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Managing staff in a situation of double command, between risks and opportunities in the context of Middle school

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Abstract. This article explores the management of non-teaching staff working in middle school who report to two authorities, a hierarchical authority (on the level of the local authorities) and a functional authority (on the level of the Head of the school). Our study tries to respond to the following question: how are non-teaching staff managed in this context of double authority? This subject is grounded academically in theories of double bind and the role tensions. Using qualitative methodology (semi-directive interviews with non-teaching staff and their hierarchies), we focus our analysis on the risks and opportunities involved in this situation. Our data show that managing shared authority contains risks that are sources of dysfunction for organisations. Using the concept of "*discussion spaces"* developed by Mathieu Detchessahar, this study shows that setting aside time for discussion and mutual recognition helps to overcome the dysfunctional side of the situation.

Key words. *Authority; Hierarchy; Dialogue; Discussion space; Middle school*

Introduction

If there is one management principle that is well-grounded in the past, it is the principle of unity of command. In 1916, when he was Chief Executive Officer of the company *Commentry-Fourchambault-Decazeville*, Henri Fayol described the interest of this principle in his book *Administration Industrielle et Générale.* Here he declared that, "*For any action, an agent should only receive orders from a single boss"* (p.55). For Fayol, a subordinate should only refer to one superior and receive all instructions from this source. This is a way of avoiding multiple authorities that make management difficult and may result in conflict that hinders action and control. A single and direct hierarchical power is thus presented as facilitating and clarifying task distribution.

Nevertheless, in the context of managing entities that come under the authority of local government, this principle of unity of command is not always applied. For example, an employee working in an organisation with a matrix structure set up with the corresponding functions (e.g. following up human resources dossiers), comes under the authority of functional managers (e.g. the human resources director) while also being under the authority of the operational department where he/she works (e.g. the buildings manager).

Similarly, project type structures that make use of competences from various departments (all of which come under the functional authority of a project manager) are another example of an exception to the principle of unity of command.

The above exceptional examples however, share the fact that they have been chosen by the group. In this article, we have decided to study the management of non-teaching staff who work in middle schools (called *college agents* in the rest of the article). These employees contribute to the quality of the atmosphere and environment at the school: they maintain the premises, deal with security, school meals services, health and safety issues and, in boarding schools, they also deal with student accommodation.

These employees are in a situation of double authority that is both hierarchical (they are under the authority of the President of the local council), and functional (they report to the Head of the school). This situation results from the Decentralisation act 13 August 2004 relative to *"local freedoms and responsibilities"*, that transferred these personnel to the authority of local Councils.

The term *"authority"* can be understood as an actor's capacity to have his/her demands respected (Rey, 2005). The notion of hierarchical authority relates to the capacity of action of

a collective entity bound by a system in which subordinates are linked to their hierarchical superiors (here, represented by the agents and their managers respectively). This authority is part of a legal framework related to the statutory positon of the agent as an integral member of the local government bureaucracy (who may be "detached" to another locality if necessary). In this context, the hierarchical authority is in charge of recruiting employees, managing their career, their remuneration and their evaluation.

The notion of functional authority refers to the capacity of action of the school management teams to motivate these agents so that they provide an appropriate level of service for the students and their families. The idea of functional authority thus refers to the capacity of management teams to involve and motivate the agents to act in line with these demands. The functional authority is thus in charge of managing task distribution and organising agents' work. Since this functional authority is carried out by personnel from the State Education department, (the Head of school) the agents therefore find themselves reporting to a double authority.

Our study tries to respond to the following question: *how are collège agents managed in this context of double authority?*

Our study deals with coordinating personnel over whom authority is shared; we also aim to highlight the capacity for action of the actors concerned (whether they be part of the functional or hierarchical authority). This subject seems important since double authority is regularly mentioned as a source of risk for effective management. Indeed, the difficulties associated with this situation are often the subject of reports on television, newspaper articles, public reports and parliamentary debates. For example, a report published by the *Centre National de la Fonction Publique Territoriale* in 2010 about *"the transfer of college agents in local authorities"* develops the risks associated with the management of a shared authority, such as information retention and difficulties of *"short-circuiting"*.

