Raising awareness about paradoxes: the case of a participatory device facing social innovation tensions[1]

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Résumé :

Cette recherche porte sur les tensions organisationnelles liées à l'émergence des projets d'innovation sociale car elles sont utiles à la compréhension de phénomènes organisationnels complexes, et notamment dans le contexte de l'entreprise sociale (Bouchard & Michaud, 2015). Nous nous concentrons sur deux *gaps* en utilisant la théorie du paradoxe (Smith et Lewis, 2011). Premièrement, nous étudions l'innovation sociale sous l'angle de l'entrepreneuriat social afin de mettre en évidence ses dimensions processuelles et contextuelles et de souligner la nécessité de mieux comprendre les origines de ces tensions paradoxales au point de départ des projets d'innovation sociale. Là où la plupart des études sur les paradoxes cherchent à apporter de nouvelles stratégies pour faire face aux paradoxes ou en tirer parti, nous voulons aller plus en amont et saisir les origines des tensions. En d'autres termes, nous encourageons la reconnaissance des tensions dès le début du processus afin de connecter les caractéristiques essentielles du projet d'innovation sociale aux situations paradoxales auxquelles les dirigeants seront confrontés au cours de son développement.

Deuxièmement, nous répondons au besoin d'étudier les tensions au niveau inter organisationnel afin de mieux intégrer certaines caractéristiques des entreprises sociales, comme un fort ancrage

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[1]   A short version of this work has been presented during GESS (Gestion des Entreprises Sociales et Solidaires) 2019 Colloquium in Valence (France)

dans leur territoire et leur interdépendance avec un ensemble d'acteurs afin d'insister sur les natures ouvertes et collectives de l'innovation sociale (Harrisson & Vézina, 2006 ; Muller & Tanguy, 2018). En effet, ce second *gap* vient de la dimension collective de l'entrepreneuriat social, puisque de nombreux projets sont co-créés ou du moins soutenus par une diversité d'acteurs, et, via les outils et dispositifs qu'ils diffusent. Nous souhaitons clarifier le rôle de ces acteurs, et plus particulièrement nous intéresser au rôle des dispositifs et des outils de gestion face aux problèmes de tensions organisationnelles (Bouchard & Michaud, 2015) en utilisant la perspective appropriative des outils de gestion (De Vaujany, 2006 ; Grimand, 2012).

Les données proviennent de l'étude de cas d'un dispositif participatif, un appel à projet citoyen conçu par une autorité publique locale, promouvant des projets d'innovation sociale sur son territoire. La stratégie de collecte de données mobilise des ressources documentaires et des entretiens avec les différentes parties prenantes concernées par l'intervention du dispositif, comprenant des entrepreneurs sociaux.

Les résultats montrent un dispositif inédit qui intègrent une diversité de tensions et sensibilise les entrepreneurs sociaux aux paradoxes (les entrepreneurs candidats étaient très hétérogènes quant à leur capacité à répondre aux tensions de performance, et ils étaient mis au défi de co-construire un projet inclusif capable d'intégrer de multiples identités). En nous concentrant sur un dispositif inter-organisationnel, nous avons pu saisir ces tensions à de multiples niveaux, en confrontant les tensions à l'intérieur du dispositif lui-même ainsi que celles vécues par les entrepreneurs sociaux pendant le développement du projet. Nous avons identifié des paradoxes dans la catégorisation de Smith et Lewis (2011, 2013). Nous discutons du rôle de dispositifs managériaux visant spécifiquement à lancer des projets d'entreprises sociales et de la manière dont ces dispositifs peuvent révéler des tensions aux entrepreneurs et avoir un impact potentiel sur le cours du développement de leur projet.

Mots-clés : étude de cas, paradoxe, tension, innovation sociale, entrepreneuriat social

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INTRODUCTION

Studies about social entrepreneurship using a paradox perspective are receiving growing attention in the academic sphere. In fact, these ventures, also qualified as "hybrids," combine market logics with a social-welfare purpose making them a place of prominent paradoxes, also called a "tensions knot" (Maignan, Arnaud, & Chateau Terrisse, 2018; Valérie Michaud, 2013). Paradoxes can be defined as "dynamic interplay between interdependent, pervasive and persistent oppositional forces" (Audebrand, 2017, p. 369). Following Audebrand (2017), we want to expand the scope of paradox research since it has proved to be useful in understanding complex organizational phenomena (Grimand, Oiry, & Ragaigne, 2018; Michaud, 2011; Smith & Lewis, 2011), particularly in a social enterprise context (Bouchard & Michaud, 2015; Nativel, 2017, Smith et al., 2013). The present study is dealing with the social enterprise context in depth to capture the positive influence that this movement can bring to the rest of the economy (Nyssens & Defourny, 2016) by integrating a broad variety of actors (both public and private entities, institutions and support organizations, citizens, etc.). This sector evolution is correlated with the market liberalization and the step back operated by most states on social issues. Thus, conflicting situations were accelerated: on one side, historic players of the social economy have to deal with new missions and higher responsibilities, developing new models to legitimate their action in a neoliberalist environment. On the other side, an emerging social capitalism is seizing the opportunity to legitimate any activity that claim to be socially innovative or creative (Nativel, 2017). The concept of social innovation is widely used to describe any creative projects able to provide an appropriate response to unmet social needs (Phills, Deiglmeier, & Miller, 2008). We advance a richer definition of social innovation built out of a collective process that involves the participation of local organizations and citizens and promoting social transformation (Bouchard, Evers, & Fraisse, 2015; Cajaiba-Santana, 2014; Montgomery et al. 2012, Petrella & Richez-Battesti, 2014). Many scholars are currently debating on the social innovation definition (Edwards-Schachter & Wallace, 2017); others are criticizing the social entrepreneurship movement (Draperi, 2010; Petrella & Richez-Battesti, 2014). In order to bring clarity and synergies between these concepts this work is following

Dufays' (2019) assumption to study the "the internal dynamics of social entrepreneurial teams during invention and implementation stages, which correspond to social innovation nascency" (p1347). We explore the social entrepreneurship process as one commonly associated with social innovation (Phillips et al. 2015), and see innovativeness as being one element among others leading to the venture's success (Renko, 2013). Collectiveness or plurality of actors being another, (Dufays & Huybrechts, 2016; Razafindrazaka & Fourcade, 2016) we also use Montgomery et al.'s (2012) term of collective social entrepreneurship. Finally, the social enterprise, the hybrid or alternative organization, refers to the tangible outcome of the entrepreneurial process (Petrella & Richez-Battesti, 2014).

Based on the collaborative and creative traits of social innovation and entrepreneurship, this article aims to fill two gaps related to the need for a better understanding of the origins and setups of paradoxical tensions at the starting point of multi-stakeholder ventures.

