>*Relationship trust follows</p> <p>*Institutional trust will follow last</p>	<p>*Institutional trust is the most important.</p> <p>*Then comes relationship trust</p> <p>*lastly, trust in the person of the pilot/man-orchestra</p>

In addition to the factors of trust and piloting by a pilot/man-orchestra, the introduction of a flexible and agile structural configuration (Mintzberg, 1986) may constitute a plausible lead, which we develop below in response to our third question.

### **C. To what extent does an adhocratic configuration favors a «mediation continuum» approach?**

Our investigation allowed us to note the existence within the ACESF of factors which seem to us significant and explanatory with regard to the organizational structure:

- Innovative coordination practices: personalized support
- Long-term vision articulated around three phases: upstream, meeting and downstream
- Dynamic and iterative process: agile structure, continuous improvement logic
- Internal and external contingency factors: the internal structure of this structure (size, premise, objectives, etc.) is a response adapted to the external context.

In the first section of this chapter, we have concluded that mediation within the ACESF is value-creating in nature and not exclusively aimed at conflict resolution. Through our empirical survey we have indeed observed mediation practices mobilized by the ACESF, both at the level of primary and secondary axes, which shows its anchoring in this paradigm.

Cultural mediation is manifested in the activities of the ACESF through links with cultural institutions (museums, theatres) for the realization of cultural events. These events are supposed to be the preludes for lasting collaborations.

Intercultural mediation is manifested through Chinese cultural activities in France (Chinese New Year's Day) and the presence of Chinese students in higher education institutions in France.

Transnational mediation is manifested through the creation of mechanisms to facilitate Chinese and French cultural convergence. This includes workshops and activities for Chinese students and staff to understand French culture and customs. This is part of intercultural and international management.

Environmental mediation is manifested through inter-university projects around environmental protection and sustainable development, both in France and China.

Educational mediation is manifested in the educational support activities organized for Chinese students, in order to compensate for the differences in teaching methods between France and China.

Scientific mediation aims to popularize scientific knowledge to be better understood by the Chinese.

Territorial mediation is manifested through attempts to bring together territorial authorities linked to the place of residence in France of Chinese students (partnership with certain municipalities, in the framework of twinning projects with cities in China. The objective is to facilitate access to the residence of Chinese students in France).

The mediation of environmental knowledge is manifested through joint projects between French and Chinese institutions and establishments, in order to face common challenges or to achieve common objectives (collaborative projects).

We summarize these elements in the table below:

<b>Mediation Practices to catalyze links</b>	<b>Primary Axis at ACESF</b>	<b>Secondary Axis at ACESF</b>
<b>Cultural mediation</b>		Rapprochement with cultural institutions for joint activities between France and China
<b>Intercultural mediation</b>	-Chinese cultural activities in France -Chinese students in France	
<b>Transnational mediation</b>	Activities to understand French culture and customs	
<b>Environmental mediation</b>		Development of natural resources program between France and China
<b>Educational Mediation</b>	Development of educational methods adapted to Chinese students	
<b>Scientific mediation</b>		Science Extension Activities for Chinese Students
<b>Territorial mediation</b>		Twinning projects between cities in China and France
<b>Mediation of environmental knowledge</b>		Sino-French collaboration to be studied as a future project in order to collaborate on common projects Chinese stakeholders

Therefore, for a «mediation continuum», the ACESF seems to mobilize all mediation practices in a combined and entangled manner. It thus departs from the fragmented and isolated mobilization of these practices.

The convergence between the practices mobilized by the ACESF and which our survey has highlighted, with the different typologies of organizational structures in the sense of Mintzberg (1986), has enabled us to assimilate it to an adhocratic structure.

The coordination mechanism mainly mobilized by the ACESF is mutual adjustment, where this association constantly works to adapt its approaches and its mode of operation, both to the needs of students and to the requirements of French and Chinese partners. Agility therefore becomes an obligation, not an option, in this constantly evolving sector.

The basic element of the organization is revealed to be the different functions within the ACESF. Indeed, none of these functions are of minor importance and all can be vital depending on the situation and the project undertaken. The ACESF is organized around specialized units with specific missions well demarcated, in order to meet the needs of students as widely as possible.

The flow system is mainly based on informal and transversal communication between the different units and the different actors of the ACESF. Each student can benefit from a combined support provided jointly by all the units, each in its field of expertise.


At the same time, this is accompanied by a weak formalization of behavior and a very invisible hierarchy.

Concerning the liaison mechanisms, we noted a strong communication intensity which is illustrated, on one hand through the various devices set up (website, red number for members, etc.) and on the other hand through all the events organized with the partners to make the association and its activity better known, or through the various partnership projects (UNESCO, Town halls, High schools, etc.). This faculty also manifests itself in the internal coordination within the ACESF.

Concerning the specialization of workstations, or even the grouping into units, we noted that the ACESF organizes its action around specialized units, with well-defined missions. However, despite this specialized aspect, the versatility of the members of the association was very visible, where each could compensate in case of need for the absence of another. This results in a constant and uninterrupted service to student members. The ability to deal with the unexpected is strengthened.

We summarize all these elements in the diagram below.

Criteria	Main coordination mechanism	Basic element of the organization	Flow system	Formalization of behavior	Linkage mechanisms	Specialization of workstations	Grouping into units
<b>Adhocracy</b>	Mutual Adjustment	Support Functions	Informal communication flows, constellation of works	Few	Many, everywhere	Focus on horizontal specialization	By Functions and By Market



<b>ACESF Structural Configuration</b>	Mutual adjustment to the needs of Sino-French stakeholders	A set of specialized units, all vital to the association	An informal communication flow between the different specialized units of the ACESF to simultaneously provide a complete accompaniment	Low formalism and low visibility of hierarchy	Information-intensive - a multitude of devices and projects	The ACESF is organized around specialized units by function of equal importance. However, the members are versatile in order to better deal with the unexpected and ensure a constant service to Chinese students.
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Also, through the developments made above with regard to mediation practices and structural configurations, we note that the «mediation continuum» in the sense of Eric Batistoni (2012) seems really anchored in the practices of the ACESF, where the adoption of an adhocratic structure contributes to the durability and effectiveness of the wide range of mediation practices it conducts simultaneously.

Through this chapter, we have explained that the establishment of a “«mediation continuum»” is necessary for a successful mediation process. We justified it by the multiple needs of Chinese students in France, from the beginning of their steps in China, through their arrival and settlement in France, to their support for the smooth running of their studies and obtaining their diplomas. Thus, mediation mobilized by the ACESF presents itself as a combination of mediation practices, all complementary and all of equal importance.

### **Section VII.3: Abstract Chapter VII**

Through this chapter, we have explained that the establishment of a “«mediation continuum»” is necessary for a successful mediation process. We justified it by the multiple needs of Chinese students in France, from the beginning of their steps in China, through their arrival and settlement in France, to their support for the smooth running of their studies and obtaining their diplomas. Thus, mediation mobilized by the ACESF presents itself as a combination of mediation practices, all complementary and all of equal importance. Also, we have justified it by the universities, educational structures raising needs to mediate between Sino-French organizations and that the traditional structures dedicated to this role aren't filling this gap.

We then identified factors to promote the durability of the mediation process, through our answers to our three research questions, which constitute the explanatory variables of our problem. We concluded that the presence of a pilot/man-orchestra with specific attributes working within the organization, the ability to mobilize the form of trust adapted to the interlocutor and its cultural specificity, as well as the mobilization of an organizational structure in an agile and flexible adhocratic form, largely contribute to triggering a continuous, sustainable and effective mediation process and facilitates continuity between the different mediation practices.

Through all these developments we have responded to our problem by showing through our case study that a “mediation continuum” is possible through an adhocratic structure combined to the Trust factor and Orchestra-man.



**CHAPTER VIII**

**RESEARCH CONTRIBUTIONS AND LIMITATIONS**

In this chapter, we present, in a first section, the theoretical and managerial contributions of our research. In a second section, we present the limitations of the research.

## **Section VIII.1: Research contributions**

Like any research work in "Management Sciences", our research aims to enrich knowledge, in theoretical and methodological fields, for the organizations constituting the object of our research but also potentially transferable to other organizations.

### **A. Theoretical contribution**

The main theoretical contribution of our research is, in our opinion, at the following level:

#### **A.1 In relation to the Battistoni (2012)"«mediation continuum»" principles, the principle of continuity between different mediation practices (Lalonde, 2001; Bernard et al. 2001; Chini, 2001; Faget, 2012)**

The concepts proposed by these researchers highlight the lack of continuity between the different mediation practices, without however defining the conditions for success. Our research has enriched this theoretical knowledge through the identification of success levers that can facilitate the articulation between different mediation practices. These include (1) a mobilization of the form of trust depending on the nature of the interlocutor and his cultural particularism; (2) the presence of a pilot playing the role of a man-orchestra and endowed with essential attributes, such as the mastery of participatory managerial practices, a flexible temperament, a significant negotiating capacity, the holding of intangible assets linked to expertise, the personal network held and the social influence; (3) the establishment of an adhocratic structure, which increases the organization's flexibility, agility and capacity to adapt to changes in its environment. The combination of these three levers can contribute to the establishment of a successful «mediation continuum», or even sustained continuity between the different mediation practices.

## **B. Methodological contributions**

The main methodological contributions of our research are at three levels:

### **B.1 The identification of two categories of mediations following the listing of existing mediation practices according to four identified main variables.**

We have listed the different existing mediation practices according to four criteria resulting from the confrontation of a multitude of theoretical knowledge: (1) Objective; (2) Relationship; (3) Process; (4) Duration. We therefore identified two categories of mediations: Mediation to manage a dispute & Mediation to catalyze links. The identification of these categories allows the decision maker to better understand the choice of mediation practices according to needs.

