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Business as a pretext? Managing social-economic tensions on a social enterprise's websites

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Abstract

The ubiquity of tensions and paradoxes in organizations is increasingly acknowledged, but literature is scarce on the actual practices mobilized to deal with them. This paper explores how the social-economic tension experienced by a social enterprise is dealt with discursively through its mission statement and two websites.

While first sight observations suggest that the poles of the tension are split between the two websites (one regular and one transactional/for online sales), closer analysis reveals the micro-strategies used to innovatively reformulate and reconnect the poles. The store (online and physical) appears as "more than a store", and communities are numerous and shifting in territorial and membership terms. This paradox-inspired analysis shows how the social and the economic are textually intertwined, but it also shows further "intra-pole" tensions. Websites appear as "sites of action" that allow the tensions to be both stressed (through the splitting of the organization over two sites) and accepted (through the links they allow to create between the poles, within and between texts), while constituting an organization with social and economic goals.

Key words: tension, paradox, website, text, social enterprise, discourse

INTRODUCTION

Tensions, contradictions and paradoxes abound in organizations, and are now recognized as an inherent part of organizational life (Quinn & Cameron, 1988; Bouchikhi, 1998; Lewis, 2000; Perret & Josserand, 2003; Smith & Lewis, 2011). Nevertheless, our understanding of how they are actually dealt with remains largely incomplete (Trethewey & Ashcraft, 2004; Smith & Tushman, 2005). In particular, and in the midst of corporate social responsibility discourses, a challenging tension emerges between social and economic objectives. Numerous capitalist enterprises are now undertaking social initiatives (Margolis & Walsh, 2003); conversely, traditional nonprofit organizations are developing entrepreneurial ventures (Cooney 2006; Young, 2005). This blurs classic definitional frontiers between the private, capitalistic and nonprofit sectors (Emerson, 2003; Peredo & McLean, 2006), making social-economic tension ever more topical.

The social-economic tension can be seen as constitutive of social enterprises. These organizations pursue social and economic objectives simultaneously through business activities; they are created on the social-economic tension. This tension has been recognized in the literature on social enterprises, and so has its challenging and problematic character (Bull, 2008; Cooney, 2006; Smith, Besharov, Wessels & Chertok, 2012; Young, 2005). But still, our understanding of the concrete practices used to deal with it is greatly lacking (Cooney, 2006; Diochon & Anderson, 2010; Le Ber, Bansal & Branzei, 2010; Russell & Scott, 2007). How do social enterprises deal with this social-economic tension? Adopting a paradox perspective (Smith and Lewis, 2011), this paper contributes to filling the gap by looking at the discursive practices of a social enterprise. Considering texts as "mediators of action" (Phillips, et al. 2004 quoted by Sorsa, 2010) and also tensions, I study how the constitutive tensions of a social enterprise are dealt with through the communicative practices found in the two websites (one regular and one transactional) of the Ecolo Co-op[1], a co-operative organization. More specifically, this paper proposes that websites be considered as novel organizational sites of strategic importance, for they communicate the core strategic and constitutive tensions of a pluralistic organization's very mission, while creatively reshaping their dynamics through diverse communicative practices.

In the next sections, I will first review the literature on tensions in social enterprises; on texts and tensions, and on websites - a specific genre overlooked in organization studies. The method devised for the textual analysis will then be detailed, followed by the findings, discussion and conclusion.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Before beginning the review, I will define tensions and explain both what is meant by a "paradox perspective" (Smith & Lewis, 2011) and why it is deemed a fruitful lens to look at social enterprises.

Stohl and Cheney (2001: 353-354) define tension as the "clash of ideas, principles or actions and […] the discomfort that may arise as a result". Contradictions, paradoxes and dilemmas are related yet distinct phenomena

1. As pseudonym

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which all belong to the larger "tension" family, with tension thus being the most encompassing term. In this study, I have chosen to use the label "tension" to describe the relationship between social and economic objectives in social enterprises. By positing that "the social" and "the economic" are simply in tension, I leave it open to the empirical setting to reveal their more precise interplay. That being said, I adopt a "paradox perspective" to look at this empirical tension, meaning that I make the opposite poles "explicit", and "consider their simultaneous presence and dynamic balance", contemplating "how both [can] be simultaneously pursued" (Cameron & Quinn, 1988: 7). Indeed, the paradox perspective allows for the acceptance of "contradictory yet interrelated elements that exist simultaneously and persist over time" (Smith & Lewis, 2011: 382). Such a perspective differs from the dialectic or dilemmatic ones: in a dialectic approach, "contradictory elements (thesis and antithesis) [are] resolved through integration (synthesis), which, over time, will confront new opposition", while a dilemmatic approach to tensions sees the two elements as "competing choices, each with advantages and disadvantages", and forces a choice between the two (Smith & Lewis, 2011: 387).

Created to pursue both social and economic objectives, social enterprises (SEs) exacerbate the social-economic tension, which appears as a central dimension of their identity. My aim here is not to fuel definitional debates surrounding SEs, the social economy, or third sector and related initiatives (Bouchard, Ferraton & Michaud, 2008; Defourny & Nyssens, 2010; Evers & Laville, 2004). Different institutional contexts have given rise to various types of SEs, and different conceptualizations co-exist (see Defourny & Nyssens, 2010 for comparison of European and US approaches). Overall – and although they may differ on a number of counts, such as the individual (or collective) nature of the initiative, their democratic (or other) governance system, etc. – "[s]ocial enterprises are commonly defined as enterprises that trade for a social or environmental purpose. As well as meeting their social and/or environmental goals, they have to be business-like and meet financial and commercial goals. As a result they are sometimes referred to as having a double or even triple bottom line" (Spear, Cornforth & Aiken, 2009: 248).

Tensions in social enterprises and related organizations

Trethewey and Ashcraft (2004: 82) noted that most studies conducted with a "tension-centred" approach were conducted in alternative organizations (such as women's groups and other democratic, grassroots organizations), since these organizations imply compromises, given the contradictions between their ideologies, structures and practices, and those of their institutional environment. Such tensions may be related to the tension between social and economic goals, as external market pressures may mean that social goals may get squeezed out and that the co-operative [and, arguably, any type of SE] degenerates to become similar to other businesses. While the inevitability of 'degeneration thesis' [...] has been challenged by various researchers [...], the dangers of financial considerations squeezing out social and other goals is a real one. Conversely too great an emphasis on social goals may mean important financial aspects of the enterprise are neglected, threatening its survival. (Spear, Cornforth & Aiken, 2009: 259)

Pharoah, Scott and Fisher (2004: 30-31) consider the pressure on SEs from

their market environment to be a challenge, as SEs must maintain "social mission and vision when self-sufficiency in the marketplace becomes a condition of existence". For Russell and Scott (2007: 1), describing "the development of social enterprise without reference to what we believe to be inherent conflicts and dilemma is ultimately self-delusory and unhelpful". The simultaneous pursuit of social and economic goals creates tensions, and the challenge of their management should not be underestimated (Bull, 2008; Diochon & Anderson, 2010; Pharoah, Scott & Fisher, 2004; Seanor, Bull & Ridley-Duff, 2007). For Pharoah et al. (2004: 29), "at their best, social enterprises provide opportunities for multiple business and social returns. […] Social enterprises, however, are also where cultures can clash and all the inherent tensions between these two goals surface". Indeed, Smith et al. (forthcoming) put forth that the social and commercial sides of a social enterprise are not isolated from one another. Rather, they are inherently interrelated and often conflicting. Attending to both the social and financial might benefit the organizational overall. Yet these different pursuits are often associated with competing identities, value systems, and norms (Battilana & Dorado, 2010; Tracey, et al., 2011). Managing these tensions is a critical skill for social entrepreneurs (Dacin, Dacin, & Matear, 2010).

How, then, is this tension managed? Although the tension is broadly recognized in the social enterprise literature, it seems we know little about how it is dealt with in concrete terms. While not all nonprofit organizations are social enterprises and vice-versa, a growing number of them are, and in the following paragraphs I thus draw on some research on nonprofits to add to this review on the social-economic tension in SEs.

According to Young, Jung and Aranson (2010), the "mission-market tension is not a new issue for nonprofits"[2], and is related to two trends: 1) nonprofits ["NPOs"] increasingly working with the government on a service-contracting basis; and 2) NPOs' development of entrepreneurial business ventures on the private marketplace. The critical stance toward this second trend is clearly encapsulated by Bull (2008: 269) as follows: "a sector built on community, trust and togetherness is being challenged by trends towards 'business-like' practices [...] and 'managerialism'". The NPO literature is marked by the fear of mission drifts, i.e. by a "growing concern that the introduction of business logics can displace the mission focus of the organization [...]" (Cooney, 2006: 144), and by "the need for nonprofits to maintain a clear identity and focus tied to social mission […and] better means of measuring nonprofit performance in order to reconcile financial and mission-related performance" (Young, 2005: 8). It recognizes the pervasive social-economic tension (Young, et al., 2010) and offers practitioners "how-to" guides with prescriptive advice and tools to help "resolve this tension" (Young, 2005) and ensure "leverage against mission-drift" (Cooney, 2006: 144). These include the "blended value proposition" (Emerson 2003), the "mission/money matrix decision guide" (Boschee, 1998), or sets of guiding principles to balance financial and social returns and get "all stakeholders on the same page defining success" (Lynch & Walls, 2009: 31). Still, empirical research on the actual practices to deal with the social-economic tension in practice is remarkably scarce. Hudson (2009) recently aimed to fill this gap, but did so with a focus on the UK's institutional (macro) environment which does not really inform us about SEs' micro-practices. While business model-related practices were studied by Le Ber et al. (2010), micro-practices

were studied by Jäger and Beyes (2010), who found recurrent patterns for dealing with the "social mission vs. economic rationale" tension in a financial co-operative's "everyday strategizing": supporting diverse positions, protecting stabilized relationships, and relating to organizational experience. The present paper answers calls by Le Ber et al. and Jäger and Beyes for more research on practices dealing with the social-economic tension.

