



The social economy experience of Enercoop : Study of the organization and coordination of a local cooperative, Enercoop Midi-Pyrénées

L'expérience d'économie sociale d'Enercoop: Etude de l'organisation et de la coordination d'une coopérative locale, Enercoop Midi-Pyrénées

Rémi MAÎTRE
Doctorant, CERTOP, Université Toulouse 2 Jean Jaurès

Energy communities for collective self-consumption: frameworks, practices and tools

Session 2 – June 16, 2020

How regulations are shaping energy communities

As part of a doctoral thesis:

Socioeconomic study of Enercoop Cooperatives as a « social laboratory », co-led by J. Prades (economist) and M.-C. Zélem (sociologist)

Question:

Are Enercoop energy cooperatives inevitably inducing the ecological and citizen transition ?

Research methodology :

*Industrial economics approach :

- Study of the market structure in the French electricity sector (actors, strategy, positioning, market shares, differentiation, etc.) and locate Enercoop


*Sociological approach:

- 50 sociological interviews (members, employees, volunteers)
- 40 observation sessions (terrains : Midi-Pyrénées et Paris)
- Sociological survey on line (+ 1 to come)
- Analysis of documents produced by the cooperatives

Plan de la présentation

1. What is Enercoop ?
2. Study of a local cooperative, Enercoop Midi-Pyrénées
3. Analysis method, observations, results
4. Questions to conclude

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Enercoop ? 1 French network of cooperatives with 2 specific objectives

1) The renewable electricity (Wind, hydro, solar, biomass) supply activity

- **kWh price above market price** (competitiveness excluding price) ethical counterparty (including short circuit, investment in EnR)
- « **direct contracts** » : joint purchases of electricity and Guarantees of Origin (GO)
 - *to improve electricity production traceability*
 - *to reduce market activities*

2) The energy services activity aimed at reducing consumption

- Eco-friendly links and webinars (posted on the internet)
- Dr Watt training (paid training that accompanies the consumer in the identification of his electrical consumption structure, through the learning and use of the wattmeter)
- Energy Demand Management (EOM) Workshop (Popular Education Dimension)

→ Choosing a cooperative status SCIC (status created in France in 2001)

A social economy experience :

« *The self-construction of collective practices that emanates from a group in a situation of vulnerability or social exclusion in order to produce wealth* »
(Prades, 2012) (different from social solidarity economy)

Cooperative principles

*Private but **collective ownership**

*Dual Membership (dual status)

*profitability objective (and non
lucrativity) of which minimum reserves

***governementality rules** (1 member
= 1 vote, reduced scale of pay
differences, term of office, etc.)

Specificities of the SCIC:

*multisociétariat (different collèges) :
members of **multiple quality**
(consumers, employees, producers,
public authorities,...)

*authorizes volunteer engagement

➔ A Status halfway between business
and association.

Swarming and network structure : today ?

*A historical cooperative (EN): Enercoop brand contract holder, network-wide activity coordinator (Customer Relationship Management, Invoicing, Core business activities as supplying, Portfolio Management and Real Time Balancing, etc.)