### **B.2 Identifying attributes of mediators in an intercultural setting**

The mediator must adopt a pilot and man-orchestra posture. In addition to the classical attributes linked to this type of role, the mediator in the cultural and academic field on an international scale must master the managerial, cultural and regulatory codes of the countries where he is called upon to work. To this we add the need to master the languages of these countries and to adopt a posture of initiator by breaking with the wait-and-see attitude. The mediator needs to be a catalyzer for bridging an intercultural setting.

### **B.3 The adequacy between the form of trust and the cultural specificity of the interlocutor, in an intercultural context**

Given the existence of different types of trust justified by conflicting factors, it seems advisable to know how to mobilize the form of trust according to the cultural specificity of the interlocutor, where in some cultures it is institutional trust that is paramount (for example, France), while in others it is trust linked to people that is the most determining (for example, China).

#### **B.4 The identification of an adhocratic structure modulation in an intercultural setting for a continuum mediation**

We have proposed an adhocratic structure modulation of “objects” allowing multiple divisions/missions to collaborate effectively for a continuum mediation. The suggested objects modulation permits mutual adjustment between the divisions where support functions are primordial and collaborative in their work to respond in common to a defined objective.

The flow system between the different constellation of work is based on informal communication where formalization of agent’s behaviors is rare seeing the diversity of potential of missions and issues. Finally, workstations are grouped by functions and continuum mediation is achieved where multiple types of mediation types can be mobilized in one project or even through projects.

### **Section VIII.2: Limitations of the research**

Like all "research work", ours has limits that we seek to clarify in the interests of scientific transparency and intellectual honesty.

The first limitation lies in the methodological choice. In terms of sampling, our sample is representative (directors, student members, institutional stakeholders, etc.) but its size is small and the interviews conducted are few. In terms of data collection methods, the exclusive choice of the "qualitative" method and the "semi-directive interviewing" survey tool as the main source constitutes a bias for our work. In terms of data processing methods, we have adopted exclusively "qualitative thematic analysis" and "manual coding", which may reduce the validity of our results

On these various aspects, we have tried to justify our choices and to compensate as far as possible for the resulting shortcomings. We diversified our data sources (exploratory survey, main survey, secondary data), conducted multiple coding, validated our analysis grids by the interviewees, and we made sure to accurately reflect our approach and results when writing our thesis.

The second limitation lies in our research focus. The particular nature of our theme and field of research reduces the potential transferability of our results. The choice of an associative structure in the education sector working between two countries with particularities, China

and France, as the object of research, carries a multitude of biases. To compensate for this, we have defined a research period on which our analysis is based, we have referred to previous work and we have continually updated our data by taking into account new data around the ACESF, or via informal exchanges with stakeholders of this association and its members.

Moreover, the treatment of our research object may incur a risk of subjectivity, due to ideological, political and cultural considerations that are not negligible, especially since we have chosen an interpretativist epistemological positioning and an active participation. Therefore, we cannot claim absolute objectivity, although we have tried to reduce the impact of our subjectivity by taking precautions, particularly in the collection and processing of data, or when establishing our analysis grids.

## **GENERAL CONCLUSION**

*“At the most important crossroads in our lives,  
there are no signs” Hemingway*

The starting point of our research work was a relatively simple questioning of the continuity between different mediation practices. Our question was justified in the light of theory, given the limited number of studies addressing the question of the "«mediation continuum»". We combined our theoretical approach with a field study, in order to answer our question. We have chosen the Association de la communication Educative Sino-Française (A.C.E.S.F) and its stakeholders as our field of study and case study.

From the theoretical point of view, we have observed an unsatisfactory current knowledge in the field of continuity between the different mediation practices.

The question then is how to catalyze a value-creating "continuum mediation" approach? Indeed, the latter can allow the articulation between the different mediation practices. The weak conceptualization that allows us to describe, explain and master the "mediation continuum" has justified our problem.

From an empirical point of view, the Association de la communication Educative Sino-Française (A.C.E.S.F) and its stakeholders respond to the need of Chinese students wishing to pursue their studies in France. Its personalized and innovative approach, well adapted to interculturality management, facilitates the integration of Chinese students into the French education system and its support improves their chances of success. Its innovative pedagogical approach and multicultural dimension make it compatible with our research project and constitutes a well-adapted field of exploration.

### **Issues and research questions**

We formulated the following central question, which framed our research: **How to catalyze a «mediation continuum» approach?**

Among the research tracks, we examined the contribution of an adhocratic value chain, the presence of a one-man orchestra and the trust factor. We then formulated three research questions:

- **To what extent does an adhocratic value chain contribute to a «mediation continuum»?**
- **To what extent is the presence of an orchestra-man decisive for a «mediation continuum»?**
- **To what extent does the trust factor promote a «mediation continuum»?**

To provide some answers to these three research questions, and after having analyzed the theoretical framework of Mediation, we have identified the following criteria's to Mediation practices: Context, Objective, Linking, Process and Duration.

To construct a theoretical grid of analysis, we have relied on the reading of Mediation by different authors starting with "the relationship to others", "decision-making" until "its application nowadays".

Thus, we first constructed a grid around the above-mentioned Mediation criteria and the different divergent characteristics. This enabled us to establish an inventory of the various existing mediation practices. In order to understand the possible impact of the organizational structure on the continuity between the different mediation practices, we mobilized the work of Mintzberg (1986) around the different organizational structures, where we retained the adhocratic structure that proved compatible with our field of study. We also mobilized the theoretical framework around trust through the work of Zucker (1986) and around the role of the pilot and the orchestra-man with regard to the work of Galbraith (1973) and Mintzberg (1986, 1989). This theoretical framework enabled us to construct a theoretical analysis grid and formulate three questions in order to answer our problems.

### **Case Study**

We adopted an interpretativist epistemological stance, built our research protocol and focused our attention on the specificities of the ACESF and its stakeholders.

We have defined how empirical, primary and secondary data are collected. Primary data collection was conducted through a qualitative survey and participant observations. We conducted semi-directive interviews, based on an interview guide, with ACESF members and internal and external stakeholders. We then analyzed the data collected through vertical and horizontal analysis grids and interpreted them in the light of the chosen theoretical reading grid. These data collected and processed, which constituted our empirical material, were then consolidated and returned.

Moreover, our research was also supplemented and deepened by a scientific reading thanks to the official documents and the academic work mobilized. This exercise was based on continuous back and forth between theory and the field, while respecting abductive reasoning. Our research has advanced and matured in parallel with our theoretical and conceptual



framework. The theoretical framework chosen for the analysis was thus adapted. Our research focus and research questions have been progressively refined.

### **Answers to the problem and research questions**

The interpretation of the results, in light of the theoretical framework chosen, allowed us to understand, on the one hand, why the establishment of a “«mediation continuum»” is necessary for a successful mediation process and, on the other hand, how to establish continuity between mediation practices. Through our answers to our three research questions, which constitute the explanatory variables of our problem, we answer our questions.

Regarding the question **"To what extent does an adhocratic structure contribute to a «mediation continuum»"**, we found that the mobilization of an organizational structure with an agile and flexible adhocratic form, contributes largely to the initiation of a continuous, durable and effective mediation process and facilitates continuity between the different mediation practices.

Concerning the question **"To what extent is the presence of a one-man orchestra decisive for a «mediation continuum»?"**

we found that the presence of a pilot/man-orchestra with specific attributes working within the organization seems essential for the continuity of mediation practices in a “«mediation continuum»” logic.

Concerning the question **"To what extent does the trust factor promote a «mediation continuum»?"** "We found that the ability to mobilize the form of trust adapted to the interlocutor and his cultural specificity can prove decisive for the continuity of mediation practices in a “«mediation continuum»” logic.

## **Theoretical and methodological contributions**

In addition to these findings, we identified a theoretical contribution and three methodological contributions.

### **➤ Theoretical contribution**

**In relation to the principles of the "«mediation continuum»" Battistoni (2012) and the principle of continuity between different mediation practices (Lalonde, 2001; Bernard et al. 2001; Chini, 2001; Faget, 2012)**

The concepts proposed by these researchers highlight the lack of continuity between the different mediation practices, without however defining the conditions for success. Our research has enriched this theoretical knowledge through the identification of success levers that can facilitate the articulation between different mediation practices. It is notably (1) a mobilization of the form of trust according to the nature of the interlocutor and his cultural particularism; (2) the presence of a pilot playing the role of man-orchestra, mediator, integrator and endowed with essential attributes, such as the mastery of participative managerial practices, a flexible temperament, an important negotiation capacity, the holding of intangible assets linked to the expertise, the personal network held and the social influence; (3) the establishment of an adhocratic structure, which increases the organization's flexibility, agility and capacity to adapt to changes in its environment. The combination of these three levers can contribute to the establishment of a successful "«mediation continuum»", or even sustained continuity between the different mediation practices.

### **➤ Methodological contributions**

The main methodological contributions of our research are at four levels:

- **The identification of two categories of mediations following the listing of existing mediation practices according to five main variables.**

We have listed the different existing mediation practices according to four criteria resulting from the confrontation of a multitude of theoretical knowledge: (1) Context; (2) Objective; (3) Linking; (4) Process and (5) Duration. We therefore identified two categories of mediations: Mediation to resolve/manage a dispute & Mediation to create/catalyze links. The identification of these categories allows the decision maker to better understand the choice of mediation practices according to needs.

- **Identifying attributes of mediators in an intercultural setting**

The mediator must adopt a pilot and man-orchestra posture. In addition to the classical attributes linked to this type of role, the mediator in the cultural and academic field on an international scale must master the managerial, cultural and regulatory codes of the countries where he is called upon to work. To this we add the need to master the languages of these countries and to adopt a posture of initiator by breaking with the wait-and-see attitude.

- **The adequacy between the form of trust and the cultural specificity of the interlocutor, in an intercultural context**

Given the existence of different types of trust justified by conflicting factors, it seems advisable to know how to mobilize the form of trust according to the cultural specificity of the interlocutor, where in some cultures it is institutional trust that is paramount (for example, France), while in others it is trust linked to people that is the most determining (for example, China).