A case in point is an article of Julie Krassovsky published on 23 January 2012 in the *Gazette des communes, des Départements et des Régions* entitled *"Collège agents: is double authority an obstacle to organisational integration?".* This article gives examples of the many problems associated with double authority: *"one of the obstacles to the construction (of trust and feeling of belonging) is the existence of a double authority (….) In practice, this double authority is just as difficult for the agents involved as for Human resources managers"*. (p.10).

For this reason, a better understanding of ways of managing college agents subject to double authority seems necessary. In this study, we try specifically to look at the risks and opportunities associated to this situation. To try to answer our research question, we interviewed 24 stakeholders with different functions and hierarchical positions. These interviews provided us with a thorough description of the management processes in place and of agents' perceptions of these processes. During this study, we also collected secondary data about processes such as partnership agreements, evaluation procedures and dialogue.

This subject of dual authority finds its academic place around the works that analysed the logic of double bind and role ambiguity. In the context of the public sector, Bartoli & Blatrix (2015) for example illustrate a public management characterized by organizational contradictions and paradoxical and ambiguous situations. This is also mentioned by Emery & Giauque (2005) which work describes the various paradoxes of public management: paradoxes related to the public action, to the organizational culture or to the legitimational dimension.

In this study, we chose to focus on works exploring the double bind, developed by Gregory Bateson in 1956, and the role strains between roles imposed on stakeholders (the theory of Robert L Kahn & al published in 1964). These studies highlight management from the viewpoint of the difficulties inherent to situations with paradoxical orders and role ambiguities. However, these theories talk of the need to overcome these dysfunctions. We conclude our study with the concept of "*discussion space"* elaborated by Mathieu Detchessahar. This makes it possible to analyse actors' discussions and their construction of mutual recognition.

This article is organized as follows. We develop our theoretical background (part 1) and methodological aspects (part 2). Afterthat, we analyse our empirical data (part 3) before to present some elements of discussion through a comparison between the data collected and the theoretical background (part 4).

1. Management in situation of dual authority: presentation of the conceptual framework

The subject of managing college agents in dual authority find its academic place through theories which identified management paradoxes requirements imposed on stakeholders and role tensions. We complete this literature from the concept of *"discussion space"*.

1 1. A management through paradoxical requirements and role tensions

Managing a situation of dual authority correspond to the problems of constraints imposed to stakeholders. This subject is an academic reading through the theory of double bind developed by Gregory Bateson in 1956 in an article entitled *"Towards a theory of schizophrenia".* In this article, Bateson analysis interaction behaviours of schizophrenics in their day to day life. By focusing on how family members communicate with each other, Bateson describes the paradoxical requirements where two individuals (or more) place another person in a repeated experience of contradictory injunctions without the possibility to escape the situation. The double bind imposed designates a paradox situation where two contradictory constrains are received. These requirements induce an inability to perform without violating one of them.

This work constituted the foundation of the Palo Alto School. Bateson & Wittezaele made a summary in a book published in 2008 of this theory. This work has allowed a better understanding of the communication process (Watzlawick, Helmick Beavin & Jackson 1972).

As part of this work, managing paradoxes appears as a central issue in the management of organizations. Works in management science have used these concepts and have highlighted the impact of paradoxical requirements on managers. Bourguignon (2003) uses this theory to show how the *"new"* management control is part of a double bind of compliance and autonomy (or how to take initiatives without infringing the rules of the organization?).

In an extension of these works, we also find these contradictory logic of situations in the context of the theory about role tensions developed by Robert Kahn L & al (1964). These authors describe a management marked by conflict and ambiguity of roles imposed on stakeholders. Kahn et al (1964) define role conflict as requests received by an individual as part of his daily activities, these requirements are marked by simultaneous but incompatible expectations from each other. In such conflict situations arise when role tension making it difficult actor's ability to meet these different expectations.

Kahn & al (1964) also discuss the role ambiguity of situations related to the uncertainty felt by a person in relation to the lack of information received for the role. In summary of their comments, Kahn & al (1964), then highlight the impacts generated by these situations in terms of *"organizational stress"*. These studies were extended by Katz & Kahn (1966) and Rizzo, House & Lirtzman (1970).

