

Deciphering Tensions in the Development of Co-operatives: Insights from the Montréal School on Co-operative management

The authors analyze the tensions in co-operative development by drawing upon the works of the Montréal school of thought on co-operative management, the first contributions of which date to the creation of the Centre for Co-operative management at HEC Montréal in 1975. They suggest that the study of tensions represents a distinctive trait of this school of thought, and that this specificity has global implications for the co-operative movement. The tensions in co-operative development are presented in order of their appearance in the co-operative life cycle and are classified according to their nature. The contribution of this school fills a gap in the study of co-operatives where the diachronic analysis is less developed than the synchronic one. In addition, this allows the authors to show the turning point at which small and large co-operatives diverge. Similarly, the reactions to the tensions are analyzed to offer, in the end, an integrative frame that may be useful to co-operative developers.

Los autores analizan las tensiones existentes en el desarrollo cooperativo inspirándose en las obras de la escuela de pensamiento de Montreal sobre gestión cooperativa, cuyas primeras contribuciones datan de la creación, en 1975, del Centro para la Gestión Cooperativa en la HEC Montreal. Los autores plantean que estudiar las tensiones representa un rasgo característico, de esta escuela de pensamiento, y que esta especificidad tiene una implicación global para el movimiento cooperativo. Las tensiones en el desarrollo cooperativo se presentan en el orden en que aparecen en el ciclo vital de una cooperativa y son clasificadas a continuación en función de su naturaleza. La aportación de esta escuela colma una laguna en el estudio de las cooperativas, en el que el análisis diacrónico está menos desarrollado que el sincrónico. Además, ello permite a los autores mostrar el punto de inflexión en el que divergen las pequeñas y las grandes cooperativas. De manera similar, se analizan las reacciones a las tensiones para ofrecer, al final, un marco integrador que pueda resultar útil para los desarrolladores de cooperativas.

Kudeaketa kooperatiboaren gaineko Montrealgo pentsamendu-eskolaren lanetan inspiraturik, kooperativismoaren garapenean suertatzen diren tensio eta gatazkak aztertzen dituzte egileek. Lehenengo ekarpenak, HEC Montreal-ean Kudeaketa Kooperatiborako Zentroa sortu zenekoak dira, 1975. urtean. Egileek diote tensioak aztertzea pentsamendu-eskola horren ezaugarri bereizgarria dela, eta espezifikotasun horrek ondorio orokorra duela mugimendu kooperatiborako. Kooperativismoaren garapeneko tensioak kooperatiben bizi-zikloan agertzen diren ordenan aurkezten dira, eta duten izaeraren arabera sailkatzen dira ondoren. Eskola horren ekarpenak bete egiten du kooperatiben azterlanean zegoen hutsune bat, azterketa diakronikoa sinkronikoa baino gutxiago garatu dela bertan. Gainera, horrek ahalbidetzen die artikuluaren egileei kooperatiba txiki eta handiak elkarrengandik urrunten diren inflexio puntuak erakustea. Era berean, tensioen aurrean sortutako erreakzioak aztertzen dira, amaieran, kooperatiben garatzaileei baliagarri suerta dokieken marko integratzaile bat eskaini ahal izateko.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Co-operatives and co-operative movements have always faced numerous challenges related to their very nature which is to be in a state of constant tension between various elements. The aim of this paper is to analyze the development of co-operatives from the standpoint of the tensions they must face during the different phases of their development – emergence, growth, decline and renewal (Malo & Vézina, 2004).

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This analysis draws on the contributions of a network of actors that evolved in and around the Centre de gestion des coopératives (Centre for Co-operative Management) at HEC Montréal. From the diversity of the works carried out by these researchers over more than three decades, we were able to identify a common point or central theme that allows to reasonably qualify this network as a «school of thought». Indeed, a distinctive trait of co-operative management is the need to manage the tensions between various actors, issues, principles and ideologies that make co-operatives the complex entities they are. For practical reasons, in this paper, we analyse exclusively the contributions of those researchers who have been involved at HEC Montreal as professors, considering that their core work is representative of the body of works of the Montréal school of on co-operative management.

This paper starts with a short history of the main actors and projects of the Montréal school of on co-operative management, and then presents the main tensions that were addressed in the researches of the actors from this school of thought. The next section develops the notion of tension by focusing on the different phases co-operatives generally go through. This section shows the turning point at which small and large co-operatives diverge. The fourth section proposes an integrative model to understand not only the nature of the tensions facing small and large co-operatives, but also their many reactions.

2. THE MONTRÉAL SCHOOL ON CO-OPERATIVE MANAGEMENT²

2.1. Main actors and research agenda

The Montréal school on co-operative management emerged with the first works produced at the HEC Montréal Centre for Co-operative Management which was created in 1975. The Centre's central objective was then to promote co-operative management (Lévesque & al., 1980) through the provision of specific training supported by research but also by documentation (Rhéaume-Champagne & Malo, 1991) and development in the field, consistent with an HEC Montréal tradition. Indeed, a former HEC Montréal director, Esdras Minville, had piloted territorial/sectorial studies and at the same time guided co-operative development.³ Two other professors, Victor Barbeau and Francois-Albert Angers, also became involved in the development of consumer co-operatives. In the same vein, several HEC Montréal professors promoted, through their teaching, research and community development

² For the remainder of this text, we will use the shorter expression «Montréal school on co-operative management» to refer to the Montréal school of thought on co-operative management.

³ The *Oeuvres complètes d'Esdras Minville* were edited by F.-A. Angers and published in 13 volumes by Fides.

activities, the vision that co-op management has a specific character, by observing it from the various perspectives of sociology (Delmas Lévesque), finance (Jean-Claude Guérard), management, organizational design, strategy and decision making (Jean-Guy Desforges, Benoit Tremblay, Marie-Claire Malo, Daniel Côté, Martine Vézina and Nicole Giroux).

The Centre would also benefit from the contribution of European mentors - and companions for some - Claude Vienney and Henri Desroche (Lévesque, 2009). The year the Centre was created, Desroche (1975) in a seminar at HEC Montréal, broke down into the co-operative management of money, powers, knowledge and wills. From the mid 1970s to the beginning of the 1990s, Vienney visited the Centre several times. His influence is still visible in the article «Dynamique de la coopérative: association et entreprise» (Co-op dynamic: association and enterprise) (Desforges, Lévesque & Tremblay, 1979). Despite the use of the term association, as in Angers, the three authors adopt a bipolar representation of co-operatives, borrowed from Vienney, who identifies this organizational form as a combination of a group of persons and an enterprise.

The year 1980 was rife with advances in the project to describe the specificity of co-operative management. In the collective work «Stratégie et structure de l'organisation coopérative» (Strategy and structure of the co-operative organization) (Desforges & Vienney, eds., 1980), Vienney (1980b) discussed the relationships between activities and membership that characterize co-operatives. In this same book, Desforges (1980) examined co-operative strategy and structure, while Tremblay (1980) reflected on co-operative management and decision-making. Lévesque (1980b) looked at social relationships from the perspective of technology and finally Desroche wrote a postscript entitled «Stratégie coopérative et spéléologie sociale» (Co-operative strategy and social speleology). This work develops the key concepts of instituting co-operative, the community one, and instituted co-operative, the business one.