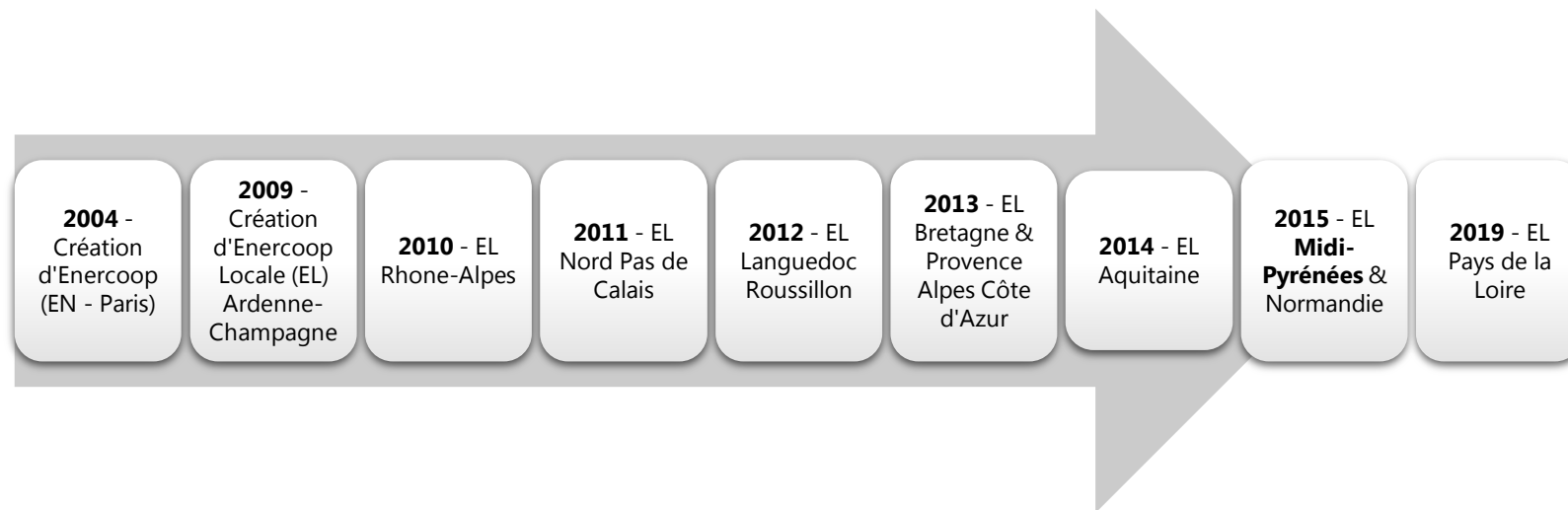
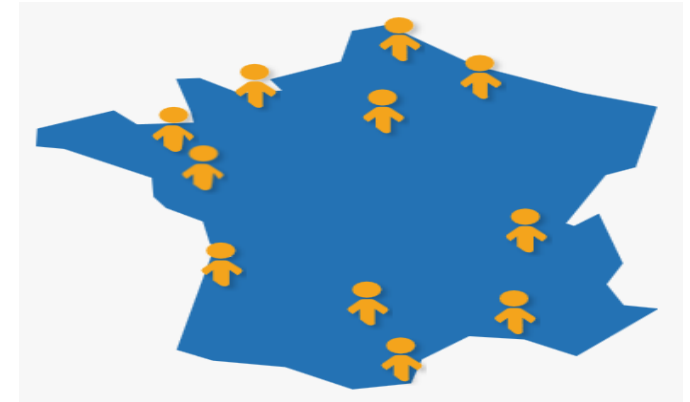
*10 Local cooperatives (EL) :

- Mainly **business provider** for Enercoop (remunerated for sale)
- Specificities in EL activities (depending on their region, history, etc.)

*EN-EL links :

- Commissions by business line (téléphone + pad)
- Network Steering Committee

➔ Seeking a better balance of power : towards shared energy services ?



En 2020 :

*90 000 consumers (about)
*45 000 members (shareholders)
*324 MW (puissance totale), soit 0,25 % of installed capacity in France

But a rapidly growing network

*multiplication by 4 of Enercoop National Turnover (20 000 000 € in 2014 to 85 000 000 € in 2018)

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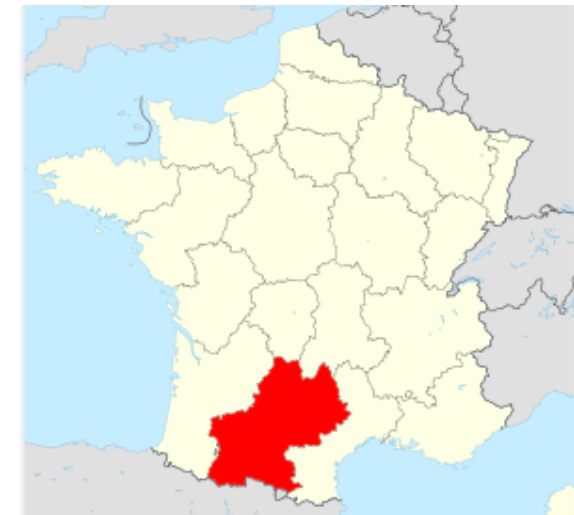
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Enercoop Midi-Pyrénées (EMIP)

SCIC Activities created in 2015 :

- Business provider for Enercoop
- Development of production parks (solar, 1400 m², 250 kwc) on industrial wasteland
- Accompaniment of members to individual autoconsumption (+ experience of autoconsumption collective)

EMIP	2015	2016	2017	2018
Number of members		891	1 395	2 270
Turnover	201 382	258 600	255 036	347 789
Net income	7 001	- 3 279	- 55 493	1 585
Balance Sheet Total	434 748	780 142	1 009 400	1 479 730
Number of employees	3		6	



- The number of members multiplied by 3 between 2016 et 2019 (3,001)
- A turnover from 201,382 € (2015) to 347,789 € (2018)

What group from EMIP : some elements

A core of founders (more men, between the ages of 35 and 70) with different skills :

- Willingness to engage (activist) and time to volunteer (retire or ready to lose a little salary to earn sense)
- Practical experience and/or diplomas in the EnR (for some, vocational retraining)
- Skills in business creation, set-up, management and business facilitation (holacracy)

→ Need the approval and support of EN to set up a Local Enercoop

Social characteristics of members (Online Sociological survey, july 2018, 400 respondents)

60 % of people have activist commitments elsewhere

Overrepresentation of [60,74 years] (33 %) (French population: 17 %, INSEE)

Overrepresentation of managers (cadres) (40 %) (FP: 10 %), managers and professionals (13,6 %) (FP: 1,4 %)

Under representation of workers (2,3 %) (FP: 11,4 %)

60 % of mens

90 % of graduates from higher school (FP : 40 %)

Enercoop Midi-Pyrénées : Activities, militant commitment...