Work on role tensions allow to understand the impact of these tensions (Perrot, 2009). For example, Commeiras, Loubès & Fournier (2009) analyze the impact of the role of stress experienced by managers within two national brands of food supermarket. Their conclusion develops the dysfunctional impact of the role tensions on the emotional involvement of department heads in their action.

As part of this work, the management of paradoxical requirements and role tension is presented rather as having a dysfunctional logic. This theory allows to see the situation of dual authority as only a configuration marked by risks. However, these analyses also suggest that organizations must strive to bring out the *"positive"* impact of these paradoxical situations. For example, Watzlawick (1991) explains double bind necessitate a reframing of the situation at a different level. We suggest to complete this work from the concept of *"discussion space"* developed by Mathieu Destchessahar. This reflection is the subject of the next subsection.

1 2. An extension of the analysis using the concept of *"discussion space"* developed by Mathieu Destchessahar

Pursuing its remarks in the issue of the work of Jean-Daniel Reynaud and Armand Hatchuel on the incompleteness of the requirements imposed on stakeholders, Mathieu Destchessahar conducted various research on the issue of discussion in organizations. Indeed, discussion spaces can take many forms in organizations either from structured spaces, via the establishment of knowledge management systems or project groups, or spaces more informal from meetings or exchanges of information.

These areas include search for exceeding the requirements from the discussion of cognitive representations of stakeholders. These spaces allow actors to debate the prescribed work, to raise any contradictions between requirements and interact with the objective to find a compromise.

Describing the actors to deal with the incompleteness of the prescription, Detchessahar (2013) summarizes the principles of management by discussion *"through which performs all the arrangements and compromises"* (p.59). According to Detchessahar (2013), this definition shows that these spaces are both structuring and structured for the organization and the stakeholders. This is both a process that allows the compromise through the implementation debate and the development of solutions produced on the basis of this compromise.

According to Detchessahar & Journé (2007), these focus areas are particularly necessary when the transformations of organizations are changing the roles and positions of the actors and require new rules. For example, Detchessahar (1999) presents the development of quality management standards in logistics. It presents the context of a transport structure marked by a family and regional culture, far from the *"symbolic universe of the largest industrial enterprise"* (p.30). In this context, the establishment of discussion spaces is presented as facilitating the coordination of the supply chain.

Similarly, during a search on autonomous teams developed within the *Chantiers de l'Atlantique*, Detchessahar (2002) developed the contributions of these discussion spaces between the companions of a welding shop. Detchessahar (2002) then described this context of socialization as a fulcrum to the emergence of new representations of the work.

The articulation of the concept of *"discussion space"* proposed by Detchessahar with the work developed in the first subsection seems to enrich the understanding of a management paradoxical requirements situations and roles strains. Our approach allows to open thinking about the uses of structure around dialogue, not just ambiguities and contradictions of roles

2. Research Methodology

In this article, we choose to study non-teaching staff in situation of dual authority. We specify below the legal and regulatory framework for the management of these personnel and then present our methodological approach.

2 1. The framework of the management of non-teaching staff: some legal and regulatory aspects

Pursuant to *Law No. 2004-809 of 13 August 2004* about *"local freedoms and responsibilities",* around 90 000 employees of French State were transferred to local authorities from 1rst January 2006. Local authorities have received by this law, the activities of security, of school meals services and health issues.

To facilitate the coordination of activities between middle school and local authority, legal decrees came out the framework for intervention. A summary is provided below (Table 1).

Table 1. The framework for authorities skills (extract)

	Extracts from decrees
Decree No. 2005-1631 of 26 December 2005	*"The Dean of the Middle School and the Executive director is responsible for the relations with the local authorities on technical problems. They have too organized the work of auxiliary staff"* (Article 19). *"Local councils provide activities like: recruitment, remuneration in middle schools and career management*" (Article 82)
Decree No 2007-913 of 15 May 2007	*"Non-teaching staff are responsible for the tasks necessary for the running of the middle schools, management of green spaces, accommodation, hygiene, and security and building maintenance, collective catering"* (Article 3).

Regarding the field of expertise of each authority, *Decree No. 2005-1631 of 26 December 2005* lay down rules for the transfer to the local authority. In this decree, the Head of the school role is to supervise and organize the work of non-teaching staff (organization schedules, distribution of tasks, ...). This principle is presented in the *Code de l'éducation* (Article no r.421-13).