During the 1980s, a large number of working papers were published by the Centre on the topics of structures of the association and enterprise structures⁴ as well as on the function of members relations (Malo, 1982b; 1983; Bouchard & Malo, 1983). The Centre also published, as a special serie of its working papers, the proceedings of the international conference «Les coopératives de travailleurs pour la création et le maintien de l'emploi» (workers co-operatives for jobs protection and creation), held in Montréal in 1984. A special issue on «co-operatives and women» (Giroux, Malo & Rhéaume-Champagne, eds., 1986) was also published by the CIRIEC Canada journal, *Coopératives et Développement*, in 1986.

⁴ See Hervé Fahndrich (supervised by Malo) and Marc-André Leboeuf (supervised by Malo) in *Cahiers du Centre de gestion des coopératives* (www.hec.ca/biblio/).

In the early 1990s, the series *Coopérateurs pionniers*⁵ (pioneer co-operators) was the result of a large research on the co-operative experience in Québec as seen by its builders (Lévesque, 1982). Then, in 1992, *Coopératives et Développement* produced an issue entitled «Vers une théorie de la gestion des coopératives» (Towards a theory of co-operative management), edited by Côté. In this issue, Côté contributed with a paper on the development of a strategic analysis model of co-operatives. Giroux also committed an analysis on participation and decision making in co-operatives. In the issue, Vienney was invited to answer the question: Does the specificity of co-operatives justify the search for specific management tools and models? His response offered a synthesis of what constitutes this specificity and justifies a specific analysis of the socioeconomic nature of co-operatives. As for specific management tools and models, Guérard is to be thanked for his important contribution as he re-engineered co-operative financing by linking the funding of members and that of the co-operative (Guérard, 1983, 1987, 1990). The school has also addressed co-operative education (Côté, Carré & Vézina, 1993; Giroux & Dubreuil, 1994) as an integrated function of management in a context of co-operative mutation (Côté & Vézina, 1991).

In 1990s and 2000s, HEC Montréal researchers contributed notably to CIRIEC⁶ international working groups on the topics of the social economy (Monzon Campo & Defourny, eds., 1992), the relationship between co-operatives, principles and markets (Monzon Campo & Zevi, eds., 1994) and co-operative holdings (Côté, ed., 2001). Within the working group on the theme of the place and role of managers in the governance structure in social economy (Chaves & al., eds., 2004), Malo and Vézina made a contribution on the governance and management of the collective user-based enterprise through value creation strategies and organizational configurations.

In 2001, as the Centre transformed into the Centre d'études Desjardins en gestion des coopératives de services financiers (Desjardins Centre for Studies in Management of Financial Services Co-operatives), and as Malo created, in the mid 1990s, a branch of CRISES⁷ at HEC Montréal, the research on co-operative management continued in these groups. In Desjardins Centre, Poulin & Tremblay (2005) show how a large co-operative restructures deeply in order to better serve its members. In CRISES, researchers from the Montréal school work on the topics of management and strategic management of co-operatives and other civil society organizations (Andion & Malo, 1998; Leite Rodrigues & Malo, 2006; Malo, Audebrand & Camus, 2008, 2010; Vézina and Malo, 2004 and forthcoming). Côté (2009) is invited to de-

⁵ Life stories of actors who were at the strategic summit of large co-operative or mutualist organizations, most recorded by Jean-Louis Martel, research professional.

⁶ International Centre of Research and Information on the Public, Social and Cooperative Economy.

⁷ Centre de recherche sur les innovations sociales (Centre for research on social innovations).

velop its framework on the management of co-operative equilibrium in the Macpherson and McLaughlin-Jenkins' book.

These are a few of the chief milestones in the Montréal school on co-operative management and in the projects to which it made contributions in connection with its particular approach. These works were instrumental in making co-operative management, as well as their governance, a specific research field in the study of co-operatives (Lévesque & Malo, 1991). We hope to demonstrate that a distinguishing feature of the Montréal school on co-operative management body of work, in regard to co-operative development, is that they reveal the inherent tensions in co-operatives. These tensions are even more at work today as co-operatives around the world are facing tremendous challenges in order to cope with globalization as well as increased societal expectations for corporate social and environmental responsibility.

2.2. A hidden specificity of the Montréal school on co-operative management

Researchers from the Montréal school on co-operative management developed a bipolar representation of the co-operative and its management, as demonstrated by the pairs of concepts found in their works (Table 1). With this, they contributed, at least implicitly, to the identification of tensions in co-operative development.

Table 1: THE TENSIONS IN THE MONTREAL SCHOOL OF THOUGHT ON CO-OPERATIVE MANAGEMENT: THE PAIRS OF CONCEPTS

PAIRS OF CONCEPTS		AUTHOR(S)	YEAR
Viability of the association	Viability of the enterprise	Desforges, Lévesque & Tremblay	1979
Genetic determination of the strategic area Criteria to evaluate possible strategic choices from and in the perspective of the association	Functional determination of the strategic area Criteria to evaluate possible strategic choices from and in the perspective of the enterprise	Desforges	1980
Role of leadership of the association Formal association structure Autonomy	Role of direction of the enterprise Enterprise structure, functions Integration, centralization	Tremblay	1980
Development Meaning	Growth Power	Lévesque	1980a

Association relationships Association technology	Domination relationships Technological transfers	Lévesque	1980b
Participation as an end Education, training and development of members	Participación como medio Información, comunicación y consulta	Malo	1982
Relations between members Association structure	Relations with members Enterprise structure	Malo Bouchard y Malo	1983 1983
Members' pension fund Dividend policy	Permanent capital of the co-operative Capital reserves policy	Guérard	1983
Women as Activists	Women as Customers	Malo	1986vf 1991va
Member-owner Member-owner	Member-user External holder of risk capital	Guérard	1990
Socio-political role Maintain use link «Association» criteria	Technical-administrative Minimum of economic performance «Enterprise» criteria	Côté	1992
Member co-operatives Bottom-up Participation in strategic process Concerted action Committees	Co-operatives group Top-down Strategic decision making Consultation Surveys	Giroux	1992
Stimulate participation of co-operative partners	Disseminate knowledge related to values, policies and rules	Giroux y Dubreuil	1994
Governance Local Cooperatives	Management Global Holding company	Malo y Lejeune	1998
Utopia Mobilization Perspective Power over the enterprise Governance configurations Autonomy	Ideology Cohesion Positioning Power in the enterprise Management configurations Integration	Malo	2000vf 2003ve ----- 2006
Association Members Democracy Practice of participation Co-operative identity New co-operative paradigm	Enterprise Cooperative Holding Competitive capacity Practice of management and business Competitive positioning Strategy and structure change	Côté	2001a 2001b
Strong associative structure Co-operative education Associative cohesion	Co-operative business activities Co-operative strategic issues Strategic cohesion	Côté	2003

Local Innovation Social capital Values Focalization	Global Standardization Financial capital Economic value Hybridization	Malo y Vézina	2004
Democracy Non-market rules	Hierarchy Market rules	Malo y Tremblay	2004
Values and purpose Associative practices Influence of the network on co-operative equilibrium at local level	Business model Business practices Influence of the competitive environment on co-operative equilibrium	Côté	2007
Adaptation Civil society Local organizations	Adoption Market or State Hierarchic actor	Malo Camus y Audebrand	2007
Civil society Territory	Market Sector	Malo, Audebrand y Camus	2010
Territorial logic New multi-stakeholder co-operatives	Sectoral logic Old single-stakeholder co-operative groups	Malo y Richez- Battesti	2010
Resource-based view Support partners Internal processes	Positioning model Financial partners External processes	Vézina y Legrand	2004
Support from a partnership network	Development of adapted analytic and management methods	Vézina y Rousselière	A publicar en 2011
Feminism Principle of differentiated equality Female-nurturer model Social policy	Self-management Principle of undifferentiated equality Male-warrior model	Malo, Buendia Martinez y Vézina	Próxima publicación
Social capital Interorganisational learning	Relational capital Business learning	Vézina y Messier	Próxima publicación
Perspective-based approach Resource-based approach	Positioning approach Positioning approach	Vézina y Malo	Próxima publicación

Source: Own elaboration.