In addition, when adopting a paradox perspective, tensions can actually be seen as a source of creativity and be assumed or accepted instead of resolved (Beech, Burns, de Caestecker, MacIntosh & MacLean, 2004; Lewis, 2000; Poole & Van de Ven, 1989; Westenholz, 1999; Smith & Lewis, 2011), especially in hybrid organizations. Generally speaking, SEs can be conceptualized as hybrid organizations (Billis, 2010; Teasdale, 2012) for they blend objectives and characteristics pertaining to the private, third and even the public sectors. In identity terms, they combine normative (social orientations and values) and instrumental (business, entrepreneurial) features (Moss, Short, Payne and Lumpkin, 2010) - which may conflict and create tensions. The "volunteer-driven organization" and "family of friends" identities conflict in a health sector NPO (Golden-Biddle & Rao, 1997), as do nonmanagerial logics and growing professional efforts (Kreutzer & Jäger, 2010). This shows the delicate balance that must be found, but also points out the relationship between an organization's different identities and its multiple constituents - with multiple identities resulting from bringing together people from diverse professional backgrounds, as is often the case in "ideographic identity organizations" (Glynn, 2006: 59) of the health (Beech, et al., 2004) and culture sectors (Glynn, 2000: 285). Taking a pragmatic sociology stance (Bénatouïl, 1999), I argue that the social-economic tension should be studied without pre-associating its poles to the different stakeholders that SEs are composed of. This allows us to "move away from considering identity as a fixed entity to be displayed, and to view it instead as being discursively constructed" (Chreim, 2005: 569). Research on hybrid organization identity allows for the identification of the different identities in play and confirms the presence of social-economic (i.e. normative-instrumental) tensions, but tells us very little about how the multiple identities are managed. Pratt and Foreman (2000) offer propositions on the managerial responses to multiple identities that still need to be empirically looked at, and multiple new research avenues.

Together, the limitations identified in the literature offer opportunities for contributions. In short: we need to go beyond identifying the tension and investigate the ways it may be dealt with in practice, which should be done without a priori positing that the mission is (exclusively) social, nor that the social and economic logics or identities are associated with distinct stakeholders. This paper aims to do so by digging into the textual practices associated to the management of the dual social and economic orientations of a SE.

Texts and tensions

Following Smith (2001: 164), texts are defined here as "definite forms of words, numbers or images that exist in a materially replicable form. […] The text itself, as a material presence (paper, electronic and so on) is produced, read (watched, listened to) in particular local settings by particular people". Although they may be interpreted differently in distinct settings, texts appear as "key

devices in hooking people's activities" (ibid.). Organizational texts "help scholars and managers to recognize the crucial orientations and assumptions that influence organizational culture, strategy, and structure" (Kets de Vries & Miller, 1987: 234). Adopting what Lewis (2000: 771) describes as a narrative approach to paradox based "on the premise that paradoxes are both recognizable and socially constructed through actors' rhetoric and conversations", I propose that texts provide new points of entry to explore organizational tensions. Sergi (2010) distinguished three avenues of research to look at texts: texts as products, as actors and as sites. These are used to present the review that intersects texts and tensions.

When looking at texts as products, the actual production process of texts may engender or solve tensions, as shown by Pratt and Rafaeli's (1997) study of dress code negotiation in the rehabilitation unit of a hospital, or Thireau and Linshan's (1998) discussion of the disputes created by the writing of a banquet guest list in a Chinese village. Multistakeholder collaboration also often results in codes of conduct, reports or policy documents (Turcotte & Pasquero, 2001). Examining the tensions surrounding the appropriation process of a strategic plan, Abdallah (2007) demonstrated how it was first jointly, then differently appropriated by managers, moviemakers and producers of an artistic organization. Texts can also be considered as actors that make people do things (Cooren, 2004b). Texts can disrupt or facilitate organizational action (Vaara, Sorsa & Pälli, 2010). A policy report (Beech, et al., 2004), corporate code of ethics (Helin & Sandström, 2010) or budget (Golden-Biddle & Rao, 1997) may create tensions. Texts can gather together different actors and logics, as shown in Star and Griesemer's (1989) seminal paper, which clearly demonstrates the boundary object role played by course hand-outs in the setting up of a scientific museum by multiple stakeholders.

The third perspective – text as site – centres on what is actually found in texts, and is based on the premise that texts offer a potential space for tensions to be articulated, expressed, managed and/or repressed. Indeed, disagreements and tensions may not always appear in texts. Final versions may serve as the formal closure of discussions (Vaara, Sorsa & Pälli, 2010: 695); texts, with their "order of facticity", are a technology that can enable the suppression of opposite perspectives (Smith, 2001: 174). A contrario, for Watkins (1990: 321), "the study of organizational documents reveals the ways that human beings structure and struggle over the meanings inscribed in the text. For texts are... sites of struggle, always [...]".

Poles of tension may co-exist in organizational texts over time and their relationship may be discursively managed, as demonstrated by Chreim's (2005) longitudinal analysis of the continuity-change duality in a bank's narratives. The "participation by command" paradox of top-down requests for democratic participation was exposed in Eriksson and Lehtimäki's (2001) rhetorical analysis of a city's strategic plan. Similarly, O'Connor (1995) revealed a central inclusion-exclusion paradox in accounts of organizational change programs, despite the programs' explicit objective of involvement. The previous tensions are not constitutive of the organizations studied, and one may ask how the discursive strategies used by organizations created on poles in tension (co-ops, artistic organizations) would differ. Daigle and Rouleau (2010: 13) uncovered how "the reaching of an agreement between art and management in the strategic plans studied is based on a double structure of compromise" in

three arts organizations. According to Rousselière and Vézina (2009), activity reports of a financial co-operative for the cultural community reveal different "classes" linked to the organization's identity (efficiency and growth; project; co-op's administrative organization; cultural community development).

Papers in the "text as site" perspective offer insightful leads into the micro-processes through which tensions may textually be managed, in discursive practices. But their focus has generally been on strategic or strategy texts, mainly strategic plans and reports. This comes as no surprise, since strategy-as-practice (Jarzabkowski, 2008; Johnson, et al., 2007) is the research stream where many of them are located. Although strategy texts have too rarely been the object of inquiry (Vaara, Sorsa & Palli, 2010), within the family of strategy texts, I put forth that a certain subset of texts have received even lesser academic attention than strategic plans: websites. Lehtimäki, Kujala and Rehbein (2005: 686) have posited that "the information contained in the company web pages reflects strategic information [... and] can be treated as strategy documents", and that strategy can be grasped through website analysis. In the following paragraphs, I will explain what makes websites distinctive texts that merit a closer look.

As the "text as site" perspective proposes, both "context" and tensions may be inscribed in organizational texts. But in line with relatively recent developments in organizational communication that put forward the idea of the "communicative constitution of organization" (CCO), this paper pushes the "text as site" approach one step further. In line with constructivist approaches to discourse, it argues that "communication generates, not merely expresses, key organizational realities" (Ashcraft, Kuhn & Cooren, 2009: 2). As presented by Cooren, Kuhn, Cornelissen and Clark (2011: 1150) in their introduction to Organization Studies' special issue on "Communication, Organizing and the Organization":

Across disciplines, scholars of organizations increasingly assert that organizations are constituted in and through human communication, a perspective that has recently been coined the CCO approach (for Communicative Constitution of Organization; see Putnam & Nicotera, 2009). Although several versions of this view can be identified (see Ashcraft, Kuhn, & Cooren, 2009; Boden, 1994; Kuhn, 2008; Manning, 1982; McPhee & Zaug, 2000; Taylor & Van Every, 2000), the general claim is that if communication is indeed constitutive of organization, it cannot be considered to be simply one of the many factors involved in organizing […]; rather, it is the means by which organizations are established, composed, designed, and sustained.

In other words, the organization can actually be found in the communication (Taylor & Robichaud, 2004), and communication appears "as the site where organization surfaces" (Ashcraft, Kuhn & Cooren, 2009: 21, italics in text).

Websites as particular sites

The Internet has been "commonly described as a revolution in communications in that it offers a new forum for exchange and interaction between people and organizations" (Gustavsson & Czarniawska, 2004: 653), but it was also said that it "does not radically alter the social base of identity or conventional constraints on social interaction" (Wynn & Katz, 1997: 298), or that websites "emerge as a variant of more established genres" (Coupland & Brown, 2004:

1328). Corporate websites have grown exponentially in number over recent years (Chevalier & Kicka, 2006). Sometimes depicted as "a mix of information already available in printed media" (except for interactive forums; Coupland & Brown, 2004), they still display features that distinguish them from traditional communications. They can simultaneously and rapidly address a diverse set of people – both internal and external to the organization (Sillince & Brown, 2009) – and yet offer the possibility to tailor the message (Esrock & Leichty, 2000; Chevalier & Kicka, 2006) to an open, dispersed readership with whom interactivity and direct dialogue is made possible (Esrock & Leichty, 2000), especially with the Web 2.0. The corporate website, "as a genre for communication, is unusual in that its visitors have diverse interests" competing with one another (Coupland, 2005: 356). The ease and fluidity with which it can be modified "render an ephemeral aura to the messages contained within" (Coupland, 2005: 362). Websites may actually be "the only source of contact between many customers and certain organizations" (Ogbonna & Harris, 2006: 172). Young (2005: 27-28) has argued that e-commerce is "a new medium through which mission-market tensions are experienced".

Websites have spurred research interest in public relations, marketing, operations management, and ergonomic/design-related issues (Chevalier & Kicka, 2006; Esrock & Leichty, 2000; Ogbonna & Harris, 2006). However, "there is a surprising dearth of research on the implications that the rapid growth in the application of this technological innovation may have on the management of people in organisations" (Ogbonna & Harris, 2006: 163). Tensions faced in the organizations follow them on the web. How, then, do organizations deal with them on the web? This question is especially acute with regards to the communication of corporate responsibility-related information (Biloslavo & Trnavčevič, 2009; Coupland, 2005). Websites have visitors with diverse interests (Esrock & Leichty, 2000; Coupland, 2005). For Esrock and Leichty (2000: 329-330), websites "should be viewed as an intentional act of communication that signifies an organization in its multiple facets to its multiple publics", and this poses interesting identity challenges, which, I posit, can also be seen as tensions. Lehtimäki, Kujala and Rehbein (2005) examined corporate websites to see "how companies express multi-voicedness and efforts to implement stakeholder inclusion". Their textual analysis of the websites of two large pulp and paper companies indicates that although a broad variety of stakeholders is found in the texts, there is little room for different voices and discrepancies, with tensions being seemingly avoided. Alternative voices also often go unspoken in the websites studied by Coupland, who demonstrates that although "[t]ensions were manifest in ways that saw the corporate argument slipping between business and environmental issues, […] close reading of the text illustrates how the environment is subsumed under the more dominant rhetoric of the business case" (Coupland, 2005: 360). Coupland and Brown's (2004) analysis of two exchanges on Royal Dutch/Shell's web forum shows how firm-stakeholder tensions can be publicly addressed and managed on the web through polyphonic, interactive identity construction processes. The web forum, interestingly described as a "site of action", allows for the continuous (re)negotiation of the corporation's identity by both internal and external constituents, who publicly air and exchange their views. For Coupland and Brown (2004: 1326), [w]hile the construction and representation of organizational identities has received considerable attention [...], relatively

little of this work has examined how they are constructed through processes of interaction with outsiders. Still less attention has been paid to those Web-based locations where identity-work takes place.