Conversely, the local authority manages the recruitment of non-teaching staff as the employer of these agents. To enable the coordination of institutions with the local authority, an agreement between the middle school and the local authority is laid down in Article 82-10 by the *Law No. 2004-809 of 13 August 2004. Decree No. 2007- 913 of 15 May 2007* then clarify the employment context college agents.

The Heads of the school are managers of French State. So, there is the principle of a double authority over these agents, both functional (on the level of the Head of the school) and hierarchical (on the level of the local authority).

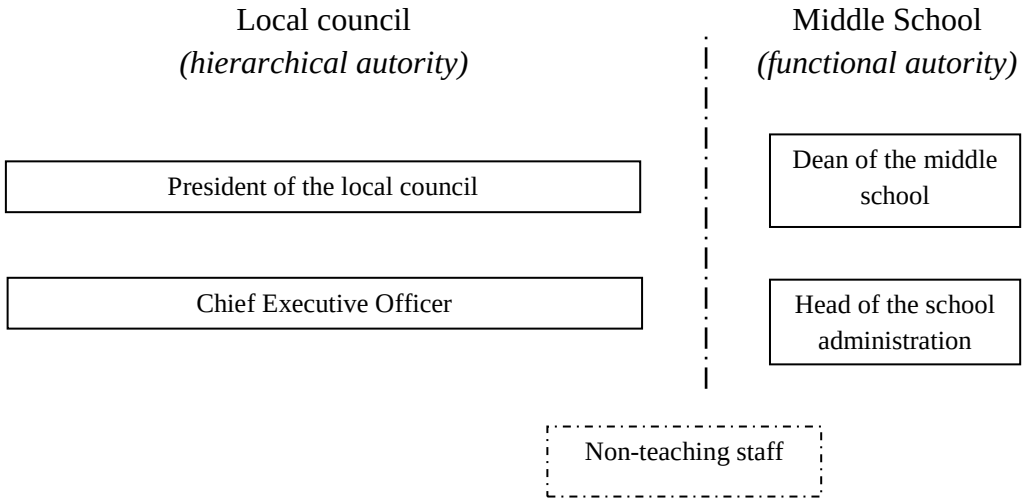
These two authorities have also management autonomy. The principle of autonomy of local authorities is recognized in article L 1111-1 of the *Code general des collectivités territoriales.* Legal personality and financial autonomy of middle school are specified in the framework of Article L 421-2 of the *Code de l'éducation*. We therefore suggest to study this shared position of authority from a qualitative methodology.

2 2. The methodological approach

We make the choice in this research, to focus our analysis on the management of non-teaching staff serving in colleges. We excluded from this analysis the relationship between the regional councils for personnel who works in high schools. Indeed, it appears this relationship derives from a different organization because of the presence of staff in charge of coordination in each context. However, the studied local authorities do not have these type of employees.

Appendix 1 summarizes our methodological framework of this research (objectives, method ...), this summary information's presents the survey of respondents. In order to better locate the position of each player, *Figure 1* below presents the main stakeholders of this management.

Figure 1. The stakeholders of the management of auxiliary staff in the middle school



This representation of the stakeholders is not exhaustive. Other stakeholders involved in the chain of command such as the Academic managers or employee's representatives. We would like to emphasize that it exists a great diversity of organizations in task work, especially at the local councils. For example, an employee in charge of service personal management in a local council can have the role to implement the management procedures and to monitor the recruitment process, the training plan, the evaluation. In another local council, its role may be more limited especially depending on the place of human resources department that can support the activities of recruitment or training for example. We develop below this different organization.

In our opinion, it seem important to conduct semi-directive interviews with stakeholders with different positions. We have conducted semi-directive interviews interact to access the meaning that actors give to their practices (Gavard-Perret & al., 2008). Twenty-four semi-directive interviews were carried out. Table 2 below summarizes the interviews conducted in four categories.