- **The identification of an adhocratic structure modulation in an intercultural setting for a continuum mediation.**

We have proposed an adhocratic structure modulation of “objects” allowing multiple divisions/missions to collaborate effectively for a continuum mediation. The suggested objects modulation permits mutual adjustment between the divisions where support functions are primordial and collaborative in their work to respond in common to a defined objective.

The flow system between the different constellation of work is based on informal communication where formalization of agent’s behaviors is rare seeing the diversity of potential of missions and issues. Finally, workstations are grouped by functions and continuum mediation is achieved where multiple types of mediation types can be mobilized in one project or even through projects.

### ➤ **Research Perspectives**

To refute or confirm the theoretical and empirical contributions obtained through the ACESF and its stakeholders, our research could again be conducted within other organizations in the cultural sector and also in other sectors of activity such as consulting firms.

In addition, the research will be pursued amid the same structure but with other stakeholders of other nationalities than the ones identified in this case study and whom are located in the European union; highlighting that the list of mediation practices will include all the mediation practices presented in this thesis which wasn't the case in our current study.

It will also be consolidated by a quantitative survey that will be conducted in the same context, especially as a project to create a federation of eight Chinese universities, in which the ACESF NGO organization in China will be integrated as a pilot member.

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## **APPENDICES**

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- Appendice A : Interview Guide
- Appendice B : Exemple d'entretien retranscrit en Français
- Appendice C: Selection of intermediary agencies in China; identified and translated from the site of work ministry in China (Importance of the sector of intermediary agencies in China)

# Appendice A

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## Interview Guide

*Within the framework of a survey conducted for a thesis work in management sciences devoted to "a mediation continuum" and our goal is to determine its levers of success. Our empirical survey aims to explore the experiences and perceptions of actors in the field. The data collected will allow us to compare with the theory, particularly with a view to identifying theories and managerial contributions, and also to formulate possible recommendations. In addition, we undertake to guarantee the confidentiality of data and anonymity, and we undertake not to exploit or disclose the results of this survey outside our thesis, or also articles for academic purposes, or even communications in the context of academic conferences.*

Function: .....

Category of Interviewee: .....

**To begin with:** Tell me about your entity, its relationship with the ACESF? And how you integrated it?

### Questions :

- Why do you join this association?
- Why do you trust this association?



**Trust**

- How does this association/partnership work?
- How conflicts are resolved ?



**Adhocracy**

- What are the weaknesses of this association?
- What are the strengths of this association?



**Orchestra-man**

### Diverse :

- Have you met with the other partners of the ACESF?
- What are your future objectives/hopeful expectations of this association/partnership?

## Appendice B

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### Entretien Retranscrit de B

Fonction: Directrice des relations internationales – Catégorie d'interviewé: Ecole de commerce en France

May : Comme ça a été discuté lors de notre conversation téléphonique, je m'engage à garantir la confidentialité des données et l'anonymat, et à ne pas exploiter ou divulguer les résultats de cette enquête à l'extérieur de cette thèse, ou aussi d'articles à vocations académiques. D'ailleurs, par cette étude du terrain, mon objectif est de comprendre les leviers de réussite de la structure de l'ACESF dans la médiation des relations éducatives au niveau Sino-Français.

Mme : Ok.

May : Donc tout d'abord si vous pouvez parler de votre entité et de votre fonction s'il-vous-plait.

Mme : Pour vous situer un-petit-peu, moi je suis arrivé à l'école en septembre 2016 pour être affecté dans le département international. Dans mon travail en Angleterre j'ai déjà établi mon expérience dans les relations internationales et l'association a déjà depuis un moment une relation avec l'université donc ce n'est pas quelque chose que j'ai mis en place. Mais en faisant l'inventaire des relations, contacts existants à mon arrivée, j'ai établi des fiches d'identité pour chacune des relations existantes et j'ai déterminé l'importance de la relation avec l'ACESF dans le contexte des relations Sino-Français vu que (.....) est un leader dans la filière de luxe ; Une filière attractive pour les étudiants asiatiques. D'ailleurs, de mon côté, je suis satisfaite que je communique régulièrement avec Shulei comme j'ai eu l'occasion de communiquer avec des agents, des associations localisés en Chine.

May : D'accord et avant de poursuivre, si vous souhaitez on pourrait poursuivre l'entretien en anglais si vous préférez.

Mme : Merci beaucoup mais je préfère communiquer plus en Français, ça m'oblige à améliorer la langue.

May : OK et c'est très intéressant que vous ayez abordé la communication avec d'autres agents éducatifs Chinois à travers l'ACESF, c'est un sujet qu'on développera dans la suite de l'entretien. et si vous me permettez pour le moment, si vous pouvez me parler plus de votre organisation (...)

Mme : Oui bien sûr. Alors, c'est une école de commerce qui ne génère pas de bénéfices. Par exemples les frais de scolarité des étudiants qui représentent une grande partie des frais de fonctionnement de l'école sont utilisés dans l'intégralité pour améliorer les cours, pour payer les professeurs, pour l'ingénierie pédagogique, pour les frais d'administration, les frais de fonctionnement, etc.

May : D'accord

Mme : Il y a également des formations d'apprentissage auxquelles participent un grand nombre d'entreprises notamment ceux, les entreprises en partenariat avec notre organisation et dans

lesquelles les étudiants font des apprentissages, des stages etc. Donc, l'école était créée en 1961 et la plupart de ses programmes, pour le moment, sont enseignés en langue française.

En notant que pour le recrutement des étudiants étrangers c'est soit de manière individuelle, ça veut dire un étudiant qui vient d'une manière spontanée et qu'on rencontre dans un salon et puis également des recrutements encadrés. Et là c'est dans le cadre d'un partenariat avec une université ou une association.

May : D'accord et y'a-t-il une préférence pour une de ses typologies de recrutement.

Mme : En général, la mobilité encadrée est beaucoup plus appréciée par le gouvernement que le recrutement individuel parce qu'ils permettent une grande diversité de nationalités dans les salles de cours. Par exemple, on a 35 nationalités différentes sur notre campus.

May : OK

Mme : Oui, c'est important la multitude de nationalités, ça permet aux étudiants internationaux de se retrouver parmi plein d'autres nationalités, de même pour les étudiants français. Ainsi, pour les deux parties, cela leur permet de ne pas rester dans leur zone de confort et de devoir s'exprimer et de travailler avec des étudiants qui ont une autre culture. L'école depuis plusieurs années développe de plus en plus son marché à l'étranger à la recherche de cette diversité. Et chose que je dois préciser aussi, on a deux types de partenariats. Le premier a pour objectif de faire venir les étudiants en France pour une partie ou l'intégralité de leur programme et l'autre type de partenariat c'est pour que les étudiants puissent suivre une formation dans leur pays. C'est par exemple, un type de programme qui intéresse normalement les cadres à niveau d'une entreprise. Ça intéresse beaucoup les cadres de niveau parce qu'ils ne peuvent pas toujours venir en France pendant une très longue période. Cette formation, ça leur permet de suivre un cursus qui est basé sur le cursus de notre école avec nos professeurs ou des professeurs qu'on forme à notre méthodologie pour qu'ils puissent reproduire la même qualité d'enseignement dans leur pays correspondant.

May : Ça c'est intéressant, j'imagine que ce sont des attestations qu'ils vont obtenir en contrepartie ?

Mme : Ils peuvent obtenir un titre d'école par exemple le MBA

May : Ah d'accord

Mme : C'est l'un des programmes qu'on développe le plus à l'étranger. On essaye toujours de leur donner l'opportunité de venir au programme, une partie de leur programme en France parce que c'est important qu'ils voient l'école de leurs propres yeux, qu'ils participent également à une partie d'étude en France pour se faire une idée précise sur nos méthodes d'enseignement, qu'ils voient l'école sur place et puis également une partie culturelle aussi puisqu'il y a la découverte de l'école, de Paris et de la France car à mon propre avis c'est que dommage de faire un programme à l'étranger si on ne s'intéresse pas à tout le contexte. Pourquoi faire un diplôme français sans s'intéresser à la France. Puis on essaye de l'adapter aux contraintes des participants. On utilise un programme très dense sur une période un tout petit peu plus courte pour compléter ce qu'ils auront pu faire à l'étranger.

May : Est-ce qu'il y a des statistiques sur les nationalités les plus représentées?

Mme : Par exemple, pour le MBA on peut recruter des étudiants chinois et étrangers pour ce programme via notre coordination avec REN Shulei, mais il y a également des étudiants qui viennent de tout pays d'Afrique, des Etats Unis et récemment du Japon. Aussi, pour poursuivre avec la suite des formations de l'école, il y a le Bachelor qui est accessible bien évidemment après le Baccalauréat ou après des études au lycée. C'est un programme qui est plutôt francophone mais il y a de parties que les étudiants peuvent suivre également en anglais soit à l'étranger pendant un semestre d'études à l'étranger soit pendant des spécialisations vers la fin de leur parcours. Donc ça leur permet d'avoir l'opportunité de s'imprégner dans un contexte linguistique différent. C'est un programme qui dure trois ans. Ensuite il y a un nouveau BBA, un programme anglophone qui est en partenariat avec l'université à San Diego.

May : D'accord

Mme : Ensuite on a le master grand d'école, le programme grand d'école. C'est un programme qui est visé tout comme le Bachelor et qui est également le programme de Master. Donc là c'est un programme qui est accessible aussi en postbac, un programme de cinq ans. Et les étudiants peuvent également le postuler à travers des admissions parallèles. Donc ça leur permet par exemple de faire une prépa et de postuler après la prépa. Ils peuvent également postuler après une licence et ensuite compléter avec les deux dernières années du programme grand d'école. Ce sont des programmes où ils peuvent suivre le cursus en apprentissage et pour aider les étudiants au niveau financier. Ensuite, il y a des programmes des titres d'école, par exemple le MBA. Le MBA vise un étudiant qui est parfois avec une grande expérience ou des études dans le domaine du management qui souhaitent avoir un niveau supérieur, une compréhension plus développée de l'entreprise. Ça peut parfois être un levier de promotion, pour le participant.