Common to these papers are tensions between the interests and logics of different stakeholders, expressed (or not) on (large, often multinational) companies' websites, often studied with a comparative approach and a focus on corporate social responsibility-related texts. In contrast, this paper looks at how the actual constitutive social-economic tension (expressed in its very mission) of a relatively small, community enterprise is being textually managed within/ between its two websites (a regular and a transactional website). To my knowledge, only Sillince and Brown (2009) have specifically explored the textual management of tensions on organizational websites. Their study deals with tensions of identity – which relate to who we are, and thus differ from tensions related to goals, like the ones experienced in SEs. Nonetheless, it confirms the interest and value of analyzing websites to identify organizational communicative practices for dealing with tensions. Indeed, similar to their analysis of the ways in which the police is presented as both effective/ ineffective, progressive/not progressive and apart from/part of the community, I will identify the communicative practices used to deal with the social-economic tension of a social enterprise. But while their analysis was performed using a rhetorical perspective, as will be explained in the methodological and analytical section that follows, mine builds on the original adaptation of strategies from the paradox perspective to textual analysis.

METHODOLOGICAL AND ANALYTICAL APPROACH

In order to address the central research question – i.e. how do social enterprises (discursively) deal with the social-economic tension? – the in-depth study of a single case, the Ecolo Co-op, was conducted. Founded in 1999 by a group of friends and neighbours who wanted to create a social gathering space for their community through a social economy initiative, the Ecolo Co-op is a Canadian co-operative selling a wide range of products such as eco-friendly office supplies, cleaning products, personal care products and organic/fair trade food. In the following sections, I shall describe the methodological and analytical approach developed for this research. But prior to discussing data collection and analysis, I find it important to give some background information to explain both the choice of the Ecolo Co-op as a single case and the insight that prompted me to look into its websites to try answering the central research question.

Background information on the Ecolo Co-op case and the interest for its two websites

The Ecolo Co-op was chosen because it appeared a particularly stimulating setting in which to study tensions and their management, an "intense case" (Miles & Huberman, 1994: 60, describe such cases as rich yet not extreme cases that illustrate a particular phenomenon). Indeed, the Ecolo Co-op presents a complex, multistakeholder organizational governance structure that formally integrates representatives from three categories of its over 8,000

members – worker, user and support members – who have potential different interests and yet equal rights in general assembly and board meetings (due to the "one person, one vote" rule of co-operative governance). Not only must the Ecolo Co-op's three types of members reach agreements and make sound decisions with regards to both the economic viability and social vitality of the organization (the social-economic tension), but these decisions and activities must also be "carried out with a sense of respect for the Earth and all life that shares it". (Ecolo Co-op's Mission statement)

My study of the Ecolo Co-op was conducted from 2006 to 2009 in real-time, with ethnographic observation and interviews. I collected field data from 170 hours of observation during special events, board and general assembly meetings, and regular days at the Ecolo Co-op store during which my role ranged from non-participant observer to active volunteer. In addition to these observations – which often offered opportunities for informal interviews – I was granted full access to all real-time documents, and also to archival organizational documents (including foundation documents, board minutes, business and strategic plans, newsletters, etc.,), adding a retrospective dimension to complete the data (Leonard-Barton, 1990), which thus covers the entire 1999-2009 period.

I started the data collection with very broad research questions about tensions (of governance and multiple interests and objectives) and their management, in practice. My constructivist, interpretative perspective implies a relativist posture that posits that "realities are locally and specifically constructed" (Guba & Lincoln, 1994: 109-111). In line with this epistemological and ontological positioning, I was thus more interested "in deeply understanding specific cases within a particular context than aiming at singular truth and linear prediction" (Patton, 2002: 546). Despite this open-ended approach, I cannot claim that I entered the field without any expectation of finding tensions: it would be naïve to assert that my research was totally emergent, as the very case had been chosen for its propensity to nurture tensions.

That being said, both the real-time observations and the archival data quickly indicated that social-economic/community business tensions were experienced by the Ecolo Co-op, which was striving to be an important community actor, despite a tenuous financial situation. For instance, in 2004-2005, the organization went through a major governance and financial crisis, which led to explicit discussions of the community-business tension at the board and at the 2005 general assembly. Amongst the envisioned alternatives to deal with the tension was the creation of a separate nonprofit organization to deal with environmental education and outreach, leaving the Ecolo Co-op with the objective of running an economically-sustainable store. This strategy was not implemented, but its mere consideration nonetheless attests to the recognition of a social-economic tension. From a paradox perspective, it also speaks of a tendency to split poles apart (the spatial separation strategy, according to Poole and Van de Ven, 1989) in order to manage the social-economic tension at the Ecolo Co-op. Anecdotal vignettes that further support this observation range from the organization of distinct members' meetings (namely, "members' involvement" and "business development"), to the general's manager computer files being classified under two folders ("cooperative life" and "administrative life") and, despite limited financial and human resources, to the development and maintenance of two distinct presences on the web: a regular website (RW) and an online sales, transactional website (TW).

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This last, insightful example at first truly intrigued me. As I read and re-read the material related to the social-economic tension and the development of the websites, I realized how both appeared connected, with the latter appearing as one way to deal with the former. My research design was flexible enough to detect, in situ, the importance of websites in the management of tensions – something that I never planned to study and that emerged from the data. Consequently, I set out to dig into both the context of emergence of the websites (using ethnographic data and archival documents) and the actual texts (through fine-grained, textual analysis), in order to explore the management of the social-economic tension in a social enterprise.

More detail on data collection and mobilization

This study is based on the in-depth analysis of the Ecolo Co-op's websites and informed by ethnographic observation and other texts. Results are thus based on two distinct sets of data: ethnographic data and archival documents were used to understand the context in which the websites were developed (exotextual analysis; Barry, Carroll & Hansen, 2006), while the websites' contents fed the endotextual analysis (ibid.), zooming into the micro-practices used to deal with the social-economic tension. This second set of data, as will be described in the analytical process, included references to another crucial text, the mission statement of the Ecolo Co-op.

Context of development - In narrating the context of development of the websites, I mainly rely on the following data: observed strategic discussions at board meetings; board and general assembly meeting minutes; informal conversations with Ecolo Co-op workers; strategic planning documents; and attendance to the launch of the RW, as well as my volunteer work experience as a translator and reviewer of different website texts. It is important to clarify here that I did not write any of the websites' texts. The websites are bilingual; my work was related to the French version of the websites, and the analysis of the texts for the present paper was conducted on English texts, in order to avoid any displacement of meaning that could result from translation (as the vast majority of the Ecolo Co-op's members who wrote texts are Anglophones writing in their mother tongue).

Websites' texts - The fine-grained analysis of the websites is based on the website contents (see Appendices A and B). The RW is composed of 7,675 words (to which can be added the blog section, which totals 59,361 words distributed over 143 posts, and excluding texts that were written for out-of-web purposes and simply archived on the website such as newsletters and annual reports). The TW is 2,659 words long (excluding individual product descriptions that for the most part were directly taken from manufacturers and therefore not analyzed). Texts were retrieved from the web on August 9, 2010 and copied in NVivo for analysis.

Analytical approach

Context of development – The first part of the findings is based on a longitudinal and contextual narrative strategy, which "involves construction of a detailed story from raw data" (Langley, 1999: 695) and focuses on the main events that surround the emergence of the websites, as well as the description of what these websites are. The events were identified through ethnographic and

archival material. In writing the Ecolo Co-op story over the 1999-2009 period, I noticed how the development of the transactional website was brought up in the midst of discussions about the strategic development of the organization and its management of the social-economic tensions – more precisely with regards to the issue of expanding the market without losing community anchorage. This first analytical strategy can be seen as a preliminary, necessary step that, together with the surprising spatial separation tendency described above, led to the insight that the websites' actual contents could shed light on the Ecolo Co-op's strategies to deal with social-economic tensions.

Websites' texts – Informed by rich knowledge of the 'context' in which the websites were developed, the analysis of the texts stems from an hermeneutic-inspired approach (Phillips & Brown, 1993). I first read the texts many times, paying careful attention to tensions of all kinds. Emergent coding of the tensions confirmed the presence of an overarching social-economic tension, expressed in community-business terms. Prior to describing subsequent steps, an important remark is deemed necessary. Keeping in mind that the value of analytical synthesis primarily lies in the "creativity and skill of the individual researcher", and not in "the correct application of a particular method" (Phillips & Brown, 1993), the following method should be read as the result of a data-sensitive, creative methodological craftwork, as opposed to the systematic application of a standard, widely spread approach. Graebner, Martin & Roundy (2012: 276) "view qualitative data as an ingredient, like flour, that can be used in a creative and wide-ranging variety of ways" and describe qualitative data analysis as "cooking without a recipe". I definitely had to create my own recipe to conduct this research.

As I was (re-)reading the texts, I realized that the mission statement actually stated many of the tensions found elsewhere in both the RW and TW (as well as the tensions observed in the context). Given the intricate link between an organization's mission and its identity (Moss et al., (2010) conceptualize missions as proxies by which to measure organizational identity) and the recognition that values shape practices (Diochon & Anderson, 2010), the fact that the very mission statement was marked by multiple objectives and stakeholders pushed me to further investigate along tensions and to code it accordingly (Step 2 of the analytical process). Structured around explicit (what, why and how) and implicit (who and where) questions, the mission was used to 1) identify the constitutive organizational tensions, but also, importantly, to 2) provide the coding framework of the RW and TW.