Table 2. The list of interviews conducted

	Stakeholders categories	**Number of interviews**
Local authority	Management staffs	8
	Chief Executive Officers	4
	Non-teaching staffs	3
Middle school	Deans of the Middle school and Heads of school administration	9

We carried out interviews with the Head of the school and managers of local authorities (mainly Human Resource and education services). The purpose of these interviews is to triangulate data by crossing information between different actors (eg: compare the devices mentioned by the Head of the school with those submitted by the local authorities). College agents are responsible for green spaces, management of building and cleaning and catering services. Other stakeholders were also interviewed as Directors in the Rectory (eg. Director of Human Resources, Director in charge of the staff).

The interviews aim to access to the description of the management systems implemented and the perception of the stakeholders in relation to these devices. *Appendix 2* summarizes the items of the structured interviews in three steps.

Firstly, we ask the local adaptation of organizational configurations. To understand the distribution of tasks between the actors (middle school, local authority), this first step of the interview focuses on understanding the contextual elements and activities performed by the various services.

The second step study management systems implementation related to Human resources aspects (recruitment, evaluation, mobility ...). This step aims to question the risks and opportunities associated with the dual authority.

Finally, a third step is devoted to the presentation of interaction modalities between structures, centered mainly around contracting and dialogue mechanisms.

Each interview was transcribed in full and constitute the primary data for this research. At the time of these interviews, secondary data were collected such as, partnership agreements, training plans or evaluation devices. These data provide additional sources of information for the understanding of the management systems.

Then, we proceeded to a data coding analysis. This analysis aims to transform data (collected words) in a meaningful formulation through a list of items (Mucchielli, 2010; Paillé & Mucchielli, 2012). This choice of coding result of the complexity of data collected (each interview lasting around 1 to 2 hours and comprising about 10 to 15 pages of transcript) and semi-directive nature of the interviews (actors who provided the summary informations and with relative freedom to discuss the themes of the interview guide).

A first level of code was used to summarize the important parts of conversations about each item (presentation of services, devices set up to manage the agents ...). We then coded the transcripts on two themes, namely the elements associated with the risks of dual authority and extracts addressing the opportunity aspects. The function of these thematic codes is to collect verbatim in more meaningful analysis units. The following presentation of the data are based from this thematic coding.

3. The management of non-teaching staff: a duality of command characterized by risks and opportunities

The collected data are presented in two parts. In a first subsection, we discuss the risks associated with the situation of dual command. The second time is devoted to developing opportunities elements.

3 1. Some risks associated with this situation of dual command of authority ...

The first problem concerns the complexity for the management of such personnel. The difficulty corresponds to the management of a multitude of stakeholders especially for the local authority. Indeed, the services in charge of colleges agents appears complex, particularly in the distribution of functions between the Education and Human Resources services. It should be clear that no one solution is used between local authority, some making the choice of centralized management to the human resources department, other delegated human

resources function to education service, others sharing these missions between human resources and education services with different degrees of formalization. For example, this diversity appears to the question of hierarchy, manage by the education or human resources directors, or a combination of these managers (eg:: distribution of a first level of authority at the education service and a second level by the director of human resources).

From this complexity, it shows risks in understanding the roles that are manifested for through aspects of disorientation *"I never know who to call"* (Mrs. MG, Head of school administration). This point of the multiplicity of interlocutors is mentioned concerning the replacements of employees provided by temporary contracts involving successive intervention of human resources and the education services. College agents and functional authorities appear in complex situations with multiple interlocutors. In this case, the mode of resolution of these difficulties concerns the action of the Head of school administration for the coordination of departmental services through informal activities (eg.: contacts and telephone reminders).

From the multiplication of stakeholders and the sharing of authority, it also shows a problem of *"short-circuiting"*. These stakeholders appear important in the speech through the lack of information of functional authorities with respect to the information available of departmental information officers: *"The problem is the communication. The employees have information that we do not have. We are not directly addressed this problem. Some employees call directly and say, "I have been told". We find ourselves in difficulty. (...) We should have information simultaneously. Some people benefit. We have to phone. I call the referent service colleges"* (Mr GB, Head of school administration).

To overcome this problem, the management system appears organized from a coordination of action between the services of the local authority and middle school. However, these case appear more problematic in case of internal conflicts between the employees and the Head of School. The difficulty relates to the action of a actor seeking to take advantage of the absence of information. Following a dispute with two interviews agents, a Head of the school administration evokes such trouble this point: *"I should have been sought directly with the agents, but this was not the case. One of them asked me and another discuss directly to the territorial referent"* (Mrs. AM, Head of school administration).