As far back as the 1970s, the research had already revealed the tension between the viability of the association and the viability of the enterprise (Desforges, Lévesque & Tremblay, 1979). In his 1980 publication, Desforges was already stressing the

tensions between the modalities of development of the association and those of the enterprise, as well as between the genetic determination and the functional determination of the strategic area. This latter tension refers to the criteria from the perspective of the association and those of the enterprise, underscoring the multiple rationality of the association and the singular rationality of the enterprise (Desforges, 1980). This leads to tensions between the need for a specific co-operative management and the technostructure management methods, thus showing the more general tension between co-operatives and the market economy (Desforges, 1981, 1978).

In a clearly managerial approach, the work of Tremblay (1980) revealed the tensions between the role of the association leader and that of the enterprise manager, between the association structure and the enterprise structure, between the co-operative and the federation. For Lévesque (1980a), tensions are reflected between unsatisfied needs and mobilization, between mobilization and leadership and, between leadership and the cohesion of effort. Association relationships and domination relationships as well as arbitrations between association technologies and the seemingly neutral technological transfers from the market economy are also among the tensions that characterize co-operative management (Lévesque, 1980b). In the 1980s, contributions by Malo and her collaborators identified tensions between the association structure and the enterprise structure, between the relationship function with members and the «co-operativized» business function, as well as in the relations «between» and «with» members (Malo, 1982b; 1983; Bouchard & Malo, 1983). She also discussed the tension between women members' role as activists and as customers (Malo, 1991).

In the 1990s, Côté (1992) formulated tensions in the strategic choices of the co-operative, as Desforges (1978; 1980) had done before. In his strategic management model, Côté pointed to tensions between the members and the co-operative, between the co-operative and its environment, between defense of the use link (initial agreement and reformulation of that agreement) and the achievement of a minimum of economic efficiency, as well as between the socio-political and technical-administrative poles. These tensions require arbitration between criteria linked to the association and criteria related to the enterprise. In her work on the decision-making process in co-operatives, Giroux (1992, 1993) proposed a tension between participation in the strategic process and in strategic decision-making. In this process, members needs and those of the enterprise, the individual co-operatives and their federation, as well as the needs for concertation and consultation are all in tension. Malo and Lejeune (1998) situated the tensions between the local level of co-operatives as the basic unit and the global level of the sector and the federation. From the perspective of the tensions between governance and management as well as between administrators and managers, these researchers turned the attention to the duality of co-operative and market values, which are competitive by nature, that permeate the co-operative.

The contributions of the 2000s also stressed tensions. From Malo (2003, 2006), we learned of the presence of tensions between the diverse governance configurations on one hand, and between the diverse management configurations on the other hand. This is the case, for example, of participative democracy and representative democracy or, at the level of a co-operative movement, of the tension between autonomy and integration. This author also described the tension between the social transformation perspective and competitive positioning in the co-operative movement's relationship with the market. Malo and Vézina (2004) described the tension between innovation and standardization in co-operatives development trajectory.

The analysis of tensions has become more explicit in recent years, with researchers' interest being drawn to civil society organizations, or social economy organizations, including without being limited, to co-operatives. These researchers draw from the theoretical currents of strategizing (Audebrand, 2008). In the organizational model of the plural economy (Malo, Camus & Audebrand, 2007), co-operatives are the perfect example of organizations in constant tension between civil society and the market. Mori and Malo (2003) show the tension between the dreamed-project and the project-in-practice (Desroche, 1976) in the fair trade sector, dreamed in the north and practiced in the south. Audebrand (2008) and Audebrand and Malo (2010) develop the fundamental tensions model (integration-separation, stability-change, closedness-openness) and illustrate it with the fair trade sector. Malo, Audebrand and Camus (2010) describe the fundamental tension between perspective and positioning in territorial sustainable development, while Malo and Richez-Battesti (2010) show the tension between territorial logic and sector logic, and between democracy and economic performance. They also bring out the tension, in the social economy, between the old single-stakeholder democracy and the new multi-stakeholder one. In the same vein, Malo and Bérard (2009) set out the fundamental tensions in this field, by comparing associative and co-operative legal statuses, and also collective enterprise and social business.

Finally, we will cite two yet-to-be-published contributions. In the first, Malo, Buendía Martínez and Vézina (forthcoming) investigate the principle of equality, by referring to self-management and feminist logics. This reveals a tension between the principles of undifferentiated and differentiated equality, or between the male-warrior and female-nurturer models. This tension is found even between economic and social policies when the development of collective female entrepreneurship is at issue. Vézina and Malo (forthcoming), taking the co-operative model as the ideal of inspired organizations, develop the trajectory of the strategic postures in the co-operative development process. They thus shed light on tensions between the resource-based approach and the positioning approach, and between the perspective-based and the positioning approaches in strategic analysis.

3. THE TENSIONS IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF CO-OPERATIVES

In the next sections, we present the main tensions faced by small and large co-operatives during their evolution. We describe these tensions by taking into account the four major phases that most co-operatives go through while they develop: emergence, growth, decline and renewal (Malo & Vézina, 2004).

3.1. Tensions in the co-operative emergence phase

In the emergence phase of the co-operative, the tensions are of the same sort as those that characterize the relationship between the dreamed project and the project-in-practice (Desroche, 1976) or between the instituting model of the community and the instituted model of the enterprise (Desroche, 1980). These two poles were redefined by the Montréal school on co-operative management as being, at the time of emergence, the analysis of the viability of the association and that of the viability of the enterprise (Desforges, Lévesque & Tremblay, 1979).

Although the co-operative is created by a collective entrepreneur (Lévesque, 1986; Tremblay, Belisle & Toth, 1981), it is not uncommon for the project promoters to be lone individuals. Hence there is a tension between the individual initiative and the collective model. Yet, without a group of persons, the business project will be just like any other. Without an association of people, a social enterprise but not a collective enterprise such as the co-operative can be created. In fact, democracy is the foundation of the co-operative identity (Giroux, 1992; Côté, 2003; Malo & Béhard, 2009) and not just its social mission. In addition, the collective dimension benefits from being community-based since this kind of anchoring enables the emerging co-operative to draw from the community's resources (Malo & Vézina, 2004). The contribution of an outside actor can help co-construct, with the social entrepreneur, the democratic dimension of the still too individual project. An associative plan must therefore be developed by the entrepreneur and community organizers, just as a business plan is developed for the capitalist entrepreneur. Community-entrepreneurial co-construction constitutes in this regard an important ingredient in the viability of the association.