First, and to complete Dufays' (2019) research, we want to increase the knowledge about the emergence phase of hybrid ventures in order to capture organizational tensions at this point. We will address the socio-economic tension by dividing it up into the four categories of paradoxes mentioned in Smith and Lewis' seminal work (2011): performing, belonging, organizing and learning. Smith and Lewis' classification appears useful in order to achieve a better acknowledgement of the potential poles in tension, aiming at managing with it instead of trying to solve or minimize it (Michaud, 2011).

Second, we want to highlight the mediating role of objects in the studied ventures. Instruments, tools and managerial devices are able to provide an "articulation between heterogeneous social worlds" (Vinck, 2009). Social economy scholars are giving an increasing interest to management instruments in their field, either by demonstrating the risk of managerialization they carry for SEOs[2] (Maisonnasse, Petrella & Richez-Battesti, 2019) or by illustrating the mediating or facilitating role these objects can play in paradoxical situations (Bouchard & Michaud, 2015; Grimand et al. 2018). The present work is consistent with the second vision in that sense that we explore the case of a participatory device serving hybrid ventures by integrating multiple interests.

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[2] In this study based in France, SEOs include every non-profit, cooperative, mutual fund, corporate foundation and private law companies that meet the conditions of limited profitability, democratic governance and the pursuit of a social goal

In addition, most of the existing literature and case studies on paradoxes and instruments are intra-organizational despite the fact that scholars recognize the multilevel nature of paradoxical tensions (Smith & Lewis, 2011). Through this work, we wish to focus on tensions at the inter-organizational level in order to better integrate some characteristics of hybrid organizations, such as a strong anchorage in their territory and their interdependence with a set of stakeholders to insist on the inclusive and collective natures of social innovation (Harrisson & Vézina, 2006; Muller & Tanguy, 2018).

Finally**,** we intend to address the following issue: in a context of social innovation being developed collectively, we wish to question the capacity of managerial device to reveal the paradoxes that are being set up. The next section presents the theoretical background by reviewing the literature on paradoxes management and the role of management device. The methods to explore the case studied are then described, and our findings are presented and discussed in the subsequent sections. Limitations and contributions are finally put forward.

1. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

1.1 TENSIONS AND PARADOXES IN SOCIAL INNOVATION VENTURES

Research developed by the EMES[3] network are useful to understand and position the heterogeneity of actors moving toward alternative models by combining the quest of their own interest with either a more economic or social activity to reach a certain hybridity represented by the central position in the mapping representation below (see figure 1, from Nyssens & Defourny, 2016 p12). While many capitalist firms are undertaking social initiatives, traditional non-profit organizations are developing entrepreneurial ventures (Michaud 2013). The whole economy is concerned with these institutional trajectories giving birth to new actors: social businesses (SB), entrepreneurial non-profits (ENP), social cooperatives (SC) and public-sector social enterprise (PSE). This demonstrates the plurality of potential organizations able to combine multiples interests: general, mutual or capital interest. We could add to pre-existing organizations, new entities born from a collective entrepreneurship process (Dufays & Huybrechts, 2016) which can be hybrids that combine different logics or interests: "their location [in the triangle] will depend on their general interest orientation, on the way in which they balance social and economic objectives, on the legal form they choose, on the kind of

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[3] EMES takes its name from the French title of its first research project, "L'EMergence de l'Entreprise Sociale en Europe" (The emergence of social enterprises in Europe)

resource mix or market reliance they seek, and so on." (Nyssens and Defourny, 2016, p17).

Figure 1. Institutional trajectories and resulting social enterprises models ; Nyssens & Defourny, 2016 p12
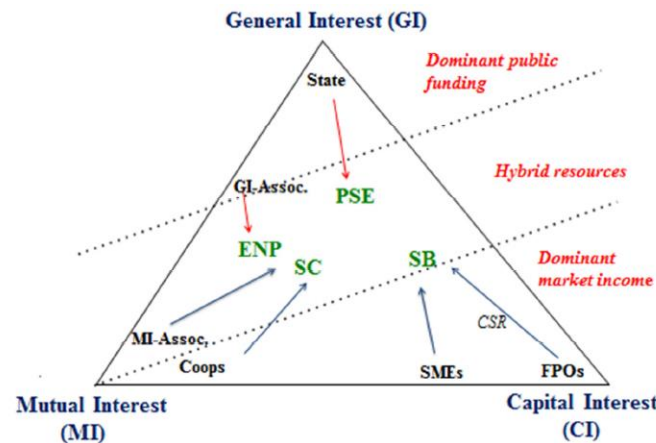
Collective social entrepreneurship also generates cooperation between the different actors mentioned above, giving rise to the relatively recent organizational form of multi-stakeholder cooperatives (Audebrand et al., 2017). It demonstrates the importance of collaborative action to solve complex social problems and goes against the common view of the individual entrepreneur (Montgomery et al., 2012).

These different shapes of social entrepreneurship (including intrapreneurship) are engaged in a process imbued with various tensions (Dufays, 2019) all along its developmental stages: from ideation or emergence of the venture to implementation and diffusion (Mulgan, 2006). In fact, social innovation scholars illustrated that socially oriented ventures emerge from "dissatisfactions with the status quo that are caused by new knowledge, new demands, and new needs" (Dufays, 2019 p1345). Then, the need for mixing resources and co-constructing with a plurality of stakeholders are potentially causing tensions as well as the social change resulting from the process which challenges the norms, values or market in place (Cajaiba-Santana, 2014). We point here that organizational tensions are inherent features of social entrepreneurship, and agree with Smith and Lewis' model of dynamic equilibrium to say that tensions are at the same time socially constructed. In fact, the actors' choice about ideology, structures or practices compared to their environment (their alternative characteristic) reinforces this phenomenon (Michaud, 2017): For instances, the simultaneous valorization of empowerment and control, change and stability or independence and affiliation are part of organizational life, these underlying or latent tensions become paradoxical when the

contradictions they may illustrate become interdependent and enduring (Audebrand, 2017). The juxtaposition of contradictory elements is stimulated in contexts marked by plurality, change and scarcity (Smith and Lewis, 2011), and social entrepreneurial teams could experience the paradoxical situation either negatively or positively:

- In a negative or vicious circle vision, some authors warned about paradoxes as a "clash of ideas or principles or actions and to the discomfort that may arise as a result" (Stohl & Cheney, 2001, p. p354). This discomfort is related to the way people deal with paradoxical tensions, biased by cognitive and behavioral forces for consistency or emotional anxiety and defensiveness, (Smith and Lewis, 2011): for example, individuals may concentrate on one contradictory element to feel safer and ensure a short-term performance (Grimand, Derumez, & Schäfer, 2014). These decisions can also be affected by organizational inertia and hamper the enterprise development. A lack of awareness or experience can lead managers to see tensions as dilemma and use defensive strategies to solve it. They would avoid the contradiction and try to maintain an appearance of order to temporarily reduce anxiety (Lewis, 2000).