The management of a dual authority thus appears source of difficulties because of a multitude of actors. If the authority of the department is unique, its components are in fact multiple depending on different times of the professional life. According to the degrees of

internal coordination to the community, this multiplicity of interlocutors can become a factor of instability. The stakeholders are then required to develop a chaotic adjustment system involving non-formalized discussion spaces. We would like to develop this aspect of discussion in the next subsection.

Beyond the multitude of contacts, the situation is also marked by the absence of hierarchy between the authorities, a situation which is characterized by a management independence of middle school vis-à-vis the local authorities' departments. This organization imposes modes of coordination more complex than the direct hierarchical transmission instructions. This is especially developed regarding the correspondence practices of the Human Resources department vis-à-vis the functional authorities. For example, these suggest sending practices of letters received by the Heads of schools perceived as *"memo"* sent to all departmental services without taking into account the specific role of functional authority. Faced with these difficulties correspondence, the local authorities of Education services are thus more likely to adjust their actions by a local activity for middle school. The adjustments between middle school and education service of local authority come overcome the difficulties service: *"We still catching shots that leave from the human resources department, forgetting that for service personal of middle school, the rule doesn't apply. Every day we adapt" (*Mrs. MC, Manager of education department).

Another example concerns the risks associated with the authorities of management autonomy in the recruitment of personnel. In these situations, managers suggest the case of contradictory logic of confrontation and conflicts between authorities with for example, a local authority wishing to privilege internal transfer and functional authority wishing external recruitment. In this case, the mode of resolution of the situation concerns the search for a compromise solution favoring one over another. This is an example of finding a trade for the future concerning the definition of a probationary period.

Therefore, managing this duality of authority is characterized by risk management linked to a multitude of contacts characterized by coordination difficulties. These risks are all the more important as the number of actors is accompanied by autonomy of authorities. In this regard, the presentation of these problems appear connected to the frame of the requested theories (theory of double bind and role tension). Applied to the non-teaching staff, these theories analyze these paradoxes situations imposed on stakeholders. This presentation also highlights the ambiguity of situations, such as with an Head of the school administration have to perform some of the activities of hierarchical authority close to the agent, but under the

constraints imposed by the authority. However, this description of risks shows that stakeholders are also overtaking modes of these paradoxical situations from interactive modalities of dialogue

3 2. ... but also source of opportunities for stakeholders

In the first time of the transfer of personnel, the local authority has set up of plenary meetings attended by the Heads of the school. These discussion rules are still the preferred mode of dialogue between authorities. For the local authority, these moments allow discussion to encourage a vision not just centered on the demands of the management teams of their own institutions. However, although these meetings establish the principle of participation, they are rather perceived in a downward and formal logic. This logic appears rather backward through the themes mentioned in the records of the plenary meetings on *"various issues"* raised by the management teams.

This model of dialogue is not exclusive of other approaches to local initiatives with multiple names (working groups, management committees, ...). These different areas are used to define the intervention framework of functional authority by facilitating discussion on the problems encountered. These spaces can also be focused on employees. A local authority has established specialize clubs such as *"cooks clubs"* about restoring mission: *"This club has defined the efficient materials that can avoid difficulties on the job including the big dips where we try buying machines that prevent agents to be folded in half"* (Mrs. AS, Manager in charge of Education service).

These working groups are led by a community worker from small groups of volunteer workers. This is most often practices exchange groups on specific topics to be discussed but the local authority defines *a priori* solutions*: "he idea is that they share, we worked on mutualisation to lend things, and it works. This allows people to share practices, to see that we can do otherwise, organize differently"* (Mrs. CB, Manager in charge of Education service). This point on the inputs in terms of working practices is relayed through employees' perceptions participating in these groups: *"These clubs allow to see what the other colleagues do. I am an electrician, but I'm the only one in my college. This gives us useful information" (*Mr CL, Cleaning employee).

The double bind is an intractable situation, its resolution therefore requires the development of *"discussion space"* such as plenary meetings of local working groups on specific topics. These logical discussion would raise awareness functional authorities for example, when holding meetings on the progress which those moments incite in the same time, the Head of school administration to be more attentive in filling the scorecards.