At this stage of the emergence, actors must be mobilized around a strongly felt need (Lévesque, 1980a). This mobilization requires leadership (Lévesque, 1980a; Tremblay, 1980). Yet the founders, or even the founder, constitute(s) an inner circle (Desroche, 1975) such that governance and management can be practiced singly or as a pair: the president and the manager (Malo, 2003, 2006). The participative democratic configuration, involving relations between members, is not the lot of all emerging co-operatives. But, in the emergence phase, the missionary dimension (Malo & Vézina, 2004) demonstrates the cohesion of effort through a configuration in which governance and operational management are often intermixed (Malo & Lejeune, 1998).

The entrepreneur, individual or group, along with support organizations (Guérard, 1986; Malo, Lévesque & Girard, 1998) and even by relationships with other entrepreneurs, be they private (Dumais, Malo & Raufflet, 2005) or collective (Vézina & Rousselière, forthcoming), must still choose a legal status for the new organization. The specific solution (Lévesque, 1980a) can be a co-operative or a non-profit organization. It can also be another similar status such as a community-based organization (Malo & Bérard, 2009). The creation of an organization that will be a combination of an association of people and an enterprise reciprocally linked in a dual relationship of activity and membership (Vienney, 1980b) calls for the choice of a co-operative status. Conversely, the legal foundation of the non-profit organization is the inability to distribute surplus funds, not because the production of surpluses is illegal, but because their reinvestment is legally binding (Malo & Bérard, 2009). Therefore, compare to the non-profit organization, in the co-operative, there is an initial members-co-operative agreement that is based on a use link (Côté, 1992).

Historically, this use link was defined in relation to a single category of stakeholder –suppliers, workers or customers– at the core of a traditional co-operative typology (Malo, 2000). But more recently, new, inclusive, multi-stakeholder co-operatives associating multiple actors with governance, often in a territorial logic (Malo & Richez-Battesti, 2010), have appeared. This is the case of the solidarity co-operatives in Québec (Vézina & Girard, 2003) that may include consumer members (households or independent producers), worker members and support members. Hence, the governance configuration in the emergence phase is in tension between representative democratic governance and missionary governance. The former plays on the principle of differentiated equality while the latter plays on the principle of undifferentiated equality (Malo, Buendía Martínez & Vézina, forthcoming). In doing so, the multiple rationality of the association (Desforges, 1980) is increased tenfold, making even more indispensable the affirmation of a common mobilizing project, of a strategic perspective of general interest such as «fair trade» (Tadros & Malo, 2003). Yet, the co-operative identity derived from the organizational form itself refers to an instituting model that targets transformation (Malo & Vézina, 2004).

For some categories of relatively dominated agents, the advent of the co-operative organization enabled them to access to the power of the entrepreneur, like workers losing their jobs and creating a cooperative (Tremblay, Belisle & Toth, 1981). It allowed them, through an enterprise, to reorganize some of their activities disrupted by the deployment of the capitalist market economy (Vienney, 1980a). Co-operatives are still created this way, in an instituting movement, representing a mode of institutional entrepreneurship (Vézina & Rousselière, forthcoming). In fact, there is, in the co-operative form, a social innovation (Malo & Vézina, 2004) that promotes a business transformation project, its re-embedding in a territory, even when the dominant rationality of the business world pulls the enterprise toward a sectorialized global economy, in which the territories are not actants but simply resource pools.

The co-operative thus contains a project to substitute domination relationships with association relationships (Lévesque, 1980b).

The project to create a co-operative also involves an analysis of the viability of the enterprise (Desforges, Lévesque & Tremblay, 1979). While the associative plan presents the social transformation project, thus responding to a social need and enabling a mobilization, the business plan must specify the competitive positioning that has to be taken to generate income. This need for positioning can be in either a private or a public market, or in a cooperative (clients-members) or philanthropic one. It can even be in several markets at the same time. Thus, in the emergence phase, the tension between perspective and positioning is already present, but it is with or through a perspective that the new co-operative initially draws its strength, its values and its community anchorage as resources (Vézina & Malo, forthcoming).

3.2. Tensions in the co-operative growth phase

The support environment for co-operative development is important not only in the emergence phase but also in the growth phase (Guérard, 1987; Poulin & Malo, 1988, Malo & Théberge, 1989). It will however take a different form. In emergence, the co-operative is part of a community anchorage at the local territorial level. In its growth phase, the co-operative's support environment is organized around an emerging co-operative sector, while the co-operative, as social innovation, goes through a process of dissemination (Malo & Vézina, 2004). In effect, co-operatives are autonomous organizations but, due to their ambition for social transformation and competition, they have a propensity to branch out and regroup, hence a tension is likely to arise between autonomy and concertation (Malo, 2003). Thus, cohesion of effort (Lévesque, 1980a) is not given and the risk of isolation of the co-operatives in their respective local communities compromises the expansion of the emerging sector.

Clusters of co-operatives are thus created without any comprehensive plan other than the mobilizing project that characterizes a non-institutionalized co-operative movement. While the pioneer co-operatives served as a model, the recent co-operatives created in the emerging sector are less militant. Pseudo co-operatives may even appear, for lack of a co-operative regulatory frame strong enough to protect the co-op name. What's more, in the ranks of «real» co-operatives, a certain variance often exists. Some promote the federation, others think about joining it, while yet others jealously guard their autonomy. Among these latter, there is even the risk of parasitic behaviours (free-riding) as some co-operatives may try to benefit from the advantages of the federation without contributing to it.

While there exists, in the still militant movement, a volunteer capacity to mobilizing non-monetary and non-market resources that can be allocated to the needs of the federation, financial resources are not yet on the table. The co-operative's capa-

city to mobilize this type of resource (Vézina & Malo, forthcoming) is generally weak, a capacity that is even more limited when it comes to young co-operatives showing few surpluses. The young federation will then turn towards public authorities that hold monetary and non monetary (ex: office spaces) resources. That is why the first responsibility entrusted to a federation is generally the role of representing co-operatives with public authorities (Malo, 1982a).

The relationship between the State and co-operatives is built around a common issue (Malo, Camus & Audebrand, 2007) taking the form of a strongly felt need and in connection with the mission of the co-operatives and that of the State (Vézina & Bernier, 2001; Vézina & Girard, 2003). But a government or a public administration will require in return for its financial support, an assurance that there is cohesion among the co-operative group. This cohesion will be measured by the membership rate of the co-operatives in the group. As such, the co-operatives must try to escape from a vicious circle in which the group needs public financing but does not have the financial means to support its activities in order to mobilize of all the co-operatives. Even more, the federation of co-operatives requires a financial effort from the co-operatives while its own contribution to service in members co-operatives remains very limited, if not non-existent. Furthermore, the unity of the co-operative sector may be weakened by the creation of multiple federations, the diversity of which is based on adherence to values that are different enough to preclude the erection of a unified movement (Malo, 1980). The time dimension can be critical because if unity is slow to establish itself, the competition, for its part, will swiftly organize itself.