Today, a team of 10 employees (6 wives, 4 mens) working in different activities (particular and professionals marketing, supply network, production and selfconsumption,etc.) organized according to **holacracy**
+ a group of **volunteers** (members of the board)

What is being an engaged director in an « activist cooperative » ?

- *Attend weekly meetings
- *Prepare and participate in cooperative events (AG, CA, Workshop, stands, etc.) or even the cooperative network (codir)
- *Write strategic documents
- ➔socialization process that will build a « militant capital » (Matonti et Poupeau, 2004)

The sociology of activism:

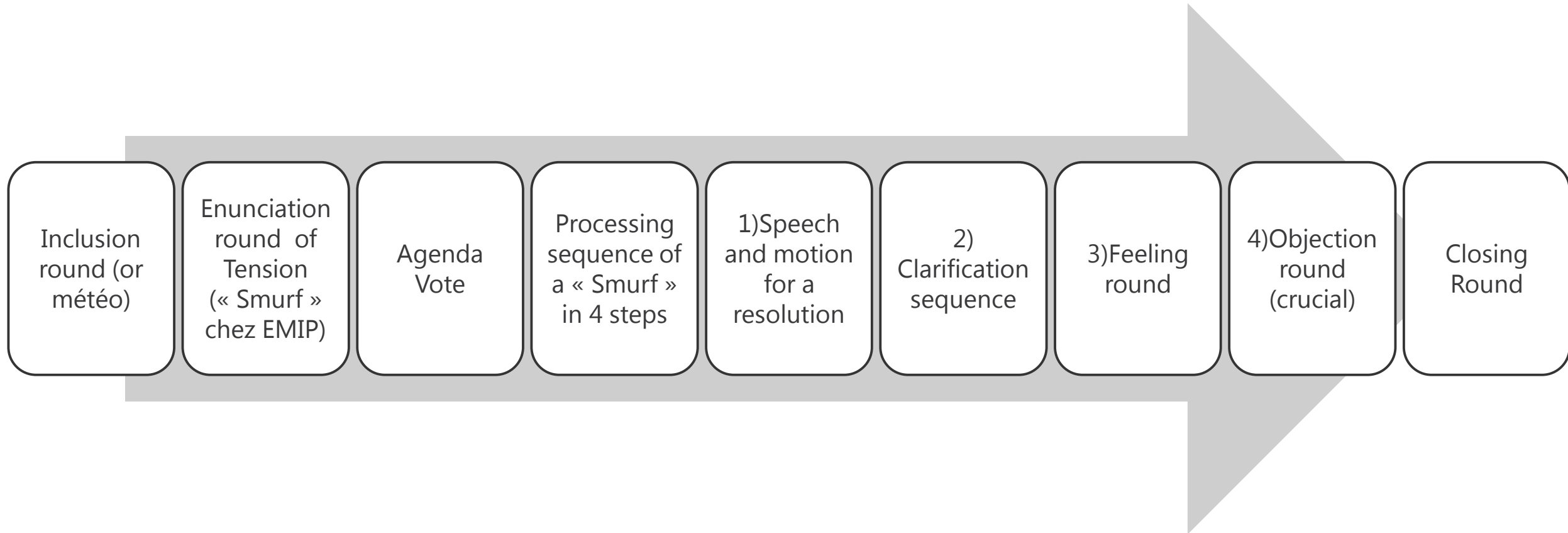
- *Cause, Engagement and Organization (interactionnist approach) (Vendramin, 2013)
- ➔ Cause : the energy transition(in practical terms)
- ➔ Individual hired: employee, volunteer
- ➔ Organization: Enercoop as a « *cooperative activist* »




The holacracy method chez EMIP : How is a collectivity coordinated under the principle of collective reason, with horizontal aim?