- Conversely, scholars draw attention on the fact that "beyond the vices (that we wish to fight) we discover virtues (that we wish to cultivate) for the organization" (Translated from Guedri, Hussler, & Loubaresse, 2014 p14). Here, scholars identify strategies to manage with the paradoxes, valuing acknowledgement and acceptance of the poles in contradiction and illustrating that high-performance firms often present paradoxical characteristics (high autonomy versus rigid rules, loose coupling versus tight coupling), and especially strong skills to manage and balance it (Guedri et al. 2014). Improving awareness of tensions allow managers to attend competing demands simultaneously. This capacity to transcend paradoxes "requires cognitive and behavioral complexity, emotional equanimity, and dynamic organizational capabilities" (Smith and Lewis, 2011 p391), a skill set that can foster the long-term competitiveness of the venture (Grimand et al., 2014; Lewis, 2000).

Social innovations are processes of prominent tensions and important research avenues must focus on how practitioners acknowledge the existence of such tensions and become equipped with the conceptual tools to deal with these tensions (Audebrand 2017, p386). For this reason, most of the studies seek to bring new strategies to cope with paradox issues and take advantage of it but we want to go more upstream and grasp the origins of tensions. In other words, we

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promote the acknowledgement of tensions from the very beginning of the process in order to connect the core features of the social innovation venture to the paradoxical situations the leaders will face during its development. Indeed, analyzing the emergence of an organization amounts to be where tensions are forged according to Smith and Lewis:

"Organizations emerge as leaders respond to foundational questions, constructing boundaries that foster distinctions and dichotomies (Ford & Backoff, 1988). In creating organizations, leaders must decide what they are going to do, how they are going to do it, who is going to do it, and in what time horizon." (Smith and Lewis 2011, p388)

These creative choices correspond to the performing (*what*), organizing (*how*), belonging (*who*), learning (*what time*) tensions. Smith and Lewis' (2011) categorization of organizational tensions is useful to go beyond the socioeconomic tension that most scholars focused on in studies pertaining to social enterprises. This double bottom line is constitutive of social enterprises which always need to balance between commercial and social (or societal) objectives. Paradoxes related to this issue are called performing tensions: they "arise from the plurality of stakeholders and their potentially conflicting demands" (Dufays, 2019, p. 1346) when leaders try to identify what they are going to do. Belonging tensions emerge when sometime divergent identities, roles, values or aspirations coexist in the same group. Defining who is going to do what can raise contradictions when most social ventures need to balance with a utilitarian and a normative identity (Moss, Short, Payne, & Lumpkin, 2011). Then, the leaders when specifying how to operate, they deal with organizing tensions. They are linked to internal decision-making about organizational structures, cultures, practices and processes which represent everyday challenges for entrepreneurial teams when first experimenting their activity. Finally, learning tensions are associated with knowledge and evolution of the original project across the stages of development (Audebrand, 2017; Smith & Lewis, 2011). In social entrepreneurship ventures, there is a high chance to experience these 4 types of tensions.

Much work is still needed to imagine a way to equip social entrepreneurial teams with the right strategies that lead them to manage virtuously among organizational tensions. Since more and more ventures have the opportunity to be supported from their early developmental paths by various actors (both publics and privates), through multiple programs (idea testing incubators for instance) diffusing various tools (flourishing business canvas for instance), we present in

the next section a management tools approach and its potential to analyze this unstudied "equipment".

1.2 THE ROLE OF DEVICES

Management sciences know a renewal in the study of instrumentation for its potential in analyzing collective and organized actions (Aggeri & Labatut, 2010). The instrumentalist and rationalist vision of management tools, looking at them as the manager's invisible and constraining hand, is being reviewed since founding works of the CGS[4] (Moisdon, 1997) as rich conceptual objects, vehicles of change and organizational learning (Aggeri et Labatut, 2010, Grimand et al. 2018).

Moisdon (1997) defines the management tool as a formalization of organized activity, of what it is or what it will be (a set of reasoning and knowledge to instruct the acts of the trilogy: foresee, decide, control) in order to achieve the objectives of a project. Instruments possess a strong analytical potential in many different fields. In the social enterprise context many scholars conducted researches about the integration of managerial devices in alternative organizations to question the appropriation of such practices and the risk of a professionalization imposed by an external entity (Bouchard & Michaud, 2015; Gallois, Lecat, & Nieddu, 2016; Séran, 2018). Tools, instruments and devices can take a wide diversity of forms, they are more or less formalized, such as contracts, spreadsheets, focus groups, planning models, etc. We use the term device which is perceived as a broader object than a tool. Devices are arrangements between people, objects, rules and tools (Moisdon, 1997). The device can be seen as a media at the interface of its user and the observed reality in order to make decisions (Maisonnasse, Petrella, & Richez-Battesti, 2019). Thus, this intermediary position is increasingly used to grasp the situations of tension faced by organizations and seems particularly relevant to the context of social organization (Bouchard & Michaud, 2015). Organizational documents, for example, have been explored by Michaud (2017) for their potential to "both express and concretely create and solve paradoxes" (p10). In this trend, Grimand et al. (2018) make the demonstration of a dialectical relationship between paradoxes and management tools in organizations. On one hand, organizational paradoxes (that we suppose latently present) influence the deployment of a tool and the trajectory it takes in the organization. On the other hand, a tool can be designed to specifically regulate a targeted

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[4] Centre de Gestion Scientifique in Paris (France)

paradox and exert an influence on it. These papers suppose a close relationship between paradox and tool depending on how they fit into the organization's context.

This brings us to the research stream calling for an "appropriative perspective" which fits with the idea that any tool integrates both instrumental and interpretative flexibility (De Vaujany, 2006, Grimand 2012), and invites scholars to break with the conception-use dichotomy. Here, the tool's appropriation is close to a process of contextualization. It acknowledges that the tool is the result of a conception effort which consists in defining its perimeter, its first purposes or its formal (material) support and the roles it claims to put in place (Grimand, 2012, Hatchuel & Weil, 1992). But it also gives room to the socio-political and symbolic stakes it generates, and the dynamic production of learning it carries, allowing multiple reappropriation of the tool in the later phases. Such reappropriations are giving place to emerging practices or properties of the tool, or even to misuses. Scott (1995) is also specifying that devices, also called artefacts, are objects produced and transformed by human activities, they carry technical as well as symbolic elements that actors can appropriate to themselves, through interpretation and manipulation (Chateau-Terrisse, 2012). In fact, device are not simple technical vehicles, they transform the organization and they are transformed in the organization (Devreton, 2009).