The very success of a new co-operative enterprise model that was spread through spin-off and that created similar types of co-operatives on different local territories, may attract competitors that will imitate, simplify and standardize it (Malo & Vézina, 2004). Success can even arouse an envious State to appropriate the co-operative project, also by simplifying and instrumentalizing it (Giroux & Malo, 1988). And when alternatives are offered to them, some co-operators may become unfaithful and «vote with their feet» (Tremblay, 1980).

The use link between members and their co-operative is based on a «co-operativized» function: procurement in the suppliers' co-operative, production in the workers' co-operative, marketing and products or services sales in the clients' co-operative (Tremblay, 1980; Malo, 2003). Yet, even these activities achieved with the members undergo a form of competition when there is a possibility of substitution on the market (Vienney, 1980b). Therefore, members do not always constitute a captive market. When competitors' offer looks more attractive (better prices, better wages, depending on the type of co-operative), the associative capacity at the inter-co-operative level becomes decisive. In the face of the economic demand, it becomes imperative to pool resources (Malo & Richez-Battesti, 2010), whether they are marketing, human resources management or procurement means, depending on the nature of co-operative.

Thus, in the growth phase, there is a need to structure a co-operative sector by growing the movement (Malo & Théberge, 1989). A management of wills (Desroche, 1975) is required so that the will to unite goes beyond the circle of founding co-operatives in the network. Perhaps because they are the first to be affected by the competition or the first targeted by governmental constraint, managers of basic (local) co-operatives will have a tendency to group together in order to discuss their best practices, and may go so far as to create a «managers' committee» (Malo, 1980; Malo & Lejeune, 1998; Elkouzi & Malo, 2001). And, an interorganizational learning can even take place between organizations in the same co-operative field (Vézina & Messier, forthcoming).

At the level of the representatives of local co-operatives, meeting in a congress or in a general assembly of their sectorial movement, despite the challenge to find a consensus that goes along with any concerted action, participation in the strategic decision-making process (Giroux, 1992) is the preferred mechanism. At this stage of growth, autonomy is still in effect important. Indeed, a group that wants to move too fast to pool resources, though this mechanism is necessary to ensure a minimum of economic efficiency (Côté, 1992), will encounter resistance and even leadership-protest (Desroche, 1976) in the inter-co-operative association. A pooling of resources that does not provide for a democratic governance to control its orientations, senseless in regard to the collective project (Malo & Richez-Battesti, 2010), is doomed to cooperative failure.

Thus, organizational innovations are necessary at the level of the structuring of a new sector or a new segment. A partnership configuration (Vézina & Messier, forthcoming) generally taking the form of a structured network will facilitate the mobilization of non-core resources around a common perspective. We can cite the example of solidarity finance involving a set of by nature diverse stakeholders, including co-operatives, united around a common project (Vézina & Messier, forthcoming). Innovation is also needed in terms of financing to ensure the co-operative growth. Thus, the link between the personal finance of members and the capitalization of the co-operatives (Guérard, 1983) is a step forward, as is the inclusion of support members (Girard & Vézina, 2002; Tadros & Malo, 2003) who bring resources to the new multi-stakeholder co-operatives. Finally, the great variety of forms of voluntary groups of small and medium size organizations (Hugron & Malo, 1997) suggests that it is possible to expand the range of options offered to co-operative development in its growth phase. For example, the capitalist model of franchiser-franchisees can be adopted. However this model must be adapted to the co-operative context in order to provide the franchiser, for instance, with a democratic governance representative of the franchisees. In sum, there are always adoption-adaptation processes in the trajectory of the diffusion of a co-operative innovation (Malo, Camus & Audebrand, 2007) and that process includes a risk of «co-operative decline».

3.3. Tensions in the co-operative decline phase

We observe a phase of co-operative decline, when a reversal (Vienney, 1980b) or a shift (Côté, 1992; Giroux, 1993) occurs in the relationship between the members group and the enterprise in favour of the latest. This reversal can take place both at the co-operative and the federation levels. This situation also brings about a functional determination of the strategic area (Desforges, 1980). The strategic choices and technological transfers appear neutral but hide relationships of domination (Lévesque, 1980b). The value creation strategy is then one of standardization through imitation of the capitalist entrepreneur (Malo & Vézina, 2004).

The integration of means at the level of a co-operative sector or the concentration of means as a result of successive mergers (of basic co-operatives, of territorial federations) necessary to streamline activities, takes precedence over pooling resources in an associative way. It is generally the older co-operative movements that in this way have transformed into sectoral groups on the model of global private capitalist firms. Practically all the old agricultural and financial movements (bank and insurance) have thus become co-operative or mutualist holdings (Côté, ed., 2001), large mutualist or co-operative groups (Vézina, 2003) controlling subsidiaries whose status is capitalist, hence the expression «coopitalist holdings».

Pressures in the competitive environment, economic demands, the need to ensure the viability of the enterprise by reducing costs, including those of the democracy, are a few of the many reasons given to legitimize, for example, a reengineering of the enterprise processes, transforming not only the production and consumption relationships, but also the ownership relationship (Malo, 2001). A sectoral group can still exist, but its governance is already integrated with a management itself strongly taken up by goal-setting mechanisms and performance control. The relations between the subsidiary heads and the co-operative group head office are important and pegged to the achievement of performance objectives. Thus, we are moving away from a co-operative planning of the subsidiary activities that have the character of co-operative (vs business) integrations (Angers, 1974 and 1976). When the co-operative implements this kind of modernization based on industry regulations, the power in the association tends to move to the top, to a board of directors playing a role similar to that of a capitalist group.

At the level of the governance, the power of the members over the enterprise is even weaker than in the capitalist enterprise. In fact, although the organization at the top of the holding is still co-operative, and even though the association structure still exists and is active, making it possible to produce «local» projects (Avon & Malo, 1994), this kind of social responsibility function is not enough to give it control over the enterprise. We are therefore witnessing a co-operative dissociation of the association structure and of the enterprise structure and their «instrumentalizing reassociation». The association is, in a way, subject to the enterprise, itself su-

bordinated to the rules of the market. There follows a selection of members, by the enterprise, based on its own selected activities (Vienney, 1980b). These selected activities are prioritized on the basis of their potential contribution to enhance the competitive positioning instead of their impact on potential social transformation.

Obviously, restructuring will have an impact on the strategic perspective. Without a structure encouraging the expression of the multiple rationalities of the association, the co-operative strategy will be condemned to reflect a single rationality endorsing an enterprise logic dominated by the search for the «one best way» (Desforges, 1980). This may even become reassuring for a technosphere formed in a capitalist management style (Desforges, 1980) that is very active in this phase of cooperative decline. The strategic area, which is to say the range of possible choices, is then determined only by criteria derived from the concerns of the enterprise. Strategic process and strategic decision-making are no longer practiced in a participation-concertation dynamic among the members. Consultations through surveys, have replaced concertation and committees that used to promote ties between members (Giroux, 1992). A direction of the enterprise, more than of leadership of the association, a technosphere trained in management schools and a technical-administrative pole held by external experts who draw on an organizational and economic rationality, henceforth dominate the co-operative structures and hold power in it.