May. D'accord. On peut dire alors qu'il y a trois pistes principales de formation

Mme : il y a également le DBA qui est un Doctorate of Bachelor Administration ; un titre d'école qui permet souvent aux hauts dirigeants de faire des études pendant trois ans basées sur la recherche et la recherche appliquée. On peut dire que la distinction entre un Doctorat et un DBA, c'est qu'il y a vraiment un accent important sur le terrain et l'appliqué dans le DBA

May : Pour le DBA J'imagine qu'il y a des partenariats avec des entreprises

Mme : Effectivement, il y a des partenariats à différentes échelles avec des entreprises très vastes, diverses et variées. C'est une partie très importante de l'école, l'échange avec l'entreprise. A titre d'exemple, dans les instances de l'école, les entreprises ont une partie importante dans la structuration du programme, dans l'amélioration constante des programmes parce qu'on estime que pour avoir une école avec beaucoup de réussite ça veut dire que les étudiants doivent être employables à la fin et surtout que notre programme correspond à la demande de l'entreprise.

May : Est-ce qu'il y a une formalisation des relations avec ces entreprises mentionnées ?

Mme : Oui et Non ça dépend de la situation. Notre service relation entreprise est en contact permanents avec tous nos réseaux d'entreprises constitués grâce à notre réseau très fort d'anciens



ou à nos étudiants en stage ou en apprentissage dans les entreprises. Sans oublier que l'école est toujours à l'écoute des besoins des entreprises, des besoins de l'école aussi. Parce que nos besoins changent par rapport au programme, par rapport aux étudiants, par rapport au marché de travail. Donc, c'est parfois nous qui sommes à la demande des services de l'entreprise, que ça soit une visite à l'entreprise, que ça soit un intervenant pour donner une conférence sur une partie de leur entreprise ou que ça soit une entreprise qui est à la demande pour des stagiaires ou des apprentis ça marche dans les deux sens selon la situation.

May : on peut dire que suivant votre description, les relations informelles représentent une grande part alors. Quel est leur intérêt ?

Mme : Parfois c'est mieux de privilégier le contact aux formalités. Parce que parfois quand on signe, ça arrondie la relation au lieu de la garder d'une façon qui permet une communication fluide. N'oublions pas qu'il y a un grand travail du côté de l'école pour maintenir et entretenir les relations. Je dirai que c'est vraiment à l'école de faire. Donc c'est pour ça quand il y a les bonnes personnes en place ça se fait un petit peu plus naturellement. Une personne avec un charisme, qui inspire la confiance.

May : Puis-je dire que vous jouez ce rôle-là vis-à-vis de votre organisation

Mme : Pas totalement. Dans mes fonctions, c'est moins le côté entreprise, plus le côté international. On a une directrice des relations entreprises. Moi mon rôle ça serait plutôt avec les universités mais justement sur ce côté-là entretenir de bonnes relations avec les partenaires que ce soit avant signature de partenariat, pendant et pour assurer qu'il n'y a pas de souci pendant notre relation de même.

May : Dans mon souci de compréhension du fonctionnement de votre organisation dans le tissage des liens, me permettriez-vous de demander s'il y a une formalité fixe à suivre dans cette approche.

Mme : Oui, oui, il y a plusieurs phases. Il y a le côté « dating » où on essaye de voir si on peut travailler ensemble et s'il y a un « match », on essaye de déterminer les conditions d'une relation sereine... Ainsi, en choisissant les bons partenaires on peut plus facilement communiquer avec eux, on peut plus facilement monter des projets ensemble. Et en bien les connaissant, on peut essayer de travailler sur les points qu'on a en commun plutôt que de forcer quelque chose qui finalement ne va peut-être pas aboutir parce qu'il y a un des côtés ou les deux côtés qui ne trouvent pas assez d'intérêt.

May : Je vous remercie pour votre partage d'expériences et c'est ce qui nous mène alors vers l'ACESF et son intérêt comme intermédiaire. Pourquoi adhérez-vous à cette association ?

Mme : Je vous en prie et il y a plusieurs critères qui justifient notre choix. Tout d'abord les étudiants Chinois est en grand essor depuis plusieurs années, il y a une grande demande d'étudiants chinois pour venir en France. Comme la Chine est un pays tellement vaste, il y a tous types de profils d'étudiants, tous types de profils d'universités chinoises. Donc sur un point spécifique sur l'individu des étudiants individuels, il nous est toujours utile d'avoir un expert qui peut nous conseiller, qui peut nous aider à trouver les meilleurs profils. Donc il y a le côté d'expertise mais il y a aussi le côté facilitateur.

Moi : est-ce possible d'expliciter le côté de facilitateur svp ?

Mme : Oui. Parce qu'on se rend compte qu'en faisant de la coordination avec la Chine, et que même avec la mondialisation, les deux cultures ont une façon très différente de travailler. Ce n'est pas simplement le côté commercial ou structurel c'est également les êtres humains qui ont une compréhension bien différente d'une même situation. Quand on a quelqu'un avec un profil multiculturel, comme par exemple Shulei qui est en tête de l'association, le fait d'avoir vécu en France lui permet de mieux appréhender les échanges entre les deux pays. Je pense que pour les échanges avec la Chine, que ça soit avec les directeurs ou avec les doyens des universités pour qu'ils soient totalement à l'aise il faut qu'il y ait des échanges dans leur langue. On peut très bien avoir un traducteur sur place mais je me suis rendue compte à travers plusieurs années de travail avec la Chine que quand c'est un traducteur qu'on connaît bien, les échanges sont beaucoup plus riches. Ce n'est pas un simple traducteur qui traduit parfois mots à mots les idées qu'on captera l'ampleur et la richesse de la discussion. Ce qui n'est pas toujours le même cas avec d'autres cultures ou d'autres langues. Avec la Chine, il peut y avoir des sous-entendus que nous ne comprenons pas parce qu'il y a le traducteur qui peut neutraliser le sens de la phrase par des traductions au mot-a-mot vu son manque de connaissance du contexte de la réunion. C'est pour cela coordonner avec une association comme celle de Shulei enrichit les débats. Le fait d'avoir ce type d'interlocuteur peut aider le partenaire chinois à avoir plus de confiance en nous parce qu'il y a déjà une personne chinoise qui a choisi de travailler avec la France, de travailler avec une institution française et la représenter. Cette partie de confiance est très importante pour le chinois parce que lui aussi ne comprend pas toujours tous les aspects de notre culture, et le fait d'avoir un autre chinois qui peut lui expliquer certaines choses, qui peut mettre certaines choses en contexte ça facilite énormément les choses. Le rôle de Shulei aussi s'est de sélectionner des partenaires qui correspondent aux intérêts de (...) C'est aussi de prendre les premiers contacts, en présentant (...) en mettant d'abord les choses qui peuvent rassurer et convaincre la partie concernée. Mais parfois aussi la coordination directe avec Shulei peut déclencher les choses plus rapidement dans le processus de communication.

May : D'accord. Accélérer le rythme de la communication est un atout majeur pour vous alors.

Mme : Tout à fait, d'ailleurs Shulei joue aussi un autre rôle et qui n'est pas toujours le rôle de tous les interlocuteurs ou associations ou simples agents c'est le fait qu'il fait beaucoup de suivi une fois l'étudiant est en France pour l'aider à s'insérer et réussir ses cours. Je crois que ce facteur est très important du côté des parents et des universités Chinoises. C'est pour cela la coordination avec l'association nous a permis d'adapter ou de personnaliser notre stratégie d'accueil des étudiants Chinois. On a profité de leurs connaissances.

May : Personnaliser la stratégie d'accueil...

Mme : Oui cette stratégie était très importante pour s'adapter à l'évolution internationale des choix des étudiants étrangers. N'oublions pas que les universités en Chine, elles ont changé énormément depuis dix à quinze ans. Elles suivaient un système très traditionnel, assez rigide avant. De nos jours, ils gagnent une souplesse et change à une vitesse incroyable. Et là donc c'est utile d'avoir quelqu'un qui a suivi ses changements... Il a aussi un côté politique. Avoir quelqu'un de nationalité chinoise c'est pour comprendre les subtilités et les choses moins subtiles au niveau politique pour comprendre les besoins et les mouvements politiques par exemple les choses dont le pays donne de

l'importance. S'il y a une importance donnée à l'internationalisation des études par exemple. Ensuite ça permet à la personne de mieux traduire la possibilité de l'institution à l'étranger pour mettre en place, pour répondre à soit les contraintes soit les demandes ou soit les mouvements, les directives...

May : Peut-on dire alors que c'est pour cette raison que vous souhaitez adhérer à cette association ?

Mme : En fait... d'une certaine manière oui mais je crois qu'on peut dire que l'association s'adapte plutôt facilement aux changements. Nous de notre côté on sait qu'Emmanuel Macron a promis de visiter la Chine tous les ans, de donner l'importance aux échanges entre la Chine et la France. Aussi, Le gouvernement chinois a certainement des projets, des idées spécifiques de ce même niveau et en ayant quelqu'un comme Shulei nous permettra rapidement de prendre la vague au bon moment. Donc Shulei peut jouer le double rôle de facilitateur ou de catalyseur suivant la situation. Donc, d'un point de vue un peu personnel mais rationnel aussi. J'ai pu travailler avec Shulei dans des contextes différents tout d'abord au sein de l'école ou on fait de ses échanges avec l'école, au niveau du suivi des étudiants. Et je trouve son travail est très efficace, les étudiants le respectent. Shulei a une approche sérieuse et puis il est disponible pour communiquer.

May : OK. Et est-ce qu'on peut établir alors un mode de fonctionnement clair dans cette coordination ?