The third analytical step thus consisted of thematically coding the textual contents (words and images) of the RW and TW according to the basic questions that stemmed from mission analysis: 1) what is the co-op? (this question clearly leads to a central community-business tension); 2) why does it exist?; 3) how does it work?; 4) where are its activities?; and 5) who does it serve? Hierarchical "tree nodes" were created to code the texts in NVivo based on these five central questions; tensions that could not be captured by this structure were coded as "free nodes" (emergent). That means that the actual poles of tension used to code the websites are based on those found in the very mission of the organization, adding an original intertextual level of analysis to the regular-transactional websites' intertextuality. Although the absence of certain topics and information on webpages may communicate something (Esrock & Leighty, 2000: 331), like Suddaby and Greenwood (2005), I focused

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on the manifest content, on "those elements that are physically present" (Berg 2004 in Suddaby & Greenwood, 2005: 42). The central unit of analysis was the extract, "that is, textual passages, which varied from a few words [or one picture] to several paragraphs, to be the minimum text necessary to make a claim" (Sillince & Brown, 2009: 1834).

At this point, I must also mention that the blog section was not coded with the same coding scheme as the other texts. Indeed, reading through the 143 messages posted on the Ecolo Co-op's blog, I quickly realized that although posts were first mostly written by the Ecolo Co-op's three volunteer bloggers (for the blog's first year), gradually, such "Ecolo Co-op authored" messages gave way to messages coming from other organizations, as the blog evolved into a community bulletin board to pass on information about meetings and other events organized by fellow environmental and community groups. Blog messages were codified based on two questions: 1) Who wrote the message (official voice of the Ecolo Co-op through one of its workers or bloggers; another Ecolo Co-op member; another organization, or unspecified authorship)? and 2) Where does the activity take place/what is the concerned community for the message (neighbourhood, city, larger or outside the city, or unspecified)?

In the fourth step of analysis, drawing from the strategies to deal with paradox, extracts coded as proposing answers to the five basic questions (what, why, how, where, and who?) were then compared and related within/ between pages and websites to provide a closer look at the relationships between the poles in tension. For instance, I compared the set of extracts answering the "what" question from the social and economic columns in order to identify tensions, but also the strategies displayed in the text to manage them. The actual strategies used were adapted from Poole and Van de Ven's "generic" strategies to deal with tensions. According to Poole and Van de Ven (1989), when faced with a tension, actors choose one from the following generic strategies to deal with it: 1) opposition, i.e. accepting, embracing it and using it constructively (being both A and B in the same place and at the same time); 2) spatial separation, i.e. clarifying the levels of analysis (being A in one space and B in another, for instance in different departments or geographic locations); 3) temporal separation, i.e. temporally separating the poles (first being A, then B, at different times), and 4) synthesis, i.e. introducing new terms to resolve the tension (finding a "C" option, a compromise between A and B).

What I did, more concretely, is adapt these generic strategies to textual practices in order to analyze the relationships between the social and the economic in the websites. In other words, I proposed that the different generic strategies could be "translated" – revealed – by different textual cues. These are the following: 1) opposition can be expressed by the textual juxtaposition of the poles (for instance, a "community business"); 2) spatial separation is discursively manifest when the different poles of a tension are located in distinct textual spaces (for instance, if one section of the website adopts an exclusive community-oriented discourse and the next is marked by an overwhelming business discourse); 3) temporal separation can be identified by temporally-marked poles in a time-sensitive presentation of information (marked by community focus in the founding phase, then later by business orientations in the development stage, for example); and 4) synthesis can be revealed by the proposition of a new perspective (new expressions that combine terms that are not naturally associated, like "fair trade").

Going one step further, probing into the answers provided to each basic question also allowed me to identify the presence of additional "intra-pole" tensions. These "intra-pole" tensions were detected in the coding matrix when answers to the basic questions within one pole (one column in the matrix (see Table 2), for instance, "what" and "how" questions about the "community") came into tension with one another, as will be shown in the findings. Table 1 summarizes the sequence of analytical steps:

Table 1. Analytical approach

Analytical steps	What was done?	Results
0. Narrative strategy	Writing of the case story between 1999 and 2009: identification of main events and issues, with a focus on the tensions experienced over time and the linkage between the tensions and actions/events	Identification of linkage between strategic issues of development (local anchorage vs. market expansion) and the development of a transactional website to resolve the tension. Contextual description of the emergence of the websites (first part of the Findings section) Intuition that websites should be explored to better understand the ways the tension is dealt with, textually.
1. Thorough reading of all of the websites' contents	Reading the material looking for emergent contradictions, paradoxes, oppositions and tensions, more generally speaking	Discovery of an overarching "community-business" tension; identification of the mission (part of the RW's contents) as the expression of the constitutive tensions found elsewhere in the texts
2. Mission analysis	Coding of the mission based on basic "what", "why", "how", "who" and "where" questions	Coding framework for the remaining texts
3. Coding of the (other texts of the) websites	a. Coding of the RW and TW texts based on the coding framework that emerged from Step 2. b. Coding of the blog based on different questions	a. Material coded on a 2 x 5 matrix: community/business X what/why/how/who/where (see Table 2) b. More precise profile of the blog posts
4. "Paradox-inspired" second order coding	Second-level coding of the material by relating and comparing coded extracts within and between pages and websites	Identification of micro-strategies (spatial or temporal separation, synthesis, acceptation) to deal with the core community-business tension. Identification of further intra-pole tensions within the nodes (when comparing the what/why/how/who/where coded extracts and observing tensions within either the social or economic pole)

FINDINGS

I will first "contextualize" the development of the Ecolo Co-op's websites and present their structure and goals. While this impressionist narrative suggests that the social-economic poles are split into distinct sites, subsequent textual analysis results offer a richer look at the tension and strategies used to deal with it.

Contextualizing the websites – an overview of their development, structure and goals

The regular website

The Ecolo Co-op has been present on the web for a long time. Indeed, a website had been developed to present the Ecolo Co-op even before it opened the store doors, but very few resources were invested in updating it between 2000 and 2006. In 2006, a budget was allocated to "revamp" it with a small web development firm, using an open-source platform. The new regular website was officially launched in February 2007, with a celebration held at the Ecolo Co-op. The RW presents the Ecolo Co-op's mission, history, membership, etc. It also contains a blog, with 143 posted messages, most of which consist of information regarding events and the mobilization of local community groups posted by the Ecolo Co-op. This "localness" or community flavour is not exclusive to the blog section of the RW. Altogether, the photo gallery (with pictures that depict the Ecolo Co-op as a festive, friendly, engaged social gathering space), and also the "Members' Corner", "At the Ecolo Co-op" and "Events" sections convey a strong feeling that the Ecolo Co-op's RW is targeted to its local community of members. If, as Esrock and Leichty (2000: 32) claim, websites are "more than the sum of their contents [and are] designed to highlight some information and place in the background other information", welcoming visitors by events announcements and ensuring that the products page can only be found through an indirect path (i.e. by clicking on the "products" hyperlink in the homepage intro) further reinforces the impression that the social dimension (referred to as the "people" dimension; Moss, et al., 2010) is at the heart of the Ecolo Co-op's regular website.

While the development of the regular website is quite unsurprising, the context in which the transactional website appeared and the fact that the RW and TW are set in two distinct spaces offers insight into the Ecolo Co-op's social-economic tension management. It is also interesting to note that a similar pattern can be seen when comparing the general history of the organization and its web presence. Clearly, the Ecolo Co-op was initially centred on a community, and then realized it needed to run a viable business to survive. Similarly – and almost concomitantly – the regular website (first version) was online well before the transactional one.

The transactional website

The transactional website was launched at the end of 2008, after a long period of gestation. Indeed, back in 2004, the Ecolo Co-op went through a strategic planning process. After four years of operation, the Ecolo Co-op still had not reached the breakeven point and was looking into different ways to increase its revenues. The opening of a second store and the launch of online sales were two of the avenues of development considered by the Ecolo Co-op at this time. Opening a second store stimulated interest amongst the members who participated in the strategic planning process, and led to discussions that reaffirmed the Ecolo Co-op's anchorage in its local community. Grassroots mobilization was deemed so central to the Ecolo Co-op's development that opening a second store in another neighbourhood appeared problematic. The online sales option did not get any support then either.

However, subsequent financial and governance issues paved the way for reconsidering online sales as a way to improve sales figures through new

market reach, without sacrificing local involvement. Indeed, beginning in 2006, the general manager planned to develop online sales, and the revamping of the RW appeared as a first step in stronger online presence. A month after the launch of the new RW, he actually persuaded the Ecolo Co-op's board of directors to get a business plan written for two development projects, including online sales. This was advocated as a response to plateauing sales, and in recognition of the need to sell more in order to ensure the Ecolo Co-op's sustainability. The general manager explicitly stated that selling online did not mean that the Ecolo Co-op's grassroots would be forgotten; a contrario, to consolidate its presence in the local community, the Ecolo Co-op had to reach out to new, out-of-community customers. With support from the board, the development of the TW started in 2007.

The actual TW, launched in December 2008, can either be accessed directly (through a distinct URL from the RW) or by clicking on the hyperlinked icon at the top menu of the RW. In sharp contrast to the RW, a photomontage of products, a left-side menu organized around product categories, and the "Customer Service Information" and "My Cart" sections convey the TW's objective: to sell products to customers. This also shows in the comparative browsing patterns, i.e. when testing the hyperlinks that allow visitors to go from one website to the other. Indeed, when on the RW, clicking on the online boutique icon directs us straight to the TW in the current window. In comparison, on the TW, clicking on the Ecolo Co-op logo opens up a second window, interestingly keeping the TW open for customers to return.

From context to contents: Tensions in and between the websites texts

When contextualizing the two websites and looking at their overall structure and goals, the social-economic tension seems managed by an apparently simple spatial separation strategy (Poole & Van de Ven, 1989): the RW mainly deals with social, community issues, and the TW focuses on product sales/ business. Yet the online store appears as a means to feed the local community development with sales from the outside market, and strategies to textually deal with the tension are much more complex.