This decline in the co-operative democracy creates a tension in the social economy because it calls into question the belongingness of co-operative groups to a movement at a time when new multi-stakeholder co-operatives are promoting a more inclusive democracy (Malo & Richez-Battesti, 2010). We should remember that, in the organizational model of the plural economy, the co-operative form is halfway between the organized civil society (the associative form «A») and the organized market (the enterprise form «B»). The co-operative represents a balance, necessarily unstable, between the two (Malo, Camus & Audebrand, 2007). In the co-operative decline phase, the original A>B relationship therefore becomes B>A, the risk being to see A disappear entirely. A mutation of the co-operative leads to a complete empowerment of the enterprise over the association (Côté, 1992). The abandonment of the co-operative legal status in favour of a capitalist legal status that doesn't imply any democratic safeguards reveals the end of a slow process of «de-co-operativization» and depooling. The co-operative group thus turned capitalist is merely inserted into markets, attracted by globalization, without anchorage in territorialized civil societies. Institutional isomorphism fully played its role, despite the resistance that co-operative members were able to deploy and a leadership-protest dynamic from some certain members co-operatives.

3.4. Tensions in the co-operative renewal phase

In the ideal co-operative development process, there is no need to bring about a co-operative renewal. A co-operative holding supervising its subsidiaries through co-operative planning (Angers, 1976), making them real co-operative integrations (Angers, 1974) rather than simple profit centres, would be able to ensure use link between the co-operative and its members (Côté, 1992). It would result in a concern for members' needs (Giroux, 1992) and managing new needs (Lévesque, 1980a) strongly felt by themselves or by their community. This recognition of the multiple rationality of the association (Desforges, 1980) would help choose strategic activities, products/services and delivering modalities. In fact, if co-operative planning could be done in a closed circuit, there would be no need for a new mutual egalitarian constraint permitting a reciprocal adjustment of activity relationships (Vienney, 1980b). However, as the entry of a co-operative sector into a co-operative decline phase shows, co-operatives form an open system. As a sub-system, their rules are part of a dominant system of rules (Vienney, 1980).

Three types of cohesion are thus to be found: cohesion between members, cohesion between association and enterprise, and strategic cohesion between co-operative and competitive business context (Côté, 2003). This managing of co-operative equilibrium (Côté, 2009) is important and some co-operative holdings seem to be succeeding better than others (Côté, 2001a, 2001b; Poulin & Tremblay, 2005). While it is important to carry on some co-operative arbitrations that foster the search for a new co-operative balance in order to achieve a minimum of economic performance while maintaining the use link (Côté, 1992), we also observe situations in which re-balancing pathways (Malo & Vézina, 2004) have to be found. But co-operative renewal is very different depending on whether the co-operative organizations find themselves in a field undergoing institutionalization (solidarity finance) or in an institutionalized sector such as the financial sector (bank and insurance). The need and the way to re-balance the relationship between innovation and standardization will differ in effect. While a focusing strategy through innovation is still possible, a delicate combination of innovation and standardization processes into a hybridization strategy can also take shape (Malo & Vézina, 2004).

The focusing strategy will favour a targeted segment of users who are sensitive to some strong values (responsible consuming). This users segment is even likely to become larger as those values, just like economic values, can go through a globalization process. The hybridization strategy will be that of the generalist co-operative evolving on a narrower geographic segment but addressed to the entire market. The co-operative developing by hybridization will proceed internally to arbitrations between the needs of the different segments served (for example the large, medium and small savings holders). The co-operative that adopts the hybridization strategy however, runs the risk of finding itself in the

co-operative decline phase if, to adapt to market forces, its offer does not manage to re-include certain categories of members excluded from the capitalist offer. That is why a co-operative renewal is possible when a co-operative sectoral group whose business processes had to be standardized, decentralizes the innovation function at the level of basic units (co-operatives). These can therefore benefit from some flexibility to innovate, notably in how they establish contact with new, but often excluded, groups of actors in their community or on their territory (Bérard & Malo, 2002). In this renewal phase, the most important, as well as the most difficult thing, is to manage to build a value creation strategy in which the value created is not only an economic value but one which is also based on social values. In this regard, the strategic posture adopted by the co-operative is critical (Vézina & Malo, forthcoming).

If every co-operative competitive positioning requires a perspective of social transformation, it is through building a unique combination of resources and competencies, around this perspective and in view of this positioning, that co-operative renewal acquires a strategic dimension, rather than a simple «co-operative varnish». In this case, the citizenship relationship (Malo, 2001) is deeper than in the philanthropic approach since it allows the reintegration into the economic activity of these actors marginalized by capitalism and coopitalism. Nevertheless, those management trends (some would say fashions) such as enterprise culture, enterprise ethics, enterprise social responsibility and sustainable development are seen by some co-operative groups as opportunities to reconnect with its «association-enterprise» co-operative identity (Belhouari & al., 2005). Drawing on the values that were behind the founding principles of co-operatives, solidarity (Malo & Tremblay, 2004) and mainly democratic co-operative identity (Malo & Bérard, 2009) through participation (Giroux, 1992) is then conceived as an integrated dimension of the co-operative strategy, even a constitutive part of its competitive advantage (Côté, 2001a; 2001b).

Co-operative sectors, young and old, are then likely to propose an alternative development model combining territorial and sectoral logics, democratic governance and economical management (Malo & Richez-Battesti, 2010) as well as partnership configurations between co-operative and non-co-operative actors (Vézina & Legrand, 2004; Malo, 1997). These new organizational models based on partnership meet the traditional synergies between associative, co-operative and labor movements (Martel & Lévesque, 1995). However, this inclusive model is revisited as new links are established between co-operatives and social business such as co-operative support to micro-finance organizations focusing on micro-entrepreneurs (Ignatieff & Malo, 1997; Lapoutte & Malo, 2004). Technologies of association thus participate in the emergence and strengthening of association relationships (Lévesque, 1980b), thereby participating in co-operative renewal by proposing a new form of co-operative balance.

4. TOWARDS AN INTEGRATIVE MODEL OF TENSIONS IN CO-OPERATIVE DEVELOPMENT

In this section, we use the work of Audebrand and Malo (2010) on families of tensions and other contributions on general and specific responses to the presence of tensions (Audebrand, 2008; Malo, Camus & Audebrand, 2007) in order to discuss tensions in co-operative development. These contributions are inspired by a long tradition founded on the work of Mikhail Bakhtin. According to Bakhtin (1981), any social phenomenon is the product of a dialogic tension between centrifugal and centripetal forces. The word centripetal comes from the Latin prefix *centrum*, centre, and the suffix *petere*, seek, while the word centrifugal is formed with the suffix *fugere*, flee. The expression dialogic tension designates the presence of two poles (forces or tendencies) that are opposing and complementary at the same time. The more general form of the tension between centrifugal force and centripetal force is not confrontation or antagonism as the tenants of a dialectic approach claim, but rather a dialogue, between past, present and future actors and actants.

Thus, we want to show that the tensions in co-operative development present generic traits that manifest their belonging to one of the three basic families of tensions (Baxter & Montgomery, 1996): stability and change, integration and separation, closedness and openness. The actors' reactions to these tensions are diverse since the attention can be on the pole representing the centripetal force or, inversely, the centrifugal force, or both (Audebrand, 2008; Audebrand & Malo, 2010). Incidentally, there seems to be a specific response to each tension: accommodation in response to the stability-change tension, defining and surveillance of boundaries in response to the integration-separation tension and education in response to the closedness-openness tension (Malo, Camus & Audebrand, 2007). We want to show, by using these notions, what responses to the tensions the Montréal school of co-operative management provides.