Mme : Le mode de fonctionnement dans cette coordination est relativement simple mais efficace. Sur place à l'école, Shulei assure l'intermédiaire entre les étudiants Chinois et la DVE pour assurer leur intégration. Au niveau externe comme les déplacements officiels de la Chine vers la France ou de la France vers la Chine, c'est lui qui faisait l'organisation des déplacements, les relations de la personne et d'informer en avance les parties du contenu du déplacement.

Moi : Ah d'accord

Mme : Oui et aussi c'est-ce qui nous permet de mesurer les utilités en avance et puis également de se préparer en avance. Donc sur ce point-là on était informé des visites qu'on allait faire et un peu des idées de discussion. Aussi, du côté pratique, cad du côté de la mise en relation, il nous présente à chaque fois les bons interlocuteurs. Le bon niveau, la personne qui pouvait prendre de bonnes décisions la personne qui pouvait discuter des différents projets. Donc c'était des rendez-vous, des entretiens utiles à chaque fois. Et ça c'est très important. Un gain de temps précieux.

May : On peut dire alors que la confiance est ça était générée à travers votre expérience de travail avec Shulei, à travers son mode fonctionnement.

Mme : Ah ça s'est sûre que Oui. C'est l'expérience partagée. il y a le côté disponibilité et communication, on pourrait échanger. Il y a aussi le côté de mise à l'épreuve dans le réel. De prouver, de gagner la confiance de quelqu'un à travers un travail fourni et puis également à travers les échanges au niveau personnel et les discussions du quotidien. Quant au déplacement, les échanges agréables avec une personne qui reste calme tout au long du déplacement... ça c'est vraiment le A++ qui vous permet d'avoir l'échange assez rapidement et d'avoir la réponse assez rapidement aussi.

May : Donc en termes de fonctionnement avec l'association, est-ce qu'il y a des piliers qui ont été fixé ...

Mme : Pour moi, pour le moment, il y a peut-être plutôt un travail sur projet...

May : D'accord

Mme : car le côté formalisation entraînent une certaine rigidité dans les relations. Alors que le travail par projet nous permet de percevoir l'utilité, l'objectif, la démarche ... tout au long du projet et pour nous ça c'est précieux. C'est pour cela, le travail par projet nous est très important, au moins pour le moment ; des projets qu'ils sont en train de bâtir, donc je pense que ça demande de flexibilité pour s'adapter aux projets et donc fixer des piliers est hors de question ; au moins pour le moment.

May : Dans ces projets mentionnés, est-ce qu'il y a eu un échange d'étudiants ?

Mme : En termes d'échange culturel ou pédagogique, pour le moment c'est notamment les étudiants chinois qui viennent à l'école, parce que de notre côté on doit toujours veiller sur l'intérêt pédagogique pour envoyer un étudiant français ou qui est intégré dans nos programmes en Chine. Et pour le moment, le nombre d'universités qui peuvent intégrer un étudiant français dans leur cursus est minime, parce qu'il n'y a pas assez d'étudiants qui parlent chinois. Alors que dans le sens inverse, le nombre d'étudiants chinois parlant l'anglais ou le français est plus élevé. Donc les étudiants français peuvent se trouver dans une situation où ils ont tendance à un programme de spécification où parfois juste leurs écoles. Donc, ils suivent un cursus qui est parfois éloigné de nos attentes parce qu'ils ne sont pas mélangés avec les autres étudiants. Ils ne sont pas en vraie immersion.

May : Donc pour le moment, vous n'êtes pas enclin à envoyé des étudiants français poursuivre leurs études en Chine ?

Mme : Oui car il faudrait que les offres répondent aux attentes. Mais on n'est pas vraiment contre envoyer des étudiants en Chine. Au contraire, il y a des expériences très importantes à avoir mais je pense qu'il faut attendre un projet spécifique, utile, à nos élèves. Pour que ça se soit de valeur ajoutée aux étudiants et pas juste un voyage touristique d'un autre pays.

May : D'accord, le travail par projet que vous venez de mentionner est très important. Et par ce travail de projet on pourra avancer vers la question suivante, j'imagine que c'est une chose très naturelle quand il y a une collaboration il y a évidemment certains types, je vais dire, de conflits. Des différences d'opinions par exemple ou d'autres raisons....

Mme : .... Des conflits.... C'est vrai, il n'y a pas très longtemps j'ai eu forcément beaucoup de malentendus à gérer mais ça s'est vite réglé avec toutes les questions qui sont posées où il y avait des interrogations d'un côté ou de l'autre. C'est le dialogue, chaque côté s'explique et essaye de comprendre l'autre.

May : on peut dire une communication continue alors.

Mme : Oui, puis l'environnement je pense des deux côtés à éviter qu'une situation devienne compliquée...

May : D'accord

Mme : Donc un dialogue qui s'instaure très rapidement, des questionnements de chaque côté qui essayent de causer, de comprendre, de trouver une solution ensemble.

May : OK. Ainsi, c'est de la logique de conflits et communication qu'on peut s'intéresser maintenant à la dynamique de points forts et de points faibles de l'association. Si j'ai bien compris, vous êtes en contact continu avec Shulei et l'association. Qu'est-ce que vous avez perçu comme faiblesses de cette association et qui ralentissent son avancement ?

Mme : Je pense, pour le moment je ne le sais pas énormément, je n'ai pas assez de recul mais... Je pense que c'est un peu tôt pour avoir vraiment de grands points d'amélioration et des axes de développement.

May : OK, donc par rapport au contact continu jusqu'à maintenant, il n'y a pas eu quelque chose de flagrant qui vous a ralenti dans l'approche ou vos projets par exemple.

Mme : Il y a parfois des travailleurs différents à côté des individuels et bases différentes. Je suis peut-être moins dans le travail quand c'est possible mais la limite peut-être de l'association. C'est certaines choses comme un travail de dernières minutes. L'association c'est très typique de la culture chinoise. Il y a des structures, en plus des personnels en Chine, il y a plus de main d'œuvre donc il y a plus de possibilité de faire des choses rapidement à la dernière minute. Alors qu'en France, on essaye parfois de voir les choses de plus à l'avance quand c'est possible. Donc la faiblesse peut-être une des différences de la façon de travailler

May : une façon d'organisation et de fonctionnement différente on peut dire.

Mme : Oui, Je pense que le point différent pour moi là ça serait surtout le travail de dernière minute. Je pense le côté dernière minute plus que des choses différentes culturelles. Mais là aussi, avec peu de recul, c'est difficile de dire si c'est quelque chose qui pourrait réellement durer.

May : Bien noté. Ça nous ramène alors à la partie de force de l'association. On en a parlé au début, mais est-ce qu'on peut les aborder sous formes de points. Qu'est-ce que vous considérez comme points forts dans le rôle de cette association.

Mme : En général, leur professionnalisme dans leurs missions, leurs disponibilité, l'aisance au niveau de la communication et surtout l'implication.

May : et pour terminer, Est-ce que vous avez rencontré d'autres partenaires de l'ACESF ou d'autres acteurs qui communiquent avec l'ACESF ?

Mme : Lors du déplacement, j'ai rencontré pas mal de connaissances de l'association mais la communication s'est faite beaucoup à travers Shulei et notre traductrice notamment les questions linguistiques donc l'échange n'était pas forcément directe... Mais si, on a abordé d'autres acteurs.

May : D'accord, vu que c'est une relation qui se déroule très bien est-ce qu'il y a de nouveaux projets futurs en cours de construction ?

Mme : Malheureusement pour le moment, je n'ai pas assez de recul pour en parler et également je pense que c'est vraiment une question stratégique qui s'intègre dans la stratégie internationale, du

développement international et pour le moment ce n'est pas forcément une question que je me suis penchée dessus. Je suis plus dans l'action, dans la mise en place de projets opérationnels et le département d'échanges d'étudiants qui en est responsable.

May : D'accord.

Mme : Et puis je pense que du côté procédural, les réflexions stratégiques viendront plutôt vers la fin de l'année pour voir s'il doit y avoir des changements courts terme, moyen terme, long terme. Si la stratégie plus large de l'école permet des changements quand il y a différentes options. Pour le moment, c'est en tout cas pour moi prématuré de m'avancer sur des axes futurs surtout que c'est une relation entre les deux établissements qui n'a pas de raisons à ne pas durer, si les choses restent telles quelles. Mais après par rapport aux questions stratégiques, je pense que ça serait prématuré de m'avancer sur d'éventuels changements.

May : Mme ... c'était en fait la dernière question que j'avais et aimeriez-vous rajouter un point qu'on n'a pas élaboré lors de la discussion ?

Mme : Non je crois qu'on a abordé le sujet d'une façon transversale et j'espère que ça a été utile pour vous dans vos recherches.

May : Effectivement notre discussion m'a été très bénéfique et je vous remercie surtout pour le temps que vous m'avez accordé.