The mission statement (Appendix A) more or less explicitly addresses five basic questions. Table 2 synthesizes the answers to these questions, which form the Ecolo Co-op's constitutive tensions and the grounds upon which subsequent analysis of websites' texts was conducted.

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Table 2. Constitutive tensions found in the mission statement

	SOCIAL	ECONOMIC
What is the Ecolo Co-op? (central tension)	**Community-based, member-owned organization**	**Business offering environmental products and services**
Why does it exist? (justification)	Educating and mobilizing people Civic, inspiration and domestic justifications	Selling products Providing an alternative - response to the threat and excesses of the (traditional) market
How does the Ecolo Co-op work?	Democracy, partnership, active involvement of a collective	Product accessibility Individual aspirations
Where does the Ecolo Co-op work?	Community reach Local action	Market (Global issues)
Who does the Ecolo Co-op serve? (stakeholders)	Community Members, i.e. workers, community (users), support members Partner groups Local producers and vendors Society Natural environment (Earth and all life that shares it)	

The central, core tension lies in the "what" question. In Moss et al.'s (2010) terms, the two poles – the community and store – can be simplified by talking of people and product orientation. Choosing the community option leads to a focus on outreach mainly in the local neighbourhood (why and where?), based on the democratic, active participation of the members (how?). On the other hand, the business option means focusing on selling accessible products (why and how?), providing an inspirational, alternative space to escape the traditional market and its harmful consequences (why?), thus addressing global market-related issues (where?). In terms of the many stakeholders mentioned in the mission (who?), no precise orientation is associated with them (for instance, the Environment could be the drive for social action, but could also serve green marketing positioning). Not only do the questions overlap but their relations and dynamics feed additional tensions within the poles.

A closer look at the websites' texts indicates the presence of both poles in both sites. Dealing with the core tension of the "what" question leads us to address the other four, since the community-store tension intersects them all. The next paragraphs enrich the first, spatially-split reading of the social-economic tension by exploring the textual relationships that bind the poles and questions.

A first observation is that the community-business duality is present throughout most parts of the RW. When juxtaposed in an extract, the community generally precedes retail-related activities, as in the following:

> Founded in 1999, today we are over 8,000 members strong and offer more than 1,000 ecological and fair trade products. (RW, At the Ecolo Co-op section)
>
> Its small team continues to work hard, supported by the public, members and non-members alike, to keep it at the centre of community life in [the neighborhood] and to provide its members with a range of products and services that correspond to their needs as responsible citizens. (RW, History section)

While the sequence of the terms in those excerpts (and most others) does not connote any temporal separation, the overall narrative structure of the History section clearly does. The first half of the text recalls the context that

brought the founders together to think of a neighbourhood project. While they are personally named and their motivations clearly stated, very little is said about the Ecolo Co-op's actual activities, except for one priority to make "local products accessible to the public (in the interest of local economic development and to reduce the negative environmental impacts of transport)" (RW, History section). But the history does not tell us what the products are, or how they are made available. While the poles can be juxtaposed, being only a community seems easier than solely being a store. And enacting only one pole creates "intra-pole tensions", as will be shown below.

Being more than a store to address the "what" and "why"

When the Ecolo Co-op talks about its business, it needs to add extra features to justify and reconcile itself with economic activity, i.e. to show that the Ecolo Co-op is more than a store. This is achieved by the following three micro-strategies: 1) selling alternative goods; 2) selling goods that help reduce the consumption of other resources; and 3) educating when selling.

The first micro-strategy, selling alternative goods, is based on the characterization of the products sold. By systematically adding an adjective to qualify the "products" or "goods", the Ecolo Co-op signals how they differ from traditional, mainstream consumer goods. The following excerpt gives a good sense of those edgy adjectives:

> Here you will find a selection of our favourite and most popular products. Many are made in Quebec or manufactured by small producers across the country, and all are fair trade, organic and/or ecological. (TW, About Us section)

The association with such characteristics is especially marked on the TW, reinforcing the idea that being "just" a store would be uncomfortable for the Ecolo Co-op. Trading activities are acceptable as long as the products sold are "local', "ecological", "organic", "fair trade" and the like. Such adjectives carry with them respect for the environment and/or the communities where the products are produced. The fact that the products are selected, appreciated and popular adds further references to the Ecolo Co-op community.

Another stream of adjectives found on the TW is related to safety, as shown below:

> We are taught that we must use harsh chemical cleaners to keep our kitchens and bathrooms spic and span, but these products often contain ingredients like chlorine and phosphates that are dangerous for the environment, and our health. […] We invite you to give some of these eco-certified all natural home care and cleaning products a try. (TW, Home & Cleaning Products category presentation)

By presenting mainstream products as harmful, the Ecolo Co-op distinguishes its safe, eco-friendly products, and reconciles their sale with the importance of personal and environmental health, yet again reinforcing linkage with the environment and community. The first micro-strategy to deal with the "what" can be related to the "why" question: given the Ecolo Co-op's strong statements against the market, it needs to prove that it offers an alternative to the mainstream market, that it does business differently and is an inspirational example to engage with. In this way, it stays connected to the community pole. The second micro-strategy is to market products that reduce the consumption

of other resources, which I labelled as the paradoxical "Buy to consume less". Similar to the previous micro-strategy, this one can be related to responsible consumption. But while the first micro-strategy called for the replacement of mainstream goods by alternative ones (mainly with regards to their conditions of production), this micro-strategy invites consumers to buy goods that will help save other resources either through conservation of the actual resources (for instance, with rain barrels, water-reduction flushing or solar energy devices) or multiple uses of otherwise disposable goods (e.g., washable diapers or menstrual pads). The next excerpt encapsulates the "Buy to consume less" micro-strategy:

> Save water, energy and reduce waste in your home with these great conservation products. (TW, Conservation products category presentation)

Underlying this micro-strategy is the assumption that such products have a net impact of reducing their users' consumption of scarce natural resources. Compared with the first micro-strategy, it involves limited purchases in most cases: once customers buy a washable diapers kit, the Ecolo Co-op cannot expect repeated purchases, in contrast to "ecological" disposable ones, also sold at the Ecolo Co-op.

The third micro-strategy is one of educating (about safety, about the composition or production of products, etc.). By adding information to promotion, but also by feeding members with a monthly newsletter comprising information on different environmental and social issues, the Ecolo Co-op is, again, "more than just a store": it is actually enacting the education and outreach dimension of its mission, as demonstrated in this excerpt, which introduces the Personal Care products section:

> Did you know that our skin is our body's largest organ? We protect it from the sun and environmental pollution, but what are we exposing ourselves to when we take our morning shower or brush our teeth? Many of the ingredients found in conventional personal care products are hazardous to our health, un-tested, and not even listed on the label. (TW, Personal Care products category presentation)

It could be argued that this has more to do with a sales pitch than education, or that the Ecolo Co-op is simply putting into practice "Information and Education", the fifth of seven principles contained in the Statement on the Co-operative Identity (www.ica.coop/coop/principles.html). However, this micro-strategy may also be related to creating a community of informed, critical consumers. The Ecolo Co-op's educating role is indeed pushed to its limits on yearly "Buy Nothing Day", as described in the following excerpt:

> With Christmas looming on the horizon, we remind our customers to be responsible consumers by celebrating Buy Nothing Day each year! We cover all of our shelves, hide our products, and close our cash registers. (RW, Events section)

By refusing to sell anything during a full day (thus "educating by not selling"), the Ecolo Co-op vigorously signals that it is more than a store. Buy Nothing Day celebrations mean financial sacrifices for the Ecolo Co-op, with expenses for the actual party (cake, coffee, etc.) and workers' wages for the full day although no money is entering the cash register. The Ecolo Co-op's efforts to educate its members and to actively promote community-supported agriculture

("CSA", which aims to "provide a direct link between consumers and local organic farms"; RW, CSA section) could be similarly thought of, at first sight, as benevolent educational action. Not only does the Ecolo Co-op devote a lot of its RW's space to educating visitors about CSA (one of the main menu items), but it is also a drop-off point for three farms and one distributor. While the Ecolo Co-op does not receive any direct financial incentives to welcome farms and their partners on a weekly basis (the Ecolo Co-op does not charge farmers who use its space for deliveries), this nonetheless guarantees the Ecolo Co-op with a minimum number of weekly visitors, who might take the opportunity to grab products other than their basket while at the store. Thus, although the CSA section of the RW can be read in community education terms, second-level reading shows that educating also serves business purposes, once more linking business to community and vice-versa.

Although enacting the "store" side apparently poses challenges in terms of justification (operating a retail business is not the most instinctive, natural activity for an organization overtly criticizing consumption and market excesses), these challenges are creatively, textually managed using three micro-strategies. Similarly, the community side is characterized by further paradoxes of belonging and participation.

Communities and the paradoxes of belonging and participation

Emphasizing the community appears easier than being a store for the Ecolo Co-op, at least when using the presence of an overall "community" tone and multiple mentions of the word as indicators. But the community is not exempt from intra-pole tensions, as will be shown in the following paragraphs. Before discussing these intra-pole tensions, two general observations must be made here. First, while the "community" word does not come alone (i.e. without being linked to the store) on the TW (note: in fact, it appears alone in the Invest in your Co-op section, but the text of this section appears in both the TW and RW), it does appear without any reference to the Ecolo Co-op business in numerous extracts from the RW. In 3 out of the 5 mentions of the word "community" on the TW, the "community" word is used to qualify the enterprise ("community enterprise") or the co-op ("community-based co-op"). The other two mentions refer to the Montreal landscape or to the activity generated by the Ecolo Co-op. On the regular website, when used as a noun, the community is explicitly (in 2 out of 4 cases) or implicitly (in the other 2 cases) the Ecolo Co-op's neighbourhood. As was the case in the TW, the word "community" is mostly employed as an adjective on the regular website (in 11 out of the 15 mentions, excluding CSA, blog posts and community links, on which I shall elaborate later). But interestingly, it is not used to qualify the Ecolo Co-op itself inasmuch as to describe the orientations of fellow projects and organizations, thus giving a sense of the sorts of players that make up the Ecolo Co-op's (extended) community.