We therefore wish to apply an appropriation perspective to cases of particular tools and devices intervening 1) in inter-organizational situations, because most of the tools and paradoxes studied take place inside the organizations; 2) at the commencement of social entrepreneurship ventures, because there is a lack of information, in theory and in practice, on the way tools can help social entrepreneurial teams at this specific stage to develop virtuous managerial strategies toward paradoxes.

One of the central hypotheses of this work thus lies in the potential for a managerial device to raise awareness about paradoxes depending on its designed features but also its use by entrepreneurs in a context of social innovation.

To illustrate this, the figure 2 below is inspired from the dynamic equilibrium model of Smith and Lewis (2011, p389) who proposed an ensemble of factors that allow salient tensions to be virtuously managed. Based on that, we depict in this figure the ongoing salience of tensions during the entrepreneurship process and the potential impact of a device on the entrepreneurs and their project.

Figure 2. Device impact and tensions evolution during the project emergence stages
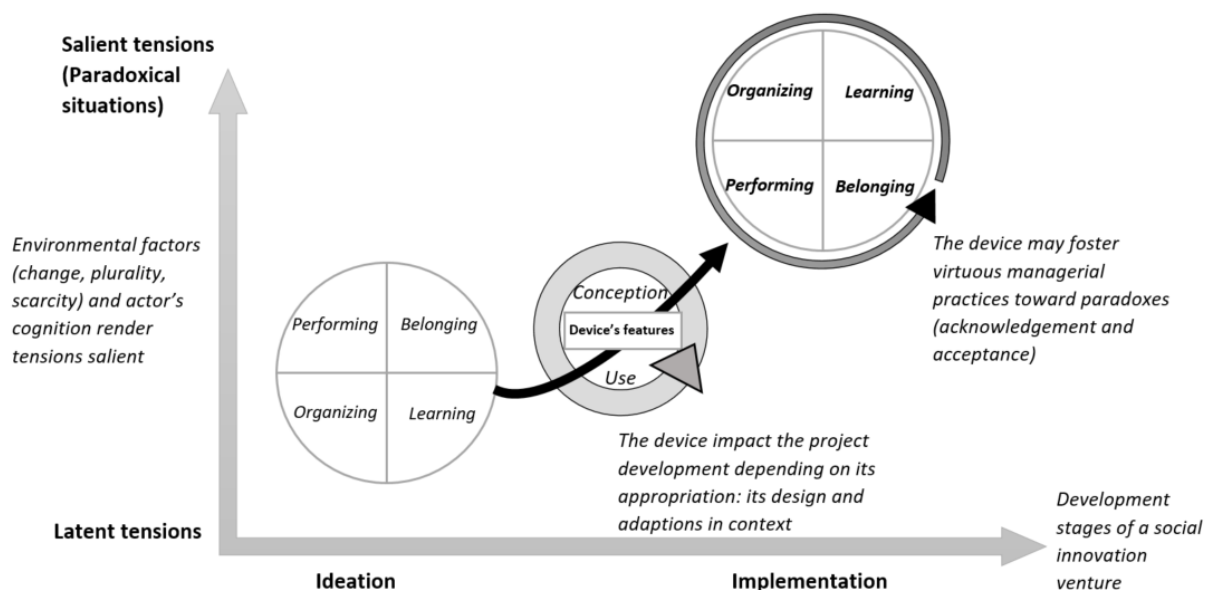
Richez-Battesti and Vallade (2017) looked at devices that participate to the emergence of a solidarity-based city such as social business incubators or local exchange trading systems. Following this trend, we will focus on devices conceived by the public actor to promote social entrepreneurship and social innovation on its territory and explore how device, stakeholders and tensions are articulating with each other. According to the institutional trajectories explained before (See figure 1, p4) the public action is evolving toward more network-oriented and horizontal practices that include a wider range of stakeholders and a greater role of citizens. This new spirit of the public action is often based on participatory democracy device (Richez-Battesti & Vallade, 2017). We describe in the next section our methodological choices to study such device.

2. METHODS

Our aim in this research was to explore a situation where the use of tools or devices by heterogeneous actors including social entrepreneurial teams contributes to the early developmental phases of social ventures facing organizational tensions. This implies a multilevel analysis (between micro and meso level of organization) around a multi-faceted unit of analysis: the device. To explore this rare and complex setup, we used the qualitative case study methodology (Yin, 2009). Because few examples of the situation exist, and there is a lack of empirical material on the phenomenon, a qualitative research is suitable (Eisenhardt 1989). It's particularly relevant when the aim is to derive ideas from the data at hand and attach them

to theoretical perspectives (Perrini et al, 2012 ; Langley 1999). Accordingly to studies about under-researched phenomenon, we looked at a context that could serve as an extreme case (Pettigrew 1990): "Extreme cases facilitate theory building by illuminating both the unusual and the typical ones (Patton 2002). It is in extreme cases that the dynamics being examined become more visible than they might be in other contexts." (Perrini et al 2012, p518). The selected case study focuses on a particular participatory device. It is a call for projects (CFP) deployed by the public authority (City of Nantes) within its territory to invite its citizens and any project leads to "reinvent" 15 unoccupied or unused spaces in the City (buildings or green areas). It's an unprecedented device for this public authority and it appeared to be quite a unique experimentation of participatory democracy at the scale of a major French city. Indeed, the CFP developed by the public actor between 2016 and 2019 has led to the emergence of several socially oriented ventures, the majority of which fall within the framework of social entrepreneurship. Some structures were created in response to the CFP, while others were pre-existing. There were 81 applications submitted for 14 laureates who were chosen by about 7,000 voters.

We look at the CFP as a device since it is less formalized than a management tool and falls into Moisdon's (1997) definition of the device as arrangements between people, objects, rules and tools. The CFP's composition of distinct and heterogeneous elements has made it possible to structure the participatory process: citizen specifications document, a platform for project submission, citizen voting platform, etc. The conceptual framework provided by paradox theory and the appropriative perspective of management tools guided us through the collecting and coding process. According to that, it was relevant to focus on the design and use of the device and to pay particular attention to contradictions, challenges and tensions experienced by the stakeholders.

To do so, our data collection strategy on the phenomenon mobilizes documentary resources, and interviews with different stakeholders impacted by the device intervention in order to give voice to a variety of informants (Gioia et al., 2013). The period of data gathering (May 2019 – October 2019) matches with the emergence phase of the laureates' projects, even if the main device's activities were belonging to the past, it was still an actual matter for most respondents to rely on their discourses. During this period, we gradually gathered materials to gain consistency on the topic by collecting a variety of perception. The recruitment process of interviewees was made for diversifying their profiles (Miles & Huberman, 2003), through

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the "snowball" method we were able to go from one contact to another. We also participated to laureates' inaugurations and used social networks to contact people (Facebook, LinkedIn).