## Appendice C

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### **Selection of intermediary agencies in China; identified and translated from the site of work ministry in China (Importance of the sector of intermediary agencies in China)**

#### **Beijing/PEKIN**

- Beijing Jiahuashida International Education Exchange Co., Ltd
- Oriental International Education Exchange Center
- China International Education Exchange Association/ International Education Exchange Center
- China Education Service Center Co., Ltd
- Beijing Jingcheng abroad study Advisory Services Co., Ltd
- Beijing Capital Normal University- study abroad service consulting center
- Beijing Gongshangda study intermediary service center
- Beijing Century Bo Park study abroad advisory services Co., Ltd
- Beijing four up study abroad Services Co., Ltd
- Beijing Yingzhi Ye Culture Exchange Co., Ltd

#### **Tianjin**

- Tianjin Kai Le study abroad service center
- Tianjin Tongyu abroad Service Co., Ltd
- Tianjin Yuanwang Study Consultation Co., Ltd
- Tianjin Hexi study abroad service center
- Tianjin Tasman Education Consulting Co., Ltd
- Tianjin Ivy Education Information Consulting Co., Ltd
- Tianjin Fenghua Jinqiao Education Information Consulting Co., Ltd
- Tianjin New Oriental Future Overseas Consulting Co., Ltd.
- Tianjin Aiyusi Education Information Consulting Co., Ltd

#### **Shanghai**

- Shanghai Huashen International Education Exchange Co., Ltd
- Shanghai Tongji study abroad Co., Ltd
- Shanghai Oriental study abroad Services Co., Ltd
- Shanghai Zhongrui International Education Service Co., Ltd
- Shanghai Xin Yuan International Education Services Co., Ltd
- Shanghai Overseas Education Service Co., Ltd
- Shanghai International Education Exchange Information Center
- Shanghai guru abroad Advisory Services Co., Ltd
- Shanghai Huaqiao International Education Service Co., Ltd
- Shanghai qiantu abroad study abroad Services Co., Ltd
- Shanghai Huayi International Education Consulting Co., Ltd

## **Chongqing**

- Chongqing Asia and Europe Education and Culture Consulting Co., Ltd
- Chongqing Rui tide abroad Business Consulting Co., Ltd
- Chongqing Jia Yang Xin to go abroad Advisory Services Co., Ltd
- Chongqing to Canada to go abroad Consulting Co., Ltd.
- Chongqing City, China Travel Service Group to go abroad Services Co., Ltd
- Chongqing, the United States and China to go abroad intermediary Services Co., Ltd
- Chongqing New Classroom Education Culture Communication Co., Ltd
- Chongqing Oujing Investment Consulting Co., Ltd
- Chongqing Huizhi study intermediary services Co., Ltd
- Chongqing UNESCO International Exchange Center Co., Ltd
- Chongqing Li Union oneworld out of the Advisory Services Co., Ltd
- Chongqing Park Chuan abroad study intermediary services Co., Ltd
- Chongqing Taohe out of the Advisory Services Co., Ltd

## **HEBEI Province**

- Hebei Province International Education Exchange Service Center
- Qinhuangdao Yanda International Education Exchange Center
- Baoding Heda International Education Service Center
- Hebei International Affairs Advisory Service Center
- Hebei Jinshi International Talent Service Co., Ltd
- Baoding Nongda Overseas Study Service Co., Ltd
- Shijiazhuang City Peisen Education Investment Advisory Services Co., Ltd
- Hebei Jiacheng immigration service Co., Ltd
- Hebei everyone Education Development Co., Ltd

## **Shanxi Province**

- Shanxi Daren International Education Exchange Co., Ltd
- Shanxi Huarui Shengda Overseas Investment Consulting Co., Ltd
- Shanxi respect as an international education consulting Co., Ltd
- Shanxi trillion foreign affairs Information Services Co., Ltd
- Shanxi Province to study abroad service center
- Shanxi Province Foreign Exchange Advisory Center Cooperation Development Department

## **Liaoning Province**

- Shenyang International Education Exchange Service Center
- Liaoning Branch in the study Services Co., Ltd
- Dalian Huiwen Science and Technology Cultural Center
- Liaoning citizens abroad Service Co., Ltd
- Dalian Muring Education Service Co., Ltd.
- Liaoning Tianxiang Foreign Economic and Technical Cooperation Co., Ltd
- Dalian Guozheng Jinshi Overseas Consulting Service Co., Ltd.
- Liaoning Province twenty-first century economic and trade personnel training center
- Dalian Chengda International Education Exchange Co., Ltd.



- Liaoning International Exchange Industrial Co., Ltd.
- Shenyang Foreign Enterprise Service Corporation
- Dalian Shihua Study Abroad Service Co., Ltd.
- Shenyang Jun Bo Education and Culture Exchange Co., Ltd
- Shenyang twenty - first century Jiayi abroad study abroad Services Co., Ltd

### **Jilin Province**

- Jilin Province to study service center
- Changchun City, private immigration service center
- Yanbian big letter overseas exchange Co., Ltd
- Changchun City Foreign Service Center
- Jilin Province International Talent Technical Cooperation Co., Ltd
- Yanbian University study abroad training center
- Jida Overseas Study Center
- Changchun East Division to study service center
- Jilin International Language and Culture Institute Service Center

### **Heilongjiang province**

- Harbin Yueyang Culture Exchange Co., Ltd
- Harbin Kang Hui Information Consulting Co., Ltd
- Harbin reported to the Information Consulting Co., Ltd
- Harbin, the United States and Australia to study abroad consulting Co., Ltd
- Harbin Yu Yang abroad study advisory services Co., Ltd
- Mudanjiang City Fuji study abroad service center
- Heilongjiang Sydney Study Consultancy Service Co., Ltd.
- Harbin Distance International Education Exchange Service Co., Ltd.
- Harbin five lakes abroad study consulting Co., Ltd
- Harbin Hiroshima to study abroad services Co., Ltd
- Harbin Boyu International Education Exchange Service Co., Ltd

### **Inner Mongolia**

- Inner Mongolia Education International Exchange Service Center
- Inner Mongolia Min Sida culture education consulting Co., Ltd
- Inner Mongolia intellectual introduction to study abroad Services Co., Ltd
- Inner Mongolia Education to study abroad service center
- Hohhot Beichen Study Consultation Service Co., Ltd
- Inner Mongolia Dr. Dafu International Consulting Services Co., Ltd
- Inner Mongolia Chaoyang International Education Exchange Co., Ltd
- Baotou intelligence study abroad Service Co., Ltd
- Hohhot Nuojia Education Information Consulting Co., Ltd
- Inner Mongolia dry Asahi study abroad service Co., Ltd
- Inner Mongolia Normal University International Exchange Service Center

## **Jiangsu Province**

- Nanjing Foreign Affairs Service Co., Ltd
- Wuxi International Talent Exchange Service Center
- Taizhou Vocational and Technical College
- Jiangsu good year abroad Advisory Service Co., Ltd.
- Jiangsu Province, the world of learning services company
- Nanjing Century Education Consulting Co., Ltd.
- Xuzhou City in the sharp out of the Advisory Service Co., Ltd.
- Xuzhou Jiangsu Normal University to study abroad service Co., Ltd
- Yangzhou University International Exchange Service Center
- Wuxi City Dibang study abroad Services Co., Ltd
- Nanjing World Education Exchange Center
- Nanjing plus information consulting Co., Ltd
- Nantong City Foreign Exchange Service Center Co., Ltd
- Jiangsu Province, the sun out of the service center Co., Ltd
- Wuxi Foreign Friendship Service Center
- Nanjing Ansheng Education and Culture Exchange Co., Ltd

## **Anhui province**

- Hefei University of Technology Service Center
- Anhui Economic Management Cadre College International Cooperation Center
- Hefei Wanhua study abroad training center
- Anhui Anjiao International Education Exchange Center
- Anhui International Exchange Center

## **Fujian Province**

- Fujian Province to study abroad service center
- Fujian Foreign Service Study Center
- Fujian Province stars to study abroad service center
- Fujian Province Jian'an study abroad service center
- Fujian Overseas Talent Center
- Fujian Changhong study abroad service center
- Xiamen, Fujian Province to study abroad Services Limited
- Fuzhou Zhuangan Economic Development Co., Ltd
- Xiamen City friendly exchanges abroad Service Co., Ltd
- Li Cheng (Xiamen) Education and Culture Exchange Co., Ltd
- Xiamen Jisida Education Consulting Co., Ltd
- Fujian Province Manpower Overseas Employment Service Co., Ltd
- Fuzhou Education Education Service Co., Ltd
- Fuzhou Jinji listed abroad study advisory services Co., Ltd
- Fujian New Oriental forward abroad Consulting Co., Ltd
- Fujian love EN study abroad Services Co., Ltd
- Fuzhou Meizhong Elite Education Technology Co., Ltd

### **Jiangxi province**

- Jiangxi Province to study abroad education consulting service center
- Jiangxi Province friendly study abroad service center
- Jiangxi Science and Technology Education Service Co., Ltd
- Jiangxi Jin Cai Education Development Co., Ltd

### **Shandong province**

- Jinan Overseas Chinese Machinery and Equipment Co., Ltd. / Overseas Chinese study abroad service center
- Shandong International Chamber of Commerce to study abroad service center
- Weihai at their own expense to study abroad service center
- Weihai International Economic & Technical Co., Ltd
- China Shandong International Economic and Technical Cooperation Corporation
- Jinan plus business consulting Co., Ltd.
- Qingdao Shengmei International Study Co., Ltd.
- Qingdao Foreign Enterprise Service Corporation
- Yantai Minsheng Advisory Service Co., Ltd.
- Shandong Hao Yuan study abroad service center
- Shandong Blue Fu Management Consulting Co., Ltd
- Jinan Institute of Education Advisory Co., Ltd.
- Shandong Heaven Hang Shun Education Exchange Co., Ltd
- Jinan love and thinking Information Consulting Co., Ltd.
- Shandong Global IELTS study abroad Services Co., Ltd.