Second, not only is the word "community" more prominent on the RW, but the RW actually 1) showcases the Ecolo Co-op (the physical space) as a community hub ("community of place"; Papadakis, 2003), and 2) is the Ecolo Co-op's (virtual) extended community hub ("community of interest"; Papadakis, 2003). Indeed, in addition to presenting the Ecolo Co-op as a CSA drop-off point (i.e. a hub between farmers and consumers), many references are made

to the Ecolo Co-op as a place where people meet:

> [The Ecolo Co-op] is available for after-hours meetings and small events of a community or environmental nature. (RW, Events section)
> Since opening its doors eight years ago [the Ecolo Co-op] has become a true crossroads of community activity. Tens of thousands of people from all over the region pass through our doors each year to meet their neighbours and friends, exchange ideas, and purchase eco-friendly and fair trade goods. (RW, Invest in the Ecolo Co-op section)

Supported by pictures, the RW text presents the Ecolo Co-op (physical) space as a friendly, welcoming place for the (mainly local) community members to meet and connect. Yet, at another level of analysis, the RW also allows the Ecolo Co-op to be a virtual hub for an extended community, mainly through its "Links" and blog sections. The "Links" section, explicitly introduced as a "hub for anyone seeking new and informative websites on a variety of themes", is comprised of a total of 319 hyperlinks divided into 28 categories, ranging from environmental issues (Eco Tips, Eco Transportation, Green Products, Organic Gardening, Sustainability, Water, etc.) to alternative information (Bookstores & Publishers, Progressive Media) and very local groups and issues (Our City, Our Neighbourhood). While most links direct visitors to "out-of-the Ecolo Co-op" initiatives, one category (Member Initiatives) specifically gives Ecolo Co-op members the opportunity to publicize projects they are involved in. Fifteen such initiatives are displayed, with the project's hyperlink and individual Ecolo Co-op member's name both given.

The second section contributing to making the Ecolo Co-op's RW a community hub is the blog section which, as explained in the methods section, was not coded using the same coding scheme as the rest of the texts on the websites. Results indicate that 58% of the messages were coded as being of neighbourhood or city interest (respectively, 23 and 35%) or reach. More interestingly, half of the messages come from other organizations; the other half is composed of official messages from the Ecolo Co-op (34%), or its members (16%). When excluding the messages labelled as "Community [or Eco] initiative discovered by the Co-op" from the messages considered as "Ecolo Co-op messages", the blog quickly appears as a wire for out-of-Co-op messages, contributing to the impression that the Ecolo Co-op's website is, in itself, a hub for an extended community of interest.

A second-level coding of community mentions on the two websites allowed for the identification of intra-pole tensions related to paradoxes of 1) belonging (Lewis, 2000), and 2) participation (Stohl & Cheney, 2001), fed by multiple answers respectively to the "who", "where", and "how" questions.

Addressing the "who" and "where": Paradoxes of belonging

According to Lewis (2000: 769, based on Smith & Berg, 1987), issues of individuality (self-others), group boundaries (we-they) and globalization (distant locales connected by central goals and advanced telecommunications) "revolve around paradoxes of belonging: the tenuous and often seemingly absurd nature of membership". The notion of membership is particularly interesting in the Ecolo Co-op case, since co-operative organizations serve their members. While a tension could be expected in the Ecolo Co-op case with regards to the potentially divergent interests of its members (split into user, worker and

support categories of members), such a tension is not found in the websites' texts. Rather than being differentiated, the three different types of members seem to be brought together in a generic, uncategorized membership. Indeed, amongst the most popular stakeholders on the websites (in descending order, according to the number of mentions in the texts, but excluding the blog, discussed earlier), we find: members in general (unspecified category), the natural environment, workers, board members and other organizations.

The issue of group boundaries appears particularly predominant in the Ecolo Co-op's websites, for it directly calls out to the community's composition and frontiers. Asking the question of "who belongs?" to the Ecolo Co-op's community raises that of the criteria for inclusion, and thus, of boundaries. Formal members of the Ecolo Co-op are directly addressed on the RW: they have their corner ("Members' Corner"), and their number is often recalled to reinforce their sense of belonging. For those not yet members (Not a member yet?), direct calls to join are formulated, as shown below:

> *Becoming a member at [the Ecolo Co-op] is easy, just ask our over 8,000 members! It's a great way to support an important initiative, and benefit from discounts of 10%-50% on certain products in the store. (RW, Membership section)*

That being said and despite the open membership and democratic principles of the Co-op, different categories (or communities) seem to appear, unrelated to the type of Co-op membership. Co-op's members seem appraised on the following criteria: 1) commitment and involvement with the Co-op; 2) shared concerns and preoccupation; and 3) physical proximity. In other words, there is a tension between the Co-op's openness to all, and the criteria that emerge from the websites' texts (especially the RW) to qualify its constituents. One can formally belong to the Ecolo Co-op, but not to its close community.

The first criterion is linked to members' experience with the Ecolo Co-op, demonstrated either by long-time or intense commitment and involvement. Based on the Board Members' presentation, being "a long-time member", "a member of the Ecolo Co-op almost since it opened", "an active volunteer at the Ecolo Co-op for many years" or a "founding member" is valuable and attests one's inclusion into the Ecolo Co-op's close community in terms of involvement. Another way to demonstrate commitment is to contribute resources into the Ecolo Co-op, whether money or volunteer work. Indeed, members are invited to further support the Ecolo Co-op, especially by purchasing preferred shares or by volunteering. Although mainly formulated in community terms and mostly present on the RW, these contributions also feed the business pole by increasing equity or decreasing expenses. As with long-time membership, major financial supporters and active volunteers' contributions are publicly acknowledged on the RW ("At the Ecolo Co-op" and "Volunteering" sections). Interestingly, together with the founding members in the History section, these contributors (i.e. board members, important financial supporters and volunteers) are the only ones to be personally named, further marking a distinction between these particular individuals and thousands of other members of the Ecolo Co-op's collective based on commitment.

Shared concerns and preoccupations form the second criterion for belonging to the Ecolo Co-op's close community. While the first criterion helps assess individual members for the most part, this one more easily applies to organizations. A closer look at the messages posted on the blog on behalf

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of other organizations shows that the number of messages is not equally divided between the organizations. Although one could argue that some organizations are more actively promoting their activities (e.g. through frequent press releases), the distribution of posts tends to show that some groups are favoured thanks to their community or ecological concerns and actions. In the RW text, the space dedicated to CSA (a specific section and many CSA-related messages on the homepage) further demonstrates the importance granted to community/environment-related shared concerns.

The third criterion is physical proximity. The twin importance of the Ecolo Co-op's neighbourhood and of its physical space serving social meeting purposes has been discussed previously. Localness attributes are emphasized and valued, whether they apply to other organizations (influencing their important presence on the blog, as demonstrated above), or individual members (in the RW text) as below:

> *[User member representative] was born and raised in [neighbourhood]. (RW, Meet our Board sub-section of Members' Corner section)*
>
> *[Support member representative] has lived in [neighbourhood] for many years, where he has raised his family and worked on and restored many houses and stores in this tight knit community. (RW, Meet our Board sub-section of Members' Corner section)*

Comparison of the RW and TW texts based on reference to these three criteria shows very different degrees of openness, with a close community focus on the RW, but almost no reference to proximity on the transactional one. The RW's homepage promotes activities and products only held at the (physical) store and highlights the nuts and bolts of the (physical) store operations, reinforcing the feeling that the close community to whom the Ecolo Co-op is talking comes to the store:

> *If you have been by the Ecolo Co-op in the last couple of weeks, you may have noticed some dusty workmen and some rumbling. We are trying to keep it down to a dull roar and are hoping not to have any interruptions of service. (RW, At the Ecolo Co-op)*

A word search shows how the localness is being accentuated in the RW. There are 14 mentions of the word "local" on the RW compared to one on the TW (actually an adjective for customs, in the customer service information). And there are 23 mentions of "neighbourhood" or of the precise name of the Ecolo Co-op's neighbourhood in the RW vs. only one on the TW (excluding the two mentions on the "Invest in your Co-op" text, common to both websites, and the mission statement text). Further, the TW explicitly contains statements that open up the Ecolo Co-op's community and that refer to out-of-neighbourhood territory, as strikingly illustrated here:

> *Welcome to Ecolo Co-op […]'s brand new online store!*
>
> *We believe that everyone should have access to ecological, equitable products no matter where you live. Whether you're in Chicoutimi or the Eastern Townships, this space is for you! (TW, About Us)*

This last extract, the first, welcoming paragraph of the TW, sets the tone of this website and allows for a new type of community to emerge. Tightening up the close community seems to be the RW's function; expanding appears as the underlying objective of the TW. Indeed, while the RW's text conveyed the impression that physical distance was a barrier to belonging to the Ecolo Co-op's closest community, the TW's connectivity function renders this criterion

irrelevant. The online store's welcoming message is also unequivocal in its public, as "this space is for you" confirms to the out-of-local-community readers that this site (as opposed to the RW) is theirs. In line with the next section, the TW also suggests a new type of participation: product purchasing.

Addressing the "how": Paradoxes of participation

Assuming that paradox is inherent to participatory practices and democratic structures (such as co-operatives), Stohl and Cheney (2001) discussed the paradoxes created by communicative practices of employee participation schemes and democratic organizations. The "how" question and answers – especially issues surrounding the stated objectives of democracy, meaningful participation of members and economic accessibility – directly point to paradoxes of participation in the two websites' texts.

Indirectly addressed previously, a first observation concerns the actual splitting of the Ecolo Co-op's websites, which roughly corresponds to its democratic association dimension being located on the RW, and its business on the TW. This observation is based on the analysis of menus on the two websites, and on the actual stakeholders that populate the two websites. Members of the Ecolo Co-op (in general, and of the support, user and worker categories) and board members – who compose the democratic, "associative" component of the Ecolo Co-op – receive much more attention on the RW than on the TW. For instance, support and user members are completely absent from the TW, and the same can be said more generally of the Ecolo Co-op's democratic dimension. Basically, information on the democratic governance (membership structure, Board, links to its Bylaws, annual reports, and General Assembly minutes) appears on the RW.