Interviews were conducted with the various stakeholders that the device connected (1 public agent working for the City, 1 elected representative of the City in charge of the participatory projects, 1 person representing a service provider company, 6 respondents from laureates' organizations, 3 from non-laureates' organizations and 2 citizens who took part in the vote). Each interview, lasting approximately one hour, was systematically recorded and transcribed. The general framework of questioning was structured around a retrospective account of the experience related to the CFP. These chronological accounts from various perspectives permitted to re-built the device design and to gain understanding on its uses. Our interview guide was adapted to the respondents' role, social entrepreneurs were also questioned about the impact of the CFP in terms of learning for their project development and relationship with the different stakeholders: the point was to understand how the device challenged them.

There was rich documentary data circulating on the topic because the device was supported by a strong communication campaign led by the City. These secondary data are mostly freely accessible through multiple channels used to spread the device properties and activities, to mobilize the citizens or to encourage the entrepreneurial teams, forming important archival materials (written documents and videos[5]). In line with the narrative approach (Lewis 2000), we used the thematic coding analysis (Michaud, 2017) to pick-up the core themes extracted from our conceptual framework, our research questions and the key variables of the study. We analyzed conjointly interview transcripts and documents using Nvivo software and an a priori coding table that we completed by emergent coding alongside the field work. For instance, we used Hatchuel & Weil (1992) analysis grid to grasp the designed features of the device (technical substrate / managerial philosophy / simplified vision of organizational relationships). We also coded any tensions, issues, contradictions… and identify them in Lewis and Smith' four categories. An example of emerging code was created for the theme related to the use of humor since paradox scholars analyzed this discursive technic as a tension indicator or even a strategy to face paradoxical situation (Michaud, 2017, Hatch & Erhlich, 1993; Jarzabkowski & Lê, 2017).

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[5]   Part of these data are accessible, an example of video following this link:
https://youtu.be/EC6QKt_vat4

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 AN UNPRECEDENTED DEVICE DESIGNED TO CHALLENGE SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURIAL TEAMS

Over a period of 2 years, this first and unique version of participatory device conceived by the City of Nantes built a relationship between 3 main stakeholders: the public actor, citizens and social entrepreneurs. We reproduced a chronological version of the device (see below, Figure 3) that allows us to grasp the heterogeneous and successive elements composing it. This

Figure 3. Chronological representation of the device elements
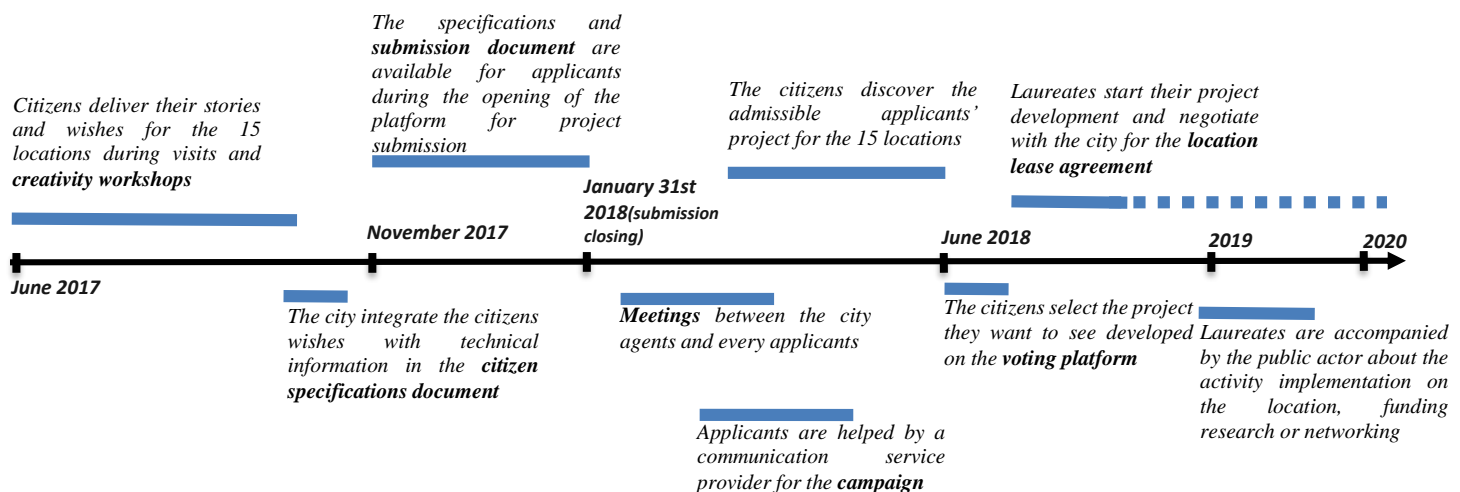
representation demonstrates how the device was designed and helps us to understand what were its purposes and why it could particularly address social innovations issues. The device analysis as a heterogeneous set of things (including isolated tools) revealed various ways to challenge its users, and especially social entrepreneurial teams, that we grasped as contradictory elements and analyzed as tensions.

First, the CFP's main objective was to empower citizens and local actors to participate to the public actor's mission i.e. to serve the general interest. To do so it encourages projects that include an answer to unmet social need formally specified by the citizens and an autonomous business model (independent from public funding). Without imposing any legal forms to the ventures, the project submission document cited hereafter[6] was imposing social expectations for the venture : "*You will specify here how the citizen inspirations' specifications are taken*

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[6]   Every verbatim in the article are translated from French by the authors

into account in your project". These specifications were collected during creativity workshops set up to collect qualitative data. Citizens were guided to participate with this introductive sentence "*The applicant project for this location will be a success if...*" and an example of answer illustrating these expectations is "*...if it generates flows and exchanges, inscribed in its environment*". Some citizens' wishes were highly inspired by sustainability and ecological expectations for their City enlarging the general interest to societal goals.

At the same time the following verbatim from the City representative suggests the importance of the economic expectations: "*Your project must integrate a business model, our aim is not to give you the location and the budget that your project need to function*". These social and economic expectations correspond to social enterprises issues and skills. Indeed, the majority of the submitted projects were collectively promoted. 12 out of the 14 laureates are SEOs and 6 of them planned to hire paid employees in their activity.