### **Henan province**

- Henan University of Finance and Economics International Cultural and Educational Exchange Center
- Henan Yiming abroad study abroad Services Co., Ltd
- Zhengzhou Education Foreign Exchange Service Center
- Henan Jincheng study abroad exchange training Co., Ltd
- Henan Bo Ruiji Cultural Development Co., Ltd
- Kaifeng education abroad to study abroad Advisory Services Co., Ltd
- Henan Province Zhicheng Technology Education Advisory Service Co., Ltd
- Henan Tengda Consulting Services Co., Ltd
- Henan people foreign service Co., Ltd
- Henan Zhongan Business Consulting Service Co., Ltd

### **Hubei Province**

- Hubei Province Foreign Friendship Service Center
- Hubei Science and Technology International Education Exchange Center
- Wuhan Education International Exchange and Cooperation Center
- Hubei Huazhong University of Science and Technology to study abroad service center
- Wuhan Cambridge Education Service Consulting Co., Ltd
- Hubei Wuke at their own expense to study abroad service center
- Hubei Huazhong Normal University at their own expense to study abroad service center

- Hubei Jinmao abroad consultants Management Co., Ltd
- Yichang Huayi Education Information Consulting Co., Ltd.
- Beijing New Oriental forward abroad Consulting Co., Ltd. Wuhan Branch
- Xiantao City Century Bridge to study abroad Consulting Co., Ltd
- Wuhan Zhuo Ya overseas study abroad Advisory Services Co., Ltd
- Wuhan friendly joint education and cultural exchange Co., Ltd
- Wuhan Rui Zhong Education Development Co., Ltd
- Wuhan from the United States and China Education Services Co., Ltd
- Wuhan Hu Yasi Education Consulting Co., Ltd
- Wuhan Ankosi Entry and Exit Advisory Service Co., Ltd

### **Hunan province**

- Changsha City International Education Exchange Service Co., Ltd
- Hunan Education Research Service Center
- Hunan Fu Yue overseas study service center
- Hunan out of the dream of the International Education Exchange Center
- Hunan Province gifted Di state affairs services abroad Co., Ltd
- Changsha Science and Technology University to study abroad service center
- Changsha long-distance study abroad Services Limited
- Hunan New Oriental Future Overseas Consulting Co., Ltd.
- Hunan Lushan go abroad affairsCo., Ltd
- Hunan Science Without Borders Education Technology Co., Ltd
- Hunan Xiang Xiang Association Education Consulting Co., Ltd

### **Guangdong province**

- Guangdong Jincheng Education Advisory Service Co., Ltd
- Foshan East and West Immigration Consultants Service Co., Ltd
- Guangzhou Yue King King Che - hung Education Technology Co., Ltd
- Guangzhou Zhuo Da Education Consulting Co., Ltd
- Guangzhou City to reach immigration consultants Co., Ltd
- Guangzhou Cheng Chen Investment Consulting Co., Ltd
- Guangzhou League Education Consulting Co., Ltd
- Guangdong Baiyuan abroad Service Co., Ltd
- Shantou City Jetway Entry and Exit Agency Services Co., Ltd
- Shenzhen Amber Education Information Consulting Co., Ltd
- Dongguan City Huishun to go abroad Services Co., Ltd
- Guangzhou new dream to study Consulting Co., Ltd

### **Hainan province**

- Hainan Science and Education Group Co., Ltd
- Hainan Province study service center
- Haikou Foreign Affairs Exchange Center
- Hainan IELTS study abroad Services Co., Ltd
- Hainan door to study abroad Service Center Co., Ltd

### **Guangxi province**

- Nanning Xinao Consulting Co., Ltd
- Guangxi East and West International Exchange Co., Ltd  
Nanning Nuo Da Education International Exchange Service Center  
Guangxi Jinrui International Human Resources Exchange Development Co., Ltd  
Guangxi Haohua Technology Co., Ltd  
Nanning City in Canada and Asia Education Advisory Co., Ltd  
Beijing Wei long Consulting Co., Ltd. Nanning Branch

### **Sichuang province**

- Sichuan Province to study abroad service center
- Sichuan Entry and Exit Service Center Co., Ltd
- Sichuan Province Dibang abroad business services Co., Ltd
- Sichuan Tianyun Education Advisory Service Co., Ltd
- Chengdu Huaying abroad service Co., Ltd
- Chengdu IELTS education management Co., Ltd
- Chengdu new pass Xinghua abroad Service Co., Ltd
- Chengdu Leader Overseas Consultants Co., Ltd
- Chengdu Plus Consultants Co., Ltd
- Chengdu Shun Xin International Service Co., Ltd
- Foreign Affairs Office of Sichuan Province

### **Guizhou province**

- Guizhou Province study abroad service center

### **Yunnan province**

- Yunnan Province to study service center
- Yunnan University International Education Service Center
- Kunming Hengtai Talent Exchange Information Co., Ltd.
- Kunming Hai Yun abroad study abroad Services Co., Ltd
- Yunnan Jihai Education Information Consulting Co., Ltd

### **Shanxi province**

- Shaanxi Province to study service center
- Shaanxi Foreign Service Center
- Shaanxi Provincial International Exchange Center
- Xi'an Jiaotong University Jinqiao Study Service Co., Ltd
- Shaanxi Northwestern University Overseas Study Service Center
- Shaanxi Haiya Cultural Information Consulting Co., Ltd
- Shaanxi Shanghai International Education Co., Ltd
- Shaanxi Education Observation Culture Media Center
- Xi'an soar workers education limited liability company

- Shaanxi New Oriental Future Overseas Consulting Co., Ltd.
- Shaanxi teaching service study Co., Ltd
- Shaanxi Jiahua World Education Technology Co., Ltd
- Shaanxi Enlightenment Culture and Education Consulting Co., Ltd
- Shaanxi Meishi Tong Education Technology Co., Ltd
- Shaanxi Zhongzhi International Education Exchange Co., Ltd
- Shaanxi Science and Technology High - tech International Cultural Exchange Service Co., Ltd
- Xi'an Yingzhong business information consulting Co., Ltd
- Xi'an Qasuo Education Technology Co., Ltd

### **Gansu province**

- Gansu Province Education International Exchange and Cooperation Service Center
- Gansu Overseas Chinese Service Co., Ltd
- Gansu Bo Hing to study abroad Services Co., Ltd

### **Qinghai**

- Qinghai Education International Exchange Center

### **Ningxia**

- Ningxia International Exchange Center
- Yinchuan King abroad study abroad Consulting Co., Ltd
- Ningxia International Education Consulting Co., Ltd
- Jin Jilu abroad study abroad Advisory ServicesCo., Ltd。 / Yinchuan Branch
- Ningxia new route to study abroad Consulting Co., Ltd.

### **Xinjiang province**

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- Xinjiang Friendship Exchange Service Center
- Urumqi Qian Ye Yueyang Information Consulting Co., Ltd
- Urumqi Huayu Albert CHAN Advisory Management ServicesCo., Ltd
- Xinjiang Kai Tak Education Consulting Co., Ltd
- Xinjiang International Economic Cooperation Corporation
- Xinjiang Wan Tung Jie abroad Advisory ServicesCo., Ltd
- Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region Foreign Friendship Exchange Service Center (Limited)
- Xinjiang New Oriental future to go abroad Consulting Co., Ltd.
- Xinjiang Meisen abroad Advisory Service Co., Ltd
- Xinjiang Reiter voyage Cultural Development Co., Ltd
- Xinjiang, Macao and Canada to study abroad service center (Limited)
- Xinjiang Blue Tree International Education Exchange Center (Limited)

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**Titre :** Une configuration adhocratique pour et par un continuum médiationnel: Cas de l'Association de la Communication Educative Sino-Française (A.C.E.S.F)

**Mots clés :** Structure adhocratique, Homme-orchestre, Confiance, Continuum médiationnel, Structure de médiation intersectorielle

**Résumé :** La médiation nous permet de repenser le monde hétérogène. Mais dans la littérature, il existe plusieurs perspectives de la médiation où l'on perçoit le manque de continuité entre les différentes pratiques de médiation.

La première partie de la thèse développe une revue de la littérature sur la médiation qui nous a permis de construire la grille d'analyse : Objectif, Relation, Processus et Durée que nous avons utilisée pour inventorier les pratiques de médiation appliquées et de déterminer la configuration permettant le "continuum médiationnel" souhaité.

La deuxième partie présente une méthodologie

basée sur une enquête exploratoire hybride réalisée selon une approche abductive où nous recueillons des données par le biais d'une enquête qualitative, d'entretiens semi-directifs et d'observations participatives.

La troisième partie met en avant les enseignements tirés de l'étude de cas, leurs interprétations et que nous avons conclu par les apports méthodologiques et managériaux : inventaire structuré de la médiation (1) attributs aux médiateurs dans un cadre interculturel (2) forme de confiance et spécificité culturelle de l'interlocuteur dans un contexte interculturel (3) et apport managérial de ce travail qui consiste en une forme de chaîne adhocratique comme organigramme (4)

**Title:** An adhocratic configuration for and through a mediation continuum: the case of Sino-French Educational Communication Association (A.C.E.S.F)

**Keywords :** Adhocratic structure, Orchestra-man, Trust, Mediation Continuum, Cross-Sectoral Mediation Structure

**Abstract :** Mediation allows us to rethink the heterogeneous world. But in the literature, there are several perspectives of mediation where we perceive the lack of continuity between the different mediation.

The first part of the thesis develops a review of the literature on Mediation that led us to construct the analytical grid: Objective, Relationship, Process and Duration that we used to inventory mediation practices applied today then to determine the configuration allowing the desired "mediation continuum".

The second part lays out a methodology based on a hybrid exploratory survey conducted using

an abductive approach where we collect data through a qualitative survey, semi-directive Interviews and participative observations.

The third part puts forward the lessons learned from the case study, their interpretations and that we have concluded with the methodological and managerial contributions: structured mediation inventory (1) attributes to mediators in an intercultural framework (2) form of trust and the cultural specificity of the interlocutor in an intercultural context (3) and managerial input of this work that consists in a form of adhocratic chain as an organigram (4).

**Titre :** Une configuration adhocratique pour et par un « continuum médiationnel » :  
Cas de l'association de la communication éducative Sino-Française (A.C.E.S.F)

**Mots-clés :** Structure adhocratique, Homme d'orchestre, Confiance, Continuum Médiationnel,  
Médiation opérationnalisée

La médiation nous permet de repenser le monde complexe et hétérogène. Mais dans la littérature, il existe plusieurs perspectives de la médiation où l'on perçoit le manque de continuité entre les différentes pratiques de médiation tel que noté par un grand nombre d'auteurs (Lalonde 2001, Chini 2001, Battistoni 2012). D'où notre question de recherche sur la manière de catalyser une approche de « continuum médiationnel ».