When delving further into the text, this presentation of the Ecolo Co-op's democratic governance structure is marked by another tension: between the ideal of democratic, active participation of members, and the actual level of members' involvement in this formal structure. In fact, if the Mission and Membership sections of the RW stress that the Ecolo Co-op seeks the active participation of its informed members, the Members' Corner, Volunteering and blog texts paint another picture. Particularly striking examples are the outdated annual report (2007, when texts were retrieved in August, 2010) and the unavailable ("coming soon") minutes from previous annual general meetings, but also the vacant worker representative seat at the board of directors, and the presence of two acclaimed board members (in the support and user members' categories, meaning that no election was held). Since all members are invited to attend the Ecolo Co-op's general assembly (when members vote to elect their representatives), vacant seat and acclaimed board members are especially surprising given the Ecolo Co-op's insistence on its large membership, as the following extract shows:

> Founded in 1999, today we are over 8,000 members strong […] (RW, At the Ecolo Co-op)

Despite the Ecolo Co-op's large membership, but also despite its role as a site for people "to meet for discussion and reflection about the environment and sustainable development" (RW, History section), little interest seems to be expressed in participating in its board of directors. A further example of the paradox of participation is the fact that Ecolo Co-op's workers receive, in a

centralized manner, the messages that other members may want to send to their representatives, as this extract demonstrates:

> *If you have questions or topics to bring up to one of your representatives on the Board, do not hesitate to contact us [hyperlink to Ecolo Co-op's general email, checked by workers] and we will get back to you ASAP. (RW, Members' Corner)*

Finally, while the web offers plenty of space for debate and exchanges, scarce participation also affects the virtual space offered by the blog: from very few reactions and interactions in its beginning, the blog's transformation into (primarily) a wire for other organizations' mobilizations has been characterized by an almost complete absence of comments from readers…who might ironically be too busy participating in the promoted events and activities to actually get involved with the Ecolo Co-op itself.

Interestingly, whereas the Ecolo Co-op does not juxtapose the mention of its 8,000 members with a potential, powerful (democratic) voice, the following excerpt shows how it does link it to purchasing power:

> *We are 8,000 members strong and have enormous purchasing power. We need to begin to exercise this power if we are to successfully complete our expansion. The addition of more food items is a big investment but one that will pay off greatly if we can provide our members with good quality food at good prices. (RW, At the Ecolo Co-op)*

In keeping with the previous discussion on the participation and close community belonging limitations set by territorial issues, and on the new, customer involvement proposed on the TW, the previous extract further proposes that increasing sales is key to the Ecolo Co-op's expansion, and also to the fulfilment of the Ecolo Co-op's objective of economic accessibility (the "how" question of the mission). Products' accessibility in economic terms is linked to the involvement of the local, close community, but also to reaching out to new markets, i.e. to geographic accessibility. For the sake of products' economic accessibility, there needs to be extra sales, which justifies opening up the community. In this way, the TW itself appears as a strategic synthesis between (and beyond the opposition of) local community, grassroots development, and the economic accessibility and sustainability imperatives.

These economic and geographic accessibility arguments may also create further tensions. In economic terms, the good prices can go against fair production and working conditions (another item in the "how" part of the mission). To offer fair trade and ecological products at a good price for (user) members, the purchasing power may be exercised, as the Ecolo Co-op proposes; this solution is promoted to avoid having to cut (workers') compensations. At the same time, the larger market reach permitted by online sales creates a new tension with regards to other mission elements: the "local" criterion does not hold anymore (what's local when the customer is located at the other end of the continent?), not to mention environmental issues (another "how" question) raised by the shipping of the products, and discreetly acknowledged in the discussion of delivery methods:

> *It is important to note that while shipping by air is generally much faster it is also, generally much less environmentally friendly. (TW, Customer service information)*

DISCUSSION

Based on my findings, the following points will be discussed here: 1) first-level results on the management of the social-economic tension (answering the central question of this paper); 2) second-level results that go one step further and assert the potential of websites to mediate tensions more generally, thus expanding Coupland and Brown's (2004) description of websites as "sites of action".

Textual dealing with the social-economic tension

Overall, results from the textual analysis confirm that the first sight impression of splitting – offered by the two distinct websites and their different structures and goals – is only one of the many strategies enacted to deal with the social-economic tension. As shown in the findings, examples of opposition, temporal separation and synthesis have also been found.

When reflecting on the paradox perspective (Lewis, 2000; Smith & Lewis, 2011), the Ecolo Co-op case is particularly illustrative of what "embracing" paradoxes can be, in practice. Let's recall that a paradox can be defined as "contradictory yet interrelated elements that exist simultaneously and persist over time" (Smith & Lewis, 2011: 392). While I started this research with an open-ended view of the relationship between "the social" and "the economic" as being one of tension, it can now be more precisely defined as a paradox. Indeed, in the Ecolo Co-op case, despite the fact that the challenge to be both a community and a business is a real one, the analysis of textual communicative practices has paradoxically revealed that it is also a challenge to be just one at a time – or should I say, one at a time in a website extract. This points to the interdependency of the contradictory elements. The analysis has also demonstrated how both poles of the social-economic tension are (re)formulated in innovative ways: the store is "more than a store", and the communities are numerous and shifting in territorial scope and membership terms.

Indeed, the Ecolo Co-op challenges traditional understandings of what it is to be a community, or a business. Social and solidarity economy organizations, through the economic citizenship they propose (Dacheux & Laville, 2003), have been said to operate a (re)institution of the economic (Caillé, 2003), to re-embed the economic in the social and to refuse the separation of the two. By being more than a store and using business activities as an excuse – a pretext, as the title of this paper suggests - for community development, this is precisely what the Ecolo Co-op does: it creates and nurtures social bonds. While research looking at social economy initiatives from a socio-economic approach has already put forward the idea that these organizations operate a reconnection between the social and the economic (see Lévesque, Bourque & Forgues, 2001 for a thorough review), this research shows how this reconnection can be done through texts. Moreover, the micro-strategies identified in the texts not only point to social concerns (mostly regarding the products' conditions of production, and thus a tendency to connect mostly to a

remote community), but also to environmental issues. In other words, by being more than a store, the Ecolo Co-op brings the social and the environmental back into business activities. On the other hand, the case demonstrates that the Ecolo Co-op also needs to re-embed the social in the economic. Indeed, for the Ecolo Co-op to reach its objectives and be sustainable, the community needs to support the business. If the close-knit community is not large or strong enough (for demographic, territorial, or economic reasons) to support the business, then it must be opened, and redefined. This creates tensions of belonging, but also new opportunities for participation which websites can help seize and exploit.

Websites as strategic tools and sites of action

The central question (and quest) of a paradox perspective to tensions is finding how to engage in A and B simultaneously. From this perspective, results of the study allow us to conceive of websites as tools that allow the Ecolo Co-op to pursue both its social and economic objectives in multiple yet interconnected parallel sites. This is facilitated by some of the very characteristics that make websites a specific genre (especially its multiple audiences and elimination of geographic distances), but also by the easy multiplication of (new) organizational texts and their potential connectivity (hypertextuality). When their characteristics are brought together through strategic textual practices, websites can allow organizations not only to engage in both A and B, but also to benefit from their potential synergies. The Ecolo Co-op's websites textually mediate its constitutive tensions; they re-cast the relations between its community and business activities and identities by allowing sometimes for their opposition, sometimes for their separation or synthesis according to the sites. In doing so, these "sites" create new articulations of the poles in tension, making websites appear as agents in the sense that they do "make a difference" (Cooren, 2006). The TW, especially, for its capacity to reach out to new markets and communities without sacrificing the grassroots ties, appears as an actor in the Ecolo Co-op's strategic development.

This reinforces the idea that texts can mediate organizational tensions, providing sites for the "articulation between heterogeneous social worlds" (Vinck, 2009: 66) and between paradoxical values and logics such as those focused on the social and the economic objectives, which, in the studied case, manifested themselves into a tension between community and business development. In this specific case study, the websites' texts express the constitutive tensions experienced by the Ecolo Co-op, while "constituting" the Ecolo Co-op as an organization dealing with those tensions through diverse strategies. As sites, texts – and their endotextual analysis - "reveal significant aspects of how the organization is constituted" (Cheney 1991 in Chreim 2005: 573).

Indeed, following Coupland and Brown's (2004) proposition that websites are "sites of action" and CCO propositions that communication not merely expresses but also generates organizational realities (Ashcraft, et al., 2009), this study shows that the Ecolo Co-op's websites are strategic "sites of action" that express AND mediate the Ecolo Co-op's social-economic tension both textually, and in very concrete organizational terms. The description of textual analysis results has made explicit the mediation enabled by diverse textual practices, as websites facilitate diverse (re)connections of the poles in textual

sites. But in more practical terms, when looking at the action played by the websites in their development context and connecting the "texts" with their "context", we see that websites further participate in concretely re-articulating them in Ecolo Co-op's other practices – by being both here and there, without having to sacrifice community or business objectives. Indeed, the development of online sales – with the hope of increasing sales by reaching out to new markets – allowed the Ecolo Co-op to consolidate and strengthen its very local, community presence.

CONCLUSION

The initial ambition of this research was to contribute to the scarce literature on the empirical practices to address the social-economic tension in social enterprises, which in this case were expressed in community-business terms. Social enterprises per se are novel hybrid organizations that I have explored from an original, unexplored approach: the textual, communicative practices of websites. Different points of entry allowed me to identify various textual practices, offering different readings of sites, from a paradox perspective.

Likewise, websites have largely been overlooked in organization studies. Together with Coupland and Brown (2004), Coupland (2005) and Sillince and Brown (2009), this study is one of the first to probe into them to better understand how organizations textually deal with tensions. This research indicates that dedicating more research interest into websites is crucial for organizational scholars, since these strategic texts both reflect and construct organizational issues in new terms that reformulate and challenge traditional notions of community (Correll, 1995), time and space. Websites offer fruitful research avenues to scholars interested in community-business tensions, but also to those vested in other strategic tensions and in pushing forward the paradox perspective more generally, notably to study the exploitation-exploitation paradox (Andriopoulos & Lewis, 2009; Smith & Tushman, 2005).