Also, because there were no strict rules to engage as applicant we can say that the CFP was at the same time open to all and selective, the submission document title was purposely ambiguous but showed what the public actor would favor: "The *call for project "15 locations to reinvent" is aimed at all people in Nantes, individually or organized collectively, all associations and all SEOs, provided that they are established in Nantes*.". The representative admitted that he didn't know how it was written in the documents but he explicitly said to its agents "*I don't want LVMH to apply and take a location to create a show-room in it*". The public actor had also to set rules for the voting platform where every voter had to provide an address in Nantes or its suburb and was phone checked, "*we don't want a journalist saying "my dog was part of the voters"* explained the representative. These exaggerated remarks recall the use of humor studied in meetings by paradox scholars (Hatch & Erhlich, 1993; Jarzabkowski & Lê, 2017) as a tension indicator or even a strategy to solve or respond to paradox (Michaud, 2017).

To ensure the success of the device, the public actor had to manage a scale issue. The representative pointed the decisive mass effect of gathering 15 locations spread in various neighborhoods of the City: "*If we do the CFP with only one location nobody will talk about it, we need people to talk about it, in order to generate projects from entrepreneurs and attention from the public to vote*". As a territorial authority acting for the general interest, they often have to deal simultaneously with local and global issues. Public agents knew that citizens would feel motivated to engage in their own neighborhood, and so, to avoid this parceling effect and reach anyone (whoever he is and wherever he lives in the City), the voting platform was both virtual

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and physical, installed in a neutral place of the City or accessible in the 11 arrondissements town halls. In addition, citizens had to vote for two locations or more in order to make them act beyond their very local boundaries and go over a more personal interest. The gathering of the very local scale of citizens' neighborhood and the City scale appears as an objective for the device to spread a homogeneous identity.

As a participatory device, its originality also comes from the integration of quantitative and qualitative data pulled from the citizens. Their participation differs at the beginning and at the end of the process to exceed the potential conflict around democratic participation often criticized to be representative in numbers or to avoid people's real motivation and wishes.

Indeed, the identity objective of the CFP was also marked by the real importance given to territorial anchorage, knowledge of the neighborhood and collaborations with citizens and local organizations, aiming at a relatively large integration of the stakeholders. The following extract from the submission document demonstrates this desire: "*You can specify here, whether and how the people of Nantes will be involved in the implementation of your project; or whether your project involves cooperation with other actors, non-profits, etc.".* ». There was an ideal of communality for the project behind the device together with entrepreneurship practices idealizing distinctive personal, technical or leadership skills as Stohl and Cheney (2001) describe in cooperative context "*as the paradox of identity: the basic challenges of preserving members' individualities while they remain part of the cooperative*" (Audebrand, 2017, p376). Videos and public pitches of the projects are typical entrepreneurship practices that were part of the campaign phase.

Last but not least, the lease agreement for the location, as the last physical element of the device, fixing and formalizing the relationship between the public actor and the laureate was a source of conflict and negotiation. At the same time, it combined the certainty for the laureate to develop its activity in the place for the duration negotiated between both parties, but since the public actor remained the location's owner, he kept rights for the use of the location in the long-term and a right to scrutinize the correct project development according to the citizens and technical specifications. This (more or less) long-term relationship could be analyzed as positive concerning the learning tension by diminishing the risk for the social venture to slowly loose its alternative identity and becoming mainstream. We translated the following abstract from the lease agreement: "*The occupant will report on the completion of its project at annual evaluation meetings scheduled with the City. These meetings will take place in the presence of*

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the occupant and its representatives and the services of the City of Nantes." Contracting with the public actor could also reveal contentious situations since they impose bureaucratic decision-making processes through heavy requirement of procedures that could hamper the entrepreneurial evolution (Nyssens and Defourny, 2016).

Interestingly, this analysis of the device conception revealed various contradictions that fit with the social innovation features we've presented since this paper's introduction. Indeed, we pointed concrete expectations as the social purpose of the venture or its limited profitability and the ambition to see autonomous project matching with the social economy aspirations. It also revealed a specific attention to the democratic and collective process due to the participatory properties of the CFP and the importance given to accessibility. Finally, a particular attention lies in the local/territorial embeddedness of the project. Challenging social entrepreneurial teams on these constitutive features sounds like a theoretical prerequisite to see robust projects emerge. These expectations are parts of the device's original design but since it's a complex and unprecedented one, its use and appropriation analysis will bring more consistent explanations.

3.2 FROM DESIGN TO USE, THE APPROPRIATIVE FEATURE

Before looking at the way participants seize the device, and because there is no clear separation between design and use in such design and according to the appropriation perspective (De Vaujany, 2006), we present in this section the phenomenon of recursive adaptations constitutive of the device properties.

The CFP, conceived and controlled by the public actor was most of the time balancing between enabling by giving free spaces of expression and creativity, and constraining, by imposing rules and deadlines (Grimand et al. 2016). The well documented control-creativity tension (Speklé, van Elten, & Widener, 2017) is central in the device conception by alternating between formalized times and tools such as the voting platform and submission document that imposed the participants to fit in and "play by the rules" versus informal periods and personalized meetings to ensure participation and creativity from the participants and preserve adaptability for the public actor. The City representative and agent presented the device as experimental because it was mixing the more conventional practice related to participatory budget management where citizens are invited to vote for a budget repartition between various projects in their city and novel practices of dialogues and collaboration among citizens (also called engineering of citizen dialogue).

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The campaign preceding the vote put the projects in competition and allowed many to confront the field and to make their project known. At the same time the device included meeting times between the entrepreneurs, from which a network emerged whose actors continue to help each other and share expertise. There was a case in which two projects avoided the tension between competition and collaboration by merging. This example of use demonstrates the device appropriation by the entrepreneurs leading to misuses: a non-laureate organization interviewed explained how they saw the CFP as an opportunity for their project development even if they lost the voting : "*that [loosing the vote], we knew it from the time we applied, that's what we said to each other: we will probably not win, we don't have any network, we're not a non-profit with their network. But it was a powerful advertisement, with articles in the press… and about that, they [the public actor] did a good communication.*" And more than an opportunity to communicate, it was an opportunity to concretize for this respondent: *"[about the submission document] It was a big file, it obliged us to put words on our project, to precise it. It was an occasion to find a public name, a name that people will have to appropriate*". This adaptive feature of the device created room for the participant to integrate their interest in the process. This flexibility was important for the public actor to manage the multiple pitfalls that occurred during the process.

In order to focus on the articulation between the device's tensions and the entrepreneurial venture development, we will focus in the next section on the device impact over the entrepreneurs and their project.

3.3 ENTREPRENEURS' USE AND IMPACT OVER THEIR PROJECT DEVELOPMENT

Because no collective legal forms were expected on the platform for project submission, the applying entrepreneurs were quite heterogeneous regarding their ability to respond performing tensions. Thus, the device included a meeting phase ran by the City agents to specify their expectations, and reflected the contradictory features of the device according to this entrepreneur respondent: "*We had this technical validation with the City, to make sure our proposition matched with the location (…), we also discussed what was possible in terms of funding, project construction, functioning with the City and access to grants. It was very complicated and obscure at this point. They were saying that there are no grants from their department for our project and at the same time they will do any efforts to make the laureate project start in the best conditions with eventual other departments' support.*".