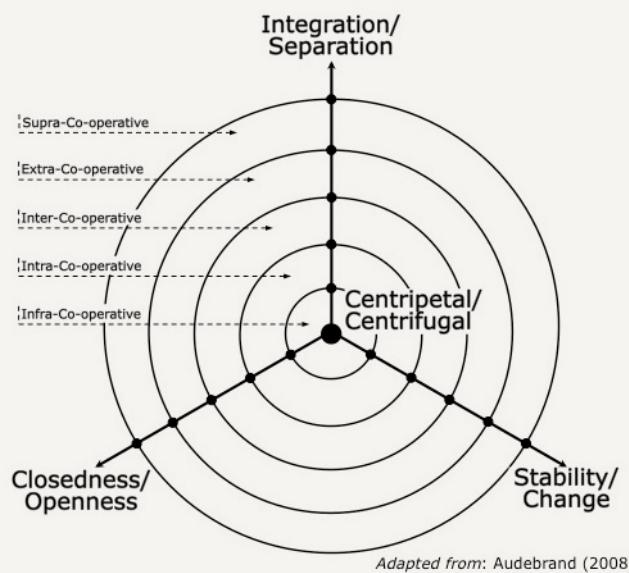
Generally speaking, the tension between stability (centripetal force) and change (centrifugal force) reflects the tension between the need to preserve a stable and constant state and the need to evolve or modify a situation. This tension is there at the very foundation of co-operation and co-operative development between the project-in-practice which is one of insertion in a relationship to the market or to the state, and the dreamed project of social change (Desroche, 1976; Malo, 2003) or, in Vienney's words (1980a), the tension between the adaptation agent role and the transformation agent role. There is also the tension between the functional determination and genetic determination of the co-operative strategic area (Desforges, 1980). Côté (2003) refers to tensions between co-operative cohesion and strategic cohesion while Malo and Vézina (2004) emphasize the tension between standardization and innovation.

The tension between integration (centripetal force) and separation (centrifugal force) generally reflects the tension between the need to integrate within a whole and the need to distance oneself from this whole. In co-operatives, this tension relates to arbitrations between individual and community, person and society, linkage and autonomy, local and global, control and resistance as well as inclusion and exclusion. An integration-separation dynamic is also present in co-operative development. We find it in the relationship between the enterprise structure and the association networks (Desroche, 1975), between the enterprise manager role and the association leader role (Tremblay, 1980), between enterprise structure and association structure (Malo, 1983), and between women members' role as activists and as customers (Malo, 1991). Capitalization of the enterprise and capitalization of the members' pension fund (Guérard, 1983) as well as management configuration (the power «in» enterprise) and governance configuration (the power «on» enterprise") (Malo 2006) can also be interpreted as integration-separation tensions.

The third family of tensions has to do with closedness (centripetal force) and openness (centrifugal force). Generally speaking, this family reflects the tension between the need to disclose information and to communicate with the outside and the need to protect or withhold information. This type of tension is notably reflected in the more or less co-operative or capitalist reasoning modes (Vienney, 1980a) and in the influence of a rationality that is somewhat unique in the case of the enterprise and somewhat multiple in the case of the association (Desforges, 1980). The closedness-openness tension is also reflected in relationships mainly permeated by domination or in relationships of association (Lévesque, 1980b). The dialogic tension between closedness and openness is also manifested in consultation-biased or concertation-biased organizational processes, the effect of which is a simple «opinion» given in the strategic process or, conversely, a participation in the decision-making process itself (Giroux, 1992).

Figure 1

NATURE AND LEVEL OF TENSIONS IN THE CO-OPERATIVE DEVELOPMENT



Source: Adapted from Audebrand (2008).

The three fundamental tensions are found in all forms of relations between actors and also involving actants. They exist at different levels of analysis of co-operative development: individuals (i.e., the infra-cooperative dynamic), organizations (i.e., the intra-cooperative and inter-cooperative dynamic), rules or institutions (i.e., the extra-cooperative dynamic) as well as social actors/movements (i.e., the supra-cooperative dynamic) bringing into play old and new social relationships (Figure 1). Obviously, in reality, these levels are interdependent. However, as Table 2 demonstrates, depending on the co-operative development phase, some of them appear to be more strategic.

Thus, tensions level of analysis between individuals appears preponderant in the co-operative emergence phase. Before being intra-co-operative, the relational dynamic is in fact infra-cooperative and concerns the individuals who founded a new organization. Even before the tension manifests itself between leadership of the association and direction of the enterprise (Tremblay, 1980), we observe, for example, a tension between the vision of the individual social entrepreneur trained in business school and the vision of the co-operative development consultant trained in community economic development academic program, which reflect a tension between a sectoral logic and a territorial logic (Malo & Richez-Battesti, 2010). In response to this type of tension, some will recommend closedness of the co-operative development on «community territorial social logic» and others, openness to «busi-

ness sectoral social logic», provided however, that openness is accompanied by the promotion of cooperative education. This implies an important role of advising that some bankers of the social and solidarity economy take towards solidarity entrepreneurs in order to influence them towards the collective form of entrepreneurship (Vézina & Legrand, 2004).

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Table 2: THE MODEL OF THE TENSIONS IN CO-OPERATIVE DEVELOPMENT

	EMERGENCE	GROWTH	DECLINE	RENEWAL
DYNAMIC	Infra-co-operative	Inter-co-operative	Extra-co-operative	Supra-co-operative
TENSIONS BETWEEN	Individuals participating to the creation of the innovation	Organizations participating to the diffusion of innovations	Rules (principles) of the innovation and rules of the markets	Old and new social actors and movements co-operative and non-co-operative
FAMILY OF TENSIONS	Closedness/openness (C/O)	Integration/separation (I/S)	Stability/change (S/C)	S/C I/C C/R
TERRITORY	Local community-based co-operative development	National co-operative socio-economic sector	Global market «coopitalist» development	New social model of development in specific solidarity areas

Source: Own elaboration.

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education. This implies an important role of advising that some bankers of the social and solidarity economy take towards solidarity entrepreneurs in order to influence them towards the collective form of entrepreneurship (Vézina & Legrand, 2004).

In the co-operative growth phase, the tensions move to intra-cooperative level but also to inter-co-operative dynamic. In fact, growth must be achieved, not just for one co-operative in particular, but for a whole co-operative sector by means of a unique federation capable of generating a strategic sectoral capacity. The reference space is then a large territory. In this phase, the analysis moves to the level of tensions in and between organizations. While the sector association structure is keyed to governance, the enterprise structure of the sector will be keyed to the sharing of activities/functions between the member organizations and the federation (Malo, 1982b). This separation-integration tension is reflected through structural choices in terms of division of work and coordination between the co-operatives and their young federation. In response to the integration-separation tension, the actors will have strategies to delimit territories and monitor boundaries to secure their co-operative identity. A leadership protest (Desroche, 1975) will be mobilised to defend not only autonomy in face of a centralised federative approach but also to promote the superiority of a cooperative model inside a plural co-operative sector (Malo, 1980).