C'est pour cela que le choix a été fait d'élaborer la compréhension de la notion de médiation sous deux angles d'attaque : l'idéologie et la pratique. En effet, la médiation désigne un intermédiaire ; son extension est une preuve suffisante de la généralité du concept qu'elle désigne et par conséquent de la difficulté de définir clairement les caractéristiques de ce qu'elle couvre. Aussi "la médiation est autre chose que la simple gestion d'un conflit puisqu'elle investit de plus en plus des domaines qui ne sont pas ceux de la concurrence et du conflit, mais plutôt ceux de la communication, son objectif n'étant alors pas de réparer une relation qui s'est détériorée mais de la créer" (Grelley, 2012).

C'est à cet égard que la "médiation" en tant que pratique, dans ses différentes applications, nécessite le développement de nouvelles conditions de véracité exprimant une continuité entre les pratiques de médiation que notre problématique est justifiée et nous a conduit à la question principale : comment assurer la continuité entre les différentes pratiques de médiation ?

Pour répondre à cette problématique, j'ai élaboré une grille d'analyse comportant quatre caractéristiques principales et chacune de ces caractéristiques a été divisée en deux sous-sections principales : **Objectif** (Accord et Communication), **Lien** (relations interpersonnelles et relations de partenariat), **Processus** (Médiation structurée et Approche structurée) et **Durée** (Court-Précis et Long-indéterminé).

Cette première grille d'analyse m'a permis d'inventorier les pratiques de médiation actuelles en les lisant à travers les variables identifiées. Ceci m'a conduit à un inventaire structuré de dix-sept pratiques de médiation sous deux types de médiation déduite : **la médiation pour résoudre un litige et la médiation pour créer des liens.**

Ensuite, j'ai poursuivi mon questionnement avec le souci de déterminer la configuration qui permettra une continuité effective entre les pratiques de médiation et j'ai décidé de développer la structure d'une organisation dans le domaine de la gestion avec le choix de la structure adhocratique associé au rôle de la confiance et de l'homme-orchestre pour atteindre notre objectif.

D'où la proposition d'un « continuum médiationnel » autour de 17 pratiques de médiation, pilotée par une configuration adhocratique dans la première partie.

La deuxième partie présente une méthodologie basée sur une enquête exploratoire hybride menée selon une approche abductive où nous recueillons des données à travers une enquête qualitative, des entretiens semi-directifs et des observations participatives afin d'exploiter l'Association de la Communication éducative sino-française (A.C.E.S.F) comme plate-forme pour répondre aux questions de recherche.

Nous avons adopté une position épistémologique interprétativiste, élaboré notre protocole de recherche et concentré notre attention sur les spécificités de l'ACESF et de ses parties prenantes. Nous avons défini la manière dont les données empiriques, primaires et secondaires sont collectées. La collecte de données primaires a été réalisée par le biais d'une enquête qualitative et des observations des participants. Nous avons mené des entretiens semi-directifs, basés sur un guide d'entretien, avec les membres d'ACESF et les parties prenantes internes et externes. Nous avons ensuite analysé les données collectées à travers des grilles d'analyse verticales et horizontales et les avons interprétées à la lumière de la grille de lecture théorique choisie. Ces données collectées et traitées, qui constituaient notre matériel empirique, ont ensuite été consolidées et restituées.

Par ailleurs, notre recherche a également été complétée et approfondie par une lecture scientifique grâce aux documents officiels et aux travaux académiques mobilisés. Cet exercice a été basé sur un va-et-vient continu entre la théorie et le terrain, tout en respectant le raisonnement abductif. Nos recherches ont progressé et mûri en parallèle avec notre cadre théorique et conceptuel. Le cadre théorique choisi pour l'analyse a ainsi été adapté. Notre axe de recherche et nos questions de recherche ont été progressivement affinés.

Notre choix de terrain pour étudier le "continuum médiationnel" a été choisi pour se situer au niveau de l'enseignement et plus particulièrement des structures d'accompagnement des étudiants chinois désireux d'étudier à l'étranger. Ce choix est justifié par la mise en place d'un système d'éducation de masse en Chine mais les institutions chinoises ne sont pas en mesure de répondre seules à cet objectif, en raison de leurs lacunes et du manque de personnel qualifié ; c'est pourquoi l'envoi d'étudiants à l'étranger contribue à atteindre cet objectif.

C'est pourquoi, le gouvernement chinois a fait un choix stratégique dans le secteur de l'éducation qui consiste à déléguer ses missions pour l'internationalisation du système éducatif chinois comme la catégorie d'acteurs appelés agents intermédiaires ou agents d'éducation intermédiaire, un secteur actuellement en plein essor en Chine.

Nous avons décidé de choisir l'Association de la Communication Educative Sino-Française (A.C.E.S.F), située en France, qui accompagne les étudiants chinois souhaitant poursuivre leurs études en France. Une association assez jeune en âge mais dont le choix a été motivé par sa structure organisationnelle, notre proximité avec l'association et la maturité de sa démarche. Notre appartenance à l'association nous a permis d'acquérir la confiance des multiples acteurs que nous avons interrogés, ce qui a facilité l'accès à l'information et surtout une chance d'élucider certaines observations sur le terrain afin d'éviter les mauvaises interprétations.

Nous menons des entretiens semi-directifs sur la base d'un guide d'entretien, avec des membres de l'association et des partenaires de l'association.



Enfin, la troisième partie présente les enseignements tirés de l'étude de cas, leurs interprétations et que nous avons conclu par les contributions méthodologiques : inventaire structuré des pratiques de médiation (1) attributs du médiateur dans un cadre interculturel (2) adéquation entre la forme de confiance et la spécificité culturelle de l'interlocuteur dans un contexte interculturel (3) et apport managérial de ce travail qui consiste en une chaîne adhocratique comme organigramme (4).

L'interprétation des résultats, à la lumière du cadre théorique choisi, a permis de comprendre, d'une part, pourquoi l'établissement d'un « continuum médiationnel » est nécessaire pour un processus de médiation réussi et, d'autre part, comment établir une continuité entre les pratiques de médiation. Les réponses à nos trois questions de recherche, qui constituent les variables explicatives de notre problème, nous ont permis de répondre à nos interrogations.

En plus de ces résultats, nous avons identifié une contribution théorique et trois contributions méthodologiques.

Au niveau de la contribution théorique, en ce qui concerne les principes du « continuum médiationnel » de Battistoni (2012) et le principe de continuité entre les différentes pratiques de médiation (Lalonde, 2001 ; Bernard et al. 2001 ; Chini, 2001 ; Faget, 2012)

Les concepts proposés par ces chercheurs mettent en évidence le manque de continuité entre les différentes pratiques de médiation, sans toutefois définir les conditions de succès.

Nos recherches ont enrichi ces connaissances théoriques par l'identification de leviers de succès qui peuvent faciliter l'articulation entre les différentes pratiques de médiation. Il s'agit notamment (1) d'une mobilisation de la forme de confiance selon la nature de l'interlocuteur et son particularisme culturel ; (2) de la présence d'un pilote jouant le rôle d'homme-orchestre, de médiateur, d'intégrateur et doté d'attributs essentiels, tels que la maîtrise des pratiques managériales participatives, un tempérament souple, une capacité de négociation importante, la détention d'actifs immatériels liés à l'expertise, au réseau personnel détenu et à l'influence sociale ; (3) la mise en place d'une structure adhocratique, qui augmente la flexibilité, l'agilité et la capacité d'adaptation de l'organisation aux changements de son environnement. La combinaison de ces trois leviers peut contribuer à l'établissement d'un "continuum médiationnel" réussi, voire d'une continuité durable entre les différentes pratiques de médiation.

Au niveau des apports méthodologiques, les principaux apports de notre recherche se situent à quatre niveaux :

(A) L'identification de deux catégories de médiations suite à l'énumération des pratiques de médiation existantes selon cinq caractéristiques principales.

Nous avons répertorié les différentes pratiques de médiation existantes selon quatre critères résultant de la confrontation d'une multitude de connaissances théoriques : (1) Contexte ; (2) Objectif ; (3) Lien ; (4) Processus et (5) Durée. Nous avons donc identifié deux catégories de médiations : La médiation pour résoudre/gérer un conflit & La médiation pour créer/catalyser des liens. L'identification de ces catégories permet au décideur de mieux comprendre le choix des pratiques de médiation en fonction des besoins.

(B) Identification des attributs des médiateurs dans un contexte interculturel.

Le médiateur doit adopter une posture de pilote et d'homme-orchestre. En plus des attributs classiques liés à ce type de rôle, le médiateur dans le domaine culturel et académique à l'échelle internationale doit maîtriser les codes de gestion, culturels et réglementaires des pays où il est appelé à travailler. A cela s'ajoute la nécessité de maîtriser les langues de ces pays et d'adopter une posture d'initiateur en rompant avec l'attentisme.

(C) L'adéquation entre la forme de confiance et la spécificité culturelle de l'interlocuteur, dans un contexte interculturel.

Compte tenu de l'existence de différents types de confiance justifiés par des facteurs conflictuels, il semble judicieux de savoir comment mobiliser la forme de confiance en fonction de la spécificité culturelle de l'interlocuteur, alors que dans certaines cultures, c'est la confiance institutionnelle qui est primordiale (par exemple, en France), tandis que dans d'autres, c'est la confiance liée aux personnes qui est la plus déterminante (par exemple, en Chine).

(D) L'identification d'une modulation de la structure adhocratique dans un cadre interculturel pour une médiation continue.

Nous avons proposé une modulation de structure adhocratique des "objets" permettant à de multiples divisions/missions de collaborer efficacement pour une médiation en continuum. La modulation d'objets proposée permet un ajustement mutuel entre les divisions où les fonctions de soutien sont primordiales et de collaborer dans leur travail pour répondre en commun à un objectif défini.

Le système de flux entre les différentes constellations de travail est basé sur une communication informelle où la formalisation des comportements des agents est rare vu la diversité des potentiels des missions et des enjeux. Enfin, les postes de travail sont regroupés par fonctions et un continuum de médiation est réalisé où plusieurs types de médiation peuvent être mobilisés dans un même projet ou même à travers des projets.