Several entrepreneurs interviewed noted the "flexible" strategy of the public actor at this stage to manage and preserve the heterogeneity of the applicants and give a chance to everyone. The meeting phase had the objective to harmonize a more balanced management of economic and social objectives and precise the public actor expectations in order to select the most robust projects. Ventures with a clear social mission had to provide a funding plan that was independent of any public funding, which was quite challenging for some non-profit participants as the previous quote indicates. Social entrepreneurial teams that had a more economic inclination had to valorize and propose a project with a higher social value. We got two accounts from entrepreneurs who participated to the CFP to start their venture as private firms. Seeking emancipation and independence through entrepreneurship the meeting with the public actor was conflicting. They had to justify the social objective of their project and their eventual integration to the social economy in order to legitimate their participation. The public actor used an economic lever in the leasing agreement conditions to distinguish between for-profit and not-for-profit organizations: by making them pay a rent if they generate profit. Both project leads negotiated and participated to the campaign but lost the vote. In the end they both found a different way to start their business and favored this situation compared to the relationship with the public actor and the tension between realizing their own independent project and having to legitimate and be scrutinized about it. There is also the example of a laureate cooperative that further completed their pre-existing activity of providing a business incubator to local entrepreneurs by proposing a new gathering place for the neighbors through a cooperative grocery shop focused on local production. The respondent from the cooperative explained the origin of this new goal: "*The wish for a local grocery shop was a citizen specification for the location*".

This framing phase had the effect of skimming off many projects before the citizens' vote. In fact, of the 81 projects received, 40 reached the voting phase. The 6 months between the submission phase and the vote gave time to the entrepreneurs to concretely challenge their ideas and test their motivation to turn their project from hypothesis to reality. Looking inside the projects, the entrepreneurs used the device to confront the importance of strategical and operational activities challenging them on organizing tensions as this respondent note: "*When you had to meet with the citizens [during the campaign], it changed the dimension of your project development, your theory. You see people, and to me, that's what made me want to*

continue and to engage. Because it's not enough to invest on the [strategic] side of communication and project development"

The territorial identity of the device imprinted on the stakeholders' interactions and reinforced the collectiveness and openness of the ventures. One of the citizens interviewed explained that in order to choose projects on the voting platform "*there was the side 'does it please me?' and the side 'does it please the community as well?'*". As for the project leaders questioned, they all specified the importance of "*going to meet people*" or "*co-constructing with the inhabitants of the neighborhood*" and potential partners (financial, support), especially during the campaign phase preceding the vote. Binding relationships and accessing to a network of local actors thanks to the device was a real advantage for this entrepreneur telling the story of another non-laureate project: "*It was a coffee-laundromat concept imagined for the CFP, the day they knew their project didn't win, everything collapsed for them… but the art school of the City, contacted them to implement their project inside the new school building, and they succeeded to realize their project*".

Moreover, some projects were imagined by local citizens during visits of the 15 locations, organized in the early phases of the CFP, thus the spatial identity of the location also played a part in some of the collective entrepreneurship processes. We interviewed the project lead of a non-profit laureate whose activities were mostly based online or on events and he explained us how the location they chose after participating to the visits and they got (as a laureate), changed their activity and identity: "*For us, it's decisive because the location Salle Bretagne is part of a joint ownership of 44 buildings, so we have to do co-construction with inhabitants of the neighborhood*". To do so, they hired an employee with cultural mediation skills, they planned regular meetings with the neighbors or installed an idea box. This non-profit will have to balance between several tensions since they will use the location to organize mostly cultural events, they need to bring people in to make money while respecting their new anchorage and the people of the neighborhood.

Respecting this territorial identity and balance it with the venture identity and its originality was a real challenge for some entrepreneurs: "*We really asked ourselves about the way to bring step by step our identity into the location… we wanted to "hack it" with pop culture, science culture and science fiction things but, in the same time we wanted to preserve this thing people gave us, people from the neighborhood who told us what they lived here, and how important it was for them to keep a strong identity*". All of this contributes to challenge the venture on its

inclusiveness from the early stages of the project development and accustom the managers to be able to deal with multiple identities (Moss and al. 2011) and belonging tensions.

Table 1. Social innovation features and contradictions categorization based on the device analysis

Relevant contradictions in the device	Smith & Lewis categorization	Corresponding social innovation feature	Device elements involved
Qualitative / Quantitative	Performing	Democratic governance	Creativity workshop Voting platform
Technical / creative	Performing	n.d	Citizen specifications
Social / (ecological) / economic	Performing	Autonomous economic model serving the social mission	Submission document Meetings
Selective / Open to all	Belonging	Collective process, multi-stakeholder project	Submission document Voting platform Meetings
Control / creativity	Organizing	Innovativeness	The whole device
Formal / informal	Organizing	n.d	The whole device
Local / global	Belonging	Territorial anchorage	Voting platform
Virtual / physical	Belonging	Accessibility	Lease agreement
Competition / collaboration	Organizing	Collective process	Campaign
Novelty / predictability	Learning	Innovativeness	The whole device
Certainty / Uncertainty	Learning	Innovativeness	Lease agreement

Finally, the precedent sub-sections (3.1, 3.2 and 3.3) demonstrated a device imbued with several contradictions that we synthetize in the table 1, above. The device, all along its successive and heterogeneous elements challenges the ventures on the main social innovation features and integrates a wide variety of paradoxes that reflect the four Smith and Lewis' categories. The device allowed the launch of various SEOs, supported by local citizens and recognized by the main territorial stakeholders. Laureates' accounts show first signs of positive practices learned from the interactions with the device, as if the revealed paradoxes imprinted on the social entrepreneurial teams' activities. We discuss these results and assumptions in the next section.

4. DISCUSSION: A DEVICE PROMPTING ENTREPRENEUR'S AWARENESS OF PARADOXES

While there is a growing literature on paradox and social enterprises (see Smith and Lewis, 2013; Battilana et al., 2014 and Audebrand, 2017 for recent reviews), the academic discussion has not, this far, incorporated investigations into the role of managerial device aimed at launching social ventures specifically, nor examined how these devices can equip social entrepreneurial teams facing tensions and potentially impact the course of their project development. We advance in this section, practical and theoretical contributions as well as relevant limits and avenues of research.