Furthermore, as mentioned in the previous subsection, informal spaces for discussion also exist for exchanges between actors (eg.: Direct contact between Head of school administration and human resources referent of the education service). The stakeholders put forward the necessary consultation imposed by this configuration in dual authority.

The situation of multiple stakeholders is a source of opportunities for service management by promoting mutual contributions. The activity of Head of the school appears essential to territorial action allowing proximity to the agents according to the logic *"we are on the ground"*. Through dialogue, functional authority facilitates the transformation of a situation that may appear as dysfunctional relationship into an opportunity for actors (eg.: from a more informal coordination of the local authority action by Head of school administration).

Conversely, the action of the local council also appears important for middle school as *"third expert"*, via the action of specialized competence. This is the case particularly in situation of internal conflict where the actions of departmental services appear as *"first level of mediation": "They know they can also rely on the authority of the (local council) when they are in trouble, through mediation. You can come around the corners"* (Mrs. AS, Director in charge of educational policies).

These items of opportunity appear precisely because there is a management autonomy between middle school and the local council. The situation of lack of hierarchy between the authorities is indeed perceived as a source of opportunity. The speeches of the institutions of the management team suggest trust relationships established over time with the departmental: *"My manager, I see often satisfied after a call to the community. With the correspondent, she is not afraid to call" (*Mr EM, Dean of the middle school).

Therefore, whatever forms these focus areas translate the necessary to create dialogue (formal and informal), this situation transform the risks to opportunites. These areas involving *"discussion of engineering"*, term of Detchessahar & Journé (2007) that clarify the respective positions and to reassure the stakeholders about their intentions.

4. Discussion

Our empirical data illustrates the risk and opportunity aspects of managing double authority. On this point the data do appear to be connected to the theories we use: they illustrate situations of paradoxical orders and role ambiguities as sources of dysfunction. At the same time, discussion spaces facilitate mutual contributions between authorities. These risks and opportunities seem to be linked to the contexts underlying this dual approach.

4.1. Double authority seen as a question of risks and opportunities.

Comparing empirical data and academic theory, we see a system of management characterised by paradoxical orders that entail risks of obstruction for the actors involved. The data we collected helps to better identify and illustrate these difficulties with examples provided by the actors themselves (e.g. expectations of management suited to the local situation versus the demands of general human resources regulation by the whole local authority). We are also confronted to ambiguities role complementary to theory of double bind, the theory of role strains allows to identify this situation with imprecise role and risks related to multiple stakeholders.

Far from being limited to an organisation marked by contradictory approaches and role ambiguities, systems of formal and informal discussion appear at the same time; these are sources of opportunity for actors, allowing them to provide mutual contributions. In fact; the different parties working on proximity (case of Heads of school) and in the same time, as third parties (case of the local authority)..

As Watzlawick (1991) mentions, beyond the simultaneous presence of two mutually exclusive elements, the main method for managing paradoxes consists of creating a new perspective that manages to include these two mutually exclusive elements. This appears in the case of managing agents in collèges through setting up spaces for discussion that enable the actors to clarify their respective positons (e.g. overcome incompatible viewpoints through compromise).

This concept of *"discussion space"* seems to us precisely the type of thing that can bring a more positive aspect of double authority into play. These spaces for discussion appear as areas for expression and confrontation resulting in overcoming the single minded logic particular to each party, and helping to lift the eventual contradictions between different orders or instructions (Detchessahar, 2013).

4 2. A management of non-teaching staff adapted in each local context

The management of these potentially contradictory aspects seems particular to each local context. According to Detchessahar & Journé (2007), *"discussion spaces"* are all the more necessary when organisational transformations bring about changes in the actors' rules and positons requiring agreement as to the new *"ground rules"*. This situation of changing roles appears in the context of managing collège agents. The transfer of these agents in fact meant that the roles of each of their authorities had to change with regard to the previous situation

where these agents were (hierarchically and functionally) attached to the head of the middle school.

Regarding functional authority, this previously mainly had to do with legal matters as to how the collège was managed in terms of administration and logistics. Regarding human resources management, the Head of school and Head of school administration transmitted instructions directly related to their powers of evaluation and sanction (because they were hierarchically linked to top management). Double authority brought about a change in their roles. Since there is no more hierarchy, today these actors talk of the need for a type of management that relies more on incentive, motivation and agents' participation.