By incorporating mission analysis as an analytical step to capture the constitutive tensions of an organization, the method crafted to approach the Ecolo Co-op's websites further expands the research of Moss et al. (2010) on the mission-inscribed, dual identity of social enterprises as both normative and utilitarian-oriented organizations. Importantly, it also traces the dynamics between and within these two orientations by following them in other texts. To my knowledge, this is the first study to intertextually relate results from an inductive mission statement analysis to the subsequent textual analysis of other documents (rather than to firm performance; see for instance Stallworth Williams, 2008). This method offers a new perspective on organizational tensions based on mission statements and their intricate relationship with other texts, which in the future could include texts other than those found on websites. The method could also be applied to websites in a dynamic fashion to account for the ease and frequency of website modification, by longitudinally comparing the practices as the texts evolve over time. Since the Ecolo Co-op's website texts were retrieved all at once, this was not the case here (except for the blog posts, where dates were specified). The research issue of "delimitation" of websites in time and space is a real one (Herring, 2010; Brügger, 2009).

Of course, as with any single case study, this research has limited potential

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for generalization. With the intensification of social enterprises' web presence in special portals and their entry on the online sales market, further research may be envisioned to compare the Ecolo Co-op's online textual practices for dealing with the community-business tension with those of other social enterprises. With websites considered as strategic "sites of action", it could also be interesting to look at other tensions that online trading may generate both online and offline. For instance, in addition to the environmental issues touched on at the end of the findings, in the case of the Ecolo Co-op, some worker members were not at ease with the new competition created by the Ecolo Co-op for small local businesses elsewhere. Another research avenue could be to systematically compare the strategies used to discursively manage the tensions with those used in other operations or in overall management strategies implemented by organizations.

Altogether, when combined with the CCO approach adopted in this paper, the textual and practical mediations revealed by the analysis of the Ecolo Co-op's websites suggest that websites are "sites of action" (following and supporting Coupland & Brown, 2004). Interestingly, this allows for both the "text as site" and "text as actor" perspectives (Sergi, 2010) to be simultaneously taken. Yet more importantly, this empirical work exemplifies a novel methodological and theoretical path to bridge communication and management approaches (Ashcraft, Kuhn & Cooren, 2009): one that looks at the materially-supported communicative constitution of an organization based on its (constitutive) tensions, and helps us to understand how the discursive strategies employed to deal with tensions can help organizations embrace paradoxes.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A. Ecolo Co-op's Mission Statement

Our Mission

The [Ecolo Co-op] is a community-based, member-owned co-operative offering environmental products and services. Through our co-operative structure of worker, community and support membership, we provide ecologically sound, sustainable products and technologies, and whole foods. In partnership with other groups, we are also committed to promoting outreach, education and social action to foster and inspire environmentally healthy and sustainable practices.

Why we do it

- To offer society an example of an organization that successfully engages in economic activities and uses reasonable profits to sustain those activities;
- To provide an alternative to mindless consumerism, rampant materialism and excessive consumption;
- To improve our community and protect and respect our natural environment.

How we do it

- Our work is guided by the following values:
- The activities of the Ecolo Co-op are determined according to the interests and needs of our members;
- We are committed to a meaningful democratic functioning based on the active and informed participation of our members;
- We strive to make our products and services as economically accessible as possible;
- We promote the involvement of local producers and vendors;
- Our working relationships are tailored to individual abilities and aspirations, and include fair monetary and non-monetary compensation;
- Decision-making and activities in our Co-op are carried out with a sense of respect for the Earth and all life that shares it.

Appendix B. Websites – their structure and contents

Regular website

	Title of the section	Description	Words	Hyperlink in text	Visual
Top menu (text + icon)	At the Ecolo Co-op, (icon is a table and chair)	Homepage of the website. Messages from the Ecolo Co-op mainly related to activities to be held at the Ecolo Co-op, messages from the Board and specials on some products	857	Products (no direct access to products); Supplier; Preferred shares info	Photo of the store; logo of a CSA farm; photo of a product
	Eco-Logic blog (icon is an acorn)	Ecolo Co-op's blog, which was initially meant to be a space animated by volunteer bloggers but became a platform to diffuse different activities organized (mainly) by other environmental and community organizations	59,361	Blog section	(depends on the message)
	Links (branch with acorns icon)	319 links, thematically grouped in 28 categories	3,493	Links section	-
	Online store (icon is a daisy)	A direct link to the Ecolo Co-op's TW	(see TW)	Transactional website	(see next table, TW)
Second menu	Community-Supported Agriculture	Describes what this type of agriculture is and how the Ecolo Co-op is a drop-off point for the different organic farms of this network.	186	NGO that promotes CSA; Farms; Organic certification organization	Members receiving their CSA baskets at the Ecolo Co-op; Logos
	Events	Presents the two important annual events celebrated at the Ecolo Co-op (Earth Day and Buy-Nothing-Day); offers Ecolo Co-op's physical space for rent for special events	232	Events calendar; Eco-logic blog; Email the Ecolo Co-op	Banner Earth
	Members' corner	Presents the composition of the Ecolo Co-op's board of directors, the bylaws and minutes from past general assemblies	57	Board of directors; Bylaws; Annual report; Member initiatives; Links; Membership	Photo of 4 people sitting at a Ecolo Co-op table
	Membership	Explains the three types of members and the way to become a member	290	Membership form; Our store (contact us); Board of directors	Image of the membership form
	Newsletter	Displays current and past editions of the Ecolo Co-op's newsletter (an electronic bulletin sent to members on a monthly basis) (from February 2007 onwards)	(not studied)	Sign up; 39 archived newsletters; Eco-logic blog; Email to the Ecolo Co-op	Image of a newsletter
	Our History	Recalls the history of the Ecolo Co-op from the initial steps of its founders to its opening, in 2000, and to the present day	644	-	Ice storm picture (branch; black and white); Renovation work; Raging grannies
	Our Mission	Mission statement	233	-	B&W photo of ex-worker serving a customer
	Volunteering	Presents different volunteering opportunities and current team of volunteers	170	Board of directors; Homepage; Newsletter; Eco-logic blog	B&W photo of two people at the Ecolo Co-op; Green heart image

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	Contact us	Physical and online Ecolo Co-op addresses, plus public transportation directions to get there	40	Email the Ecolo Co-op	-
Right menu (text and images)	A search engine function	Allows users to do a word search of the site	-	-	-
	"Invest in the Co-op" icon	Links to an information letter and invitation to buy preferred shares to support the Ecolo Co-op (on the online boutique website).	536	Board resolution to sell preferred shares; offering memorandum; 2007 financial statement	-
	An advertisement	Ad exchange between the Ecolo Co-op and another organization	-	(to the other organization)	Ad from the other organization
	Photos and a link to the image galleries	Image galleries (random selection of Ecolo Co-op's pictures: of the Ecolo Co-op's workers, friends and families, on regular days at the Ecolo Co-op and at special events.)	112 (photo vignettes)	-	22 pictures (workers, other members, family, events, etc.)
	Newsletter hyperlink	(with sign-up and read option), directs readers to the last edition of the newsletter	See above	See above	See above
	Upcoming events, with hyperlinks	Activities held at the Ecolo Co-op or organized by other (community) organizations	See At the Ecolo Co-op	To events description and calendar	(depends on the event)
	Eco-Logic blog	Title of the last 5 posts of the blog	See above	Direct access to the posts of the blog	(depends on the messages)
	Static image of the opening schedule of the physical store + address	-	-	-	"Open" sign with schedule and directions
Other pages (hyper-linked in other sections, no direct menu access)	Products	Pictures and description of main products sold ("sample products")	291	Online boutique; Contact us	Pictures of products (12)
	Board of directors	Presents the board structure and actual members, plus the general assembly	467	Elected; Member categories; Contact us; Bylaws	No picture
	Annual report	Pdf version of the 2007 Annual report	(not studied)	-	-
	Bylaws	Webpage containing the French bylaws amended Sept. 2006	(not studied)	-	-
	Membership form	Pdf membership form	92	-	Logo
	Sign up	Newsletter registration	91	To the form	-

Transactional website

	Title of the section	Description	Words	Hyperlinks	Visual
Top menu	Home	Entry page with photo montage of products sold	22	To the complete list of products	Product photomontage
	My account	"Login or create an account" section; short explanation of how to create an account	56	"Forgot your password?" hyperlink	"create an account"; "login" buttons
	Customer information	Payment methods; Shipping; Delivery methods and times; Returns & replacements; Merchandise damaged; Product warranties; Taxes; Privacy and information security policy	1104	(all items of the description are intra-page links) + Email the Ecolo Co-op	Logo of the Ecolo Co-op
	My cart	Shopping cart status	(depends on status)	"continue shopping" link to homepage	-
	Checkout	(same as previous section – "my cart")	(depends on status)	See above	-
	Log in	(same as "my account")	See above	See above	-
	Contact us	Physical address (without public transportation directions)	Emails for specific questions 48		Email the Ecolo Co-op RW
(left) Product category menus	All	Picture and hyperlink to 211 products sold	No text	Products	Images of 211 products
	Personal care		103	Products	Images of 117 products
	Home & Cleaning		88		Images of 68 products
	Fair Trade & Organic		64		Images of 34 products
	Conservation	Description of product category and photos of products	15		Images of 31 products
	Gift Ideas		23		Images of 45 products
	School and Office		22		Images of 31 products
	Water		51		Images of 8 products
	Soil Amendments	Empty product category	-	No product to display	-
	Organic Heirloom Seeds	Description of product category and photos of products	41	Products	Logo from farm

Search button	A search engine function	Allows users to do a word search on the site	-	-	-
My cart	My cart section	Tells customers what they have put in their cart and subtotal	Depends on purchases	To products in the cart	Image of products in the cart
(Right) Shopping menu	View basket (basket icon)	Tells customers what's in their cart and subtotal. Suggests other items which may be of interest; allows tax and shipping to be estimated and coupon codes to be entered	Depends on purchases	To products in the cart; to "checkout"; to "continue shopping"	Image of products in the cart + other product suggestions
	Checkout ("check" icon)	6-step checkout procedure (checkout method, billing information, shipping info and method, payment info and order review)	Form to fill, 6 steps	To next steps	-
	Checkout ("check" icon)	6-step checkout procedure (checkout method, billing information, shipping info and method, payment info and order review)	Form to fill, 6 steps	To next steps	-
	Invest in the co-op (acorn icon)	See description in Regular Website table	-	-	-
	Compare products	Offers product comparison or the creation of a wish list	Depends on selection	Leads to Login or Create an Account	-