The omnipresence of contradictory elements extracted from this case study analysis is typical of the social enterprise context (Michaud, 2013). By focusing on an inter-organizational device we were able to grasp those tensions at multiple levels, confronting tensions related to the device itself and to the project development as experienced by social entrepreneurs, we identified paradoxes within Smith and Lewis' categorization. We confirmed Dufays' work by demonstrating an entrepreneurial process imbued with tension from its first structuring choices. We also confirmed the potential for analysis of management tools theory and the appropriative perspective (De Vaujany, 2006 ; Grimand, 2012) to grasp a complex device's features and understand its role toward organizational tensions (Grimand et al., 2018; Bouchard & Michaud, 2015). Following Audebrand (2017), we wondered if a device could help practitioners to acknowledge the existence of such tensions and to become equipped with the conceptual tools to deal with these tensions.

For this, we applied an original conceptual framework to this particular CFP, it revealed strengths and weaknesses. First, the device analysis illustrated a fit with various social innovation features constitutive of a rich and processual approach of the concept as defended by scholars from Europe (EMES) and Québec (CRISES[7]) (Bouchard, Evers, & Fraisse, 2015). We were able to connect these features to the paradoxes categorization (see Table 1, p21) which demonstrate that the device was conceived to challenge the social entrepreneurial teams, make them aware of the paradoxes and encourage them to face it through their project structuration. Many complex devices are currently being developed and tested across territories to support social entrepreneurship during the ideation phase of development like the CFP but also during

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the implementation and diffusion phases (Richez-Battesti & Vallade, 2017). Support organizations (in this case the public actor, but we can imagine non-profit federations, or cooperatives cluster for instance) are struggling to develop their support offer and bring more and more entrepreneurship ventures in the social economy. The conceptual framework could bring practical and theoretical contribution to this issue stream by bringing together social innovation and social economy stakes with the entrepreneurs' experience. We met difficulties due to the temporal and multi-actors' specificities of the CFP that differentiate this case from appropriation and paradoxes analysis of more conventional device in a company setting (See the case of a reporting device in Grimand et al. 2018 for instance). In this sense, limits and avenues for future research lie in an in-depth study of this conceptual framework: we could focus on the lack of evidences related to the use of the device by entrepreneur according to the socio-political, cognitive, symbolic and rational perspectives (Grimand, 2012).

The heterogeneous features of the device revealed the four different categories of tensions (Smith & Lewis, 2011) including well studied paradoxes (Local / global; social / economic; control / creativity for examples) and interestingly potential new ones for social-business ventures (according to our knowledge) such as the integration of formal and informal behaviors (SEOs' mission toward citizens must appear informal and easy to access while the representation role of the project linked with the city identity is quite formal). We also mentioned how the device integrated the challenge for social ventures to be virtually and physically present because of inclusiveness issues. Practical contributions can therefore be drawn from this case. When we focused on the impact over the venture development the performing and belonging tensions appeared more salient. The socio-economic performance frame imposed by the device played a role of "natural" selection of the projects and the belonging tensions frame was clearly decisive to convince both the citizens and the public actor and co-construct with their marks a community project. Learning and organizing tensions appeared more hypothetical at this point and could become more salient during the project implementation (Dufays, 2019).

The challenging effect of a device carrying multiple tensions offer promising avenues of research. Several entrepreneurs reported the challenging effect of the device which concretizes their ideas and accelerated the access to local actors and institutions as potential partners. Laureates social entrepreneurs interviewed explained several good practices implemented following the voting. They were able to quickly bound relationships with a diversity of actors:

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for example, local citizens and non-profits to engage in their activities as volunteers, foundations and banks to finance the project implementation in the location or a social business support organization to get consulting service and expertise. Another example was given by a social entrepreneurial team of 4 individuals who opened their non-profit board of directors to citizens to build a collective and horizontal governance and assume the embedded and collective identity that the device gave them. We also observed emerging conflicts born from latent tensions concerning, for example, the use of the location and the relationships with the public actor bringing paradoxical situation between the desire to autonomously and quickly start the activity in the place and make the public actor responsible for renovation work (which took time). This proposition can also be further explored with longer-term studies on the various laureates and non-laureates projects to assess virtuous managerial practices able to transcend paradoxes (Guedri et al. 2014). Indeed, we demonstrated the device's ability to raise awareness about paradoxes but it appears decisive to study concrete strategies that social entrepreneurs could use all along their project's development.

Finally, this case study is in line with Nyssens and Defourny (2016)'s demonstration about the institutional trajectories (Figure 1, p6). With a polymorph device playing a mediating role (Michaud, 2011), the case of this CFP presented a variety of organized and non-organized actors developing hybrid projects and models such as social businesses (SB), entrepreneurial non-profits (ENP) and social cooperatives (SC). The public actor, as the device designer in this case, is also hybridizing its practices and relationships in a different way (Richez-Battesti & Vallade, 2017). In-depth studies should be needed to distinguish eventual differences between these types of social enterprise models according to the generic strategies to deal with the paradoxical situation (Pool and Van de Ven, 1989). Their respective move toward a general, mutual or capital interest may generate different issues, contradictions and behaviors.

CONCLUSION

This research took place in an open environment suitable for alternative ventures and representative of the integrative movement toward the social economy (See Nyssens and Defourny representation p3, 2016). Here, the public actor takes part in this trend through a participatory device that enjoys the increasing willingness of citizens and entrepreneurs to develop social ventures and respond local issues. We explored the potential of this particular device aiming to promote alternative ventures within a geographic territory. We focused on the

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device's ability to engage a plurality of actors and challenge nascent projects on the paradoxical tensions that emerge in this kind of projects using Smith and Lewis's categorization (2011).

Our study revealed the significance of the performing and belonging tensions from the ideation process, confirming Dufays's (2017) research on collective entrepreneurship. While the first type of tension has had the role of skimming off the most serious projects and has a hypothetical value at this stage, the second seems more concrete. In fact, the belonging tension had to be anticipated through the multiple relationships that project leaders have had to establish, as well as the respect for the place and the wishes expressed by citizens in order to build a known and shared identity. This prepares the future organization to manage a plural identity, combining utilitarian and normative aspects (Moss and al. 2011). The ability to manage a plurality of identities and the trust acquired with the public actor and citizens makes these projects endogenous to their territory, some scholars defined these projects as territorial social innovations (Klein, 2014).

In conclusion, we posit that ventures promoted by a heterogeneity of actors, or collective social entrepreneurship are full of potential for territories and could represent a concrete answer to the social and environmental challenges we are facing in our societies (Montgomery et al., 2012). Managerial devices and tools in general are obviously playing a role in these complex setups and offer avenues of researches to improve our understanding of paradoxes (Bouchard & Michaud, 2015; Grimand et al. 2018). Social innovations integrate a real complexity that we cannot avoid, but that we can address through the lens of management tools and paradox theories as we expand our understanding in these fields.

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