In the decline phase, which is hard to avoid due to co-operatives doing business within a capitalist market economy, an extra-co-operative dynamic takes hold. The analysis moves to the level of the tensions between rules, even when globalization forces regulation outside the field of States. In this phase, the tensions fundamentally concern relations between co-operative rules based on co-operatives values and principles on one side. Capitalist rules based on market liberal values and principles, national «care» rules and international competitive rules as well as regulations, deregulations and re-regulation tensions (from public to private regulator as shown by the certification industry growth, and in particular the power of notification agencies) also show extra-co-operative tensions. Threats are likely to beset the co-operative identity of some sectors evolving in globalized competitive markets. In this phase, the tension between stability and change is at its peak. Attention can then be focused on change, change that may be radical, leading the co-operative in a different strategic direction (Giroux, 1993; Côté & al., 2001; Poulin & Tremblay, 2005). On the other hand, in a search for stability, co-operative arbitrations, a form of accommodation, may be necessary in order to maintain a co-operative equilibrium (Côté, 1992). A partial mutation, for example in the form of the co-operative holding (Côté, 2001), demonstrates a process of accommodation by adoption/adaptation (Malo, Camus & Audebrand, 2007) of the capitalist model focusing on economic performance (Malo & Richez-Batatesti, 2010). Yet, this evolution occurs at the same time as the model of the global financialized economy draws criticism from social movements.

There is a crisis not only of capitalism but also of institutionalized co-operatism that is almost outside of the co-operative field. But crises encourage rethinking. Thus,

in the co-operative renewal phase, the level of analysis moves to the supra-co-operative dynamic. The tensions relate to the relationships between social actors/movements from different spheres of the plural economy (State, market and civil society), bringing into play old and new social relationships such as associative relationships (Lévesque, 1980b). The tension between change and stability is even more structuring. It links instituting and instituted (Desroche, 1976 and 1980; Lévesque, 1981), meaning and power (Lévesque, 1982), Utopia and ideology (Malo, 2003), social innovation and social transformation. An integration-separation type of tension also characterizes the relationship between the old and the new social economy (Lévesque, Malo & Girard, 2001) translated, among other things, into the opposition between the single-stakeholder co-operative holdings driven by a dominant sectoral logic and new co-operatives animated by a territorial logic organized around a status that sometimes allows them to integrate multiple stakeholders (Malo & Richez-Battesti, 2010). Finally, there exists, at the supra-co-operative level, a closedness-openness tension that concerns the strategic posture of social movements/actors. It is a tension between the general interest, through a shared perspective of social transformation requiring the invention of a new context, and the particular interest in which the search for a competitive positioning takes as a given the dominant context (Vézina & Malo, forthcoming). Furthermore, at issue here is the capacity to match specific resources and competencies as levers to deploy a shared perspective in a broad positioning, that of a network of social movements/actors as agent of social change.

Several large co-operative groups have, during the course of their development, lost the capacity for reciprocal adjustment and consequently practice forms of exclusion. Hence, it is not surprising that the tensions in co-operative development, with regard to its capacity for renewal, involve not only an intra-co-operative dynamic but also a supra-co-operative dynamic. Since social cohesion involves a capacity to develop accessibility, employability, territoriality and democracy (Malo, Lévesque et al, 2001), this strategic capacity can obviously not be found in a single enterprise, even a co-operative. Given the limitations of the traditional single-stakeholder co-operative model (Malo & Richez-Battesti, 2010), it is therefore not surprising to see new forms of multi-stakeholder co-operatives being developed (Girard & Vézina, 2002) and to see new partnerships configurations between actors of different natures (Vézina & Legrand, 2004). Central to this phase is the challenge to advance a new egalitarian constraint (Vienney, 1980b) which means the need to develop technologies of association that advance association relationships and not just technological transfers that reproduce domination relationships (Lévesque, 1980b). But whether it is an old co-operative sector or a new one, from the perspective of co-operative renewal, the issue remains that of the co-operative model as stakeholder of a new social model of development (Lévesque, 1982).

In the end, it is important to recognize that a dialogic tension is not in itself either positive or negative. However, it acquires a positive or negative value according to the

reactions of the participants and the more or less long-term consequences following on these reactions. A tension does not necessarily involve a confrontation between actors. In fact, a reaction may be antagonistic (actor against actor) or non-antagonistic (actor with actor facing a common challenge). In some cases, one of the poles of a tension may be wiped out or devalued in relation to another. In this case, one of the poles may dominate another and impose its voice. In other cases, the poles can enter into open conflict. It sometimes happens that the poles find themselves in an interim agreement situation. In one way or another, the existence of a multitude of possible reactions to deal with the dialogic tensions does not guarantee the competence of one or several actors to choose the appropriate reaction (and in itself, there is no appropriate reaction). In this sense, reacting to dialogic tensions is like walking on eggs, a delicate balancing act.

5. CONCLUSION

Our goal was to contribute to the theory of co-operative development by mobilizing the notion of tensions, through the works of the Montreal school on co-operative management. In our opinion, tensions constitute a distinctive trait of this school of thought which had not been remarked up to this time. We have presented the tensions in the order of their appearance in the life of a co-operative, in four phases: emergence, growth, decline and renewal. This diachronic perspective enabled us to reveal the tensions in the globalization era, for small co-operatives (first phase), for small co-operatives mutualizing means to become large without losing their autonomy (second phase), for the large co-operatives transformed in coopitalists holdings (third phase) and for the old and new co-operative actors/movements participating to the construction of a new socioeconomic model of development (fourth phase).

From the tensions thus presented by phase, were described not only intra-co-operative dynamic but also, according to each specific phase, an infra-co-operative (tensions between individuals), an inter-co-operative (tensions between organizations), an extra-co-operative (tensions between rules) or a supra-co-operative (tensions between social actors/movements) dynamic. These dynamics give rise to contemporary debates on the convergences and divergences between collective (democratic) and social (individual) entrepreneurship, as well as on the tensions between the new social economy and the old social economy. Fundamentally, these express a tension between the «association» and «enterprise» poles.

In each phase, at the intra-co-operative level of a small or a large co-operative, it is important to recognize that co-operatives are confronted by the threefold challenge of co-operative cohesion: membership cohesion, association-enterprise cohesion and strategic cohesion (Côté, 2003). To analyze strategic cohesion, the strategic co-

hesion model still has its relevancy in civil society organizations such as cooperatives, as in fair trade (Malo, Audebrand & Camus, 2008). However, that is not sufficient to account for the tensions (Malo, Audebrand & Camus, 2010). In the era of globalization, the organizations of the civil society must work on the construction, and even the invention, of the strategic context (Vézina & Malo, forthcoming), by considering it as a movement (Vézina, 1997). Therefore, tension models must be added to the analysis of co-operative development.

The project of the Montreal school on co-operative management was therefore to develop the specificity of the management of an organization that is fundamentally dialogical. Our classification of the tensions in co-operative development, using models of fundamental tensions, enabled us to strengthen both the postulate of tensions as a distinctive trait of this school of thought and the understanding of tensions in co-operative development, when small and large co-operatives today operate in a world in which activities and solidarities are going global. Our discussion of the management of tensions in co-operative development also brought out convergences and divergences in how to react or respond to these.

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