Far from being limited to Head of school administration, this change in role is also relevant to the hierarchical authority. Before the second act of decentralization, the Education departments of the local councils previously only managed the physical aspect of the school buildings through for example, their management of and investment in new school construction. From managing potential investments, these departments now manage the operational problems related to managing agents (training, mobility, replacement etc.). A step of understanding were necessary to manage employees problems.

For human resources departments too, this change was not a simple matter of transferring extra personnel. The human resources departments of Regional councils were confronted with the management of shared authority- something they had not been used to previously. These human resource departments used to manage agents with authority that covered both functional and hierarchical aspects. They now had to learn to function with the specific characteristics of the school management teams and accept to share authority. In this situation too, the influence of context on changes in the roles explain the interest of deploying spaces for discussion that enable authorities to interact and make compromises.

Conclusion

We focused our article on the risks and opportunities. From our point of view, these situations provide both positive contributions and difficulties that can be resolved through using spaces for adjustment and dialogue resulting in discussion. We envisage continuing this analysis by a more specific study of managing working conditions, hygiene and security. This policy is related to the problems of duality, for example, how do we manage these elements while respecting the demands of single document that is to be applied both to personnel with a status of state official and local government official. This extension to our propos seems in

line with the framework proposed by Mathieu Detchessahar to take account of health issues at work by starting with space for discussion.

Beyond contesting double authority or focusing only on the risk aspects, this article enables us to better understand the dual relationship between functional and hierarchical authority. These different ways of managing shared authority first appear in public management, notably in local authorities, with many configurations of project groups or multi-party contracts imposed by reorganisation, mutualisation or associations that oblige these different bodies to work together and confront each other. In this context, the manager is no longer the one who knows everything, but the one who accepts discussion, including with other organisational levels, even at the price of complexity. We then find ourselves in front of managers torn between contradictions whose characteristics need to be analysed.

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Appendix 1. Presentation of the research project

Research title: MANAGEMENT OF NON-TEACHING STAFF IN SITUATION OF DUAL AUTHORITY

Organizing laboratory: CEREGE, University of Poitiers

Project manager: Aurélien Ragaigne, Associate professor in management sciences

The project's objectives:

- Present the impacts of the dual authority in the various components of the management of auxiliary staff (recruitment, training ...)

- Identify the times when this dual authority impact the organizations and their managers (middle school and local council) in terms of knowledge transfer, collaboration, dialogue, problem of coordination ...;

- Understand the space of participation between structures (working groups, partnership agreements ...).

Academic research interests:

Management through authority sharing in situation of geographic distance with regard to the Head of school in direct contact with employees

Research Methodology:

Semi-directive interviews with managers; service personal of middle school, Executive directors and Dean of the middle school, and services of local structures (mainly human resources and education services)

Structure of the interview grid:

The interviews last approximately one hour and are articulated around three times:

- Understanding the contextual elements (middle school, local Council for example HR service; education);

- Questioning the items related to the service personal (recruitment, evaluation, mobility ...)

- Identifying modes of participation between structures (middle school, local authority) around contractual arrangements, dialogue...

Appendix 2. The structure of the interview grid

1. CONTEXT (MIDDLE SCHOOL AND LOCAL COUNCIL)	
	- Presentation of stakeholders and services, including roles between services with respect to service personal; - Collection of figures: number of employees; budget of training plan; wage bill for auxiliary staff; - Presentation of the services in charge of service personal: dedicated staff, organization of the chain of command; operating modes of service; - Existence of specific devices for auxiliary staff (eg.: training plan)
2. MANAGEMENT PRACTICES	
	- Human management activities: recruitment procedure; managing schedules, absences management; - Task control: team management and distribution of tasks, quality control; - Performance appraisal: organizational modalities of evaluation; - Training: types of training, new skills control; - Social dialogue: management of conditions and psychosocial risks, health and safety issues.
3. DIALOGUE DEVICES	
	- Dialogue system of participation: Plenary meetings, working groups with academic services; Space for exchanges, informal meeting; - Contractual arrangement: contracts and stakeholders agreements.