<p>Distinction of spheres of activities (operations, governance)</p>	<p><u>The operational/political distinction :</u> →Coopération between « operational » (employees) et « political » (volunteer), presented as « a true separation of powers »(Int. 16)</p>
<p>Application of basic concepts (role, tension, circle)</p>	<p>→hierarchal circles by 6 types de meetings (Board of directors, Manager Committee, Governance, ...) →presence of volunteer administrator at each meeting level</p>
<p>Application of mediations</p>	<p>→each meeting mediatec by Gestion Par Consentement (GPC) (Management By Consent) (not consensus) « do we all agree ?» → « can I live with »</p>

Scheme : Gestion Par Consentement ritual at EMIP



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La GPC as a « *determining factor* » of the rationalities at work

*A mode of speech distribution that generates a succession of transactions settled and codified by turns of speech

*A conversational structure as a « fundamental resource » to « organize » interactions (De Fornel & Léon, 2000)

To perform the analysis of GPC :

→ Mobilization of the sociological work of J. Widmer (« praxeological sociology ») : an **synthesis** attempt of **conversation analysis** (H. Sacks) and **categorization analysis** taking seriously the **langage as practice** and as **means of access to action**

*Focus on « ***the categories of enunciation*** » :

→ means of making « *the link between what is done in terms of **action** and what is do in terms of **turns of speech*** » (Widmer, 2010) : a mean of accessing **member categorizations**, clarify their intentions and describe the processes involved in the interactions


Over-quality, collective self-questioning and axiomaticia

*Analysis of extracts from a **Governance meeting** (obs. 3.1):

→ Collective space for assignment and (re)definition of roles exercised by members

→ About ten participants (employees + volunteers + trainees)

Theoretical elements	Phenomen description	Extracts of observation (obs. 3.1)
Place of expression of a over-quality (Prades, 2012) and axiomaticia (struggle for values) (Lordon, 2018) that generates collective self-questioning (Castoriadis, 1986)	Overrun of function of an employee who recalls his militant/citizen commitment and questions his cooperative on the transition commitment	« we decided to go as a citizen before being paid by enercoop. And also because the subject was energy. »
Use of multiformulative statements (Widmer, 2010 ; Wieder, 1970)	Reminder of the cooperative's rules	« I think that just, there's one thing, you have to be a member board (...) you have to be a board member to be part of Codir »
Collective intelligence (Levy, 1995) or collective rationality (Landemore, 2010)	The collective in meeting taken as support to the decision	« What could make me accept [a proposal], in fact ? And I was counting on you . » « I think that what is very important is that we have a work together , that we agree on a number of things and after everyone can express themselves, but based on a reflection that we would have done collectively . »

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Political and militant (activism) logic in the face of economic logic :

*« the militant call to order » in relation to the economic empire.

*The social economy experience to **reembedded economics in politics** ?
(Polanyi)

Two times of conversion required for a Community's creativity (Saint-Sernin, 2016) : **for Enercoop Midi-Pyrénées ?**

1)An « active cooperation procedure between individuals »

Holacracy + cooperative status

2)A « metaphysical conversion » where each scientist recognizes, not that there is an inventor, but « an entity that transcends people »

Cooperative Ethos + registration in ecological activism ?

Limits et metamorphics aspects of Enercoop ?

Diffusion

With the kWh price being one of the most expensive on the market, how can we spread these « cooperative ecology » practices ?

Can't answer : how to allow equal access to the transition ? (see problem of fin du moi(s) vs fin du monde)

Need System

Enercoop as a weighted « producer company » : emergence et recognition in France of « systems of radical needs » (**Heller, 1982**) from the ecological and sobriety point of view ? (unlike hierarchical organisations or subordination systems)

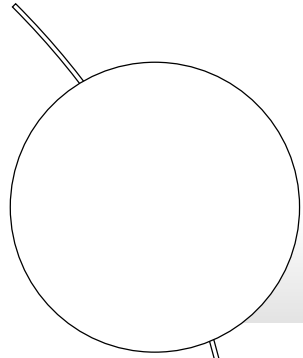
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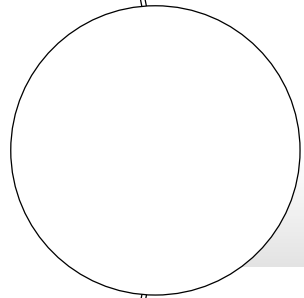
« The essential moment of emotion is the individuation of collective » (G. Simondon)

« Things are not only objects of knowledge, but patterns of co-birth » (Caudel, Art poétique)

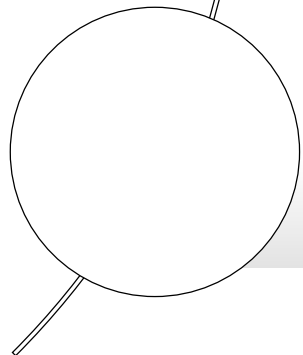
Some questions about the future of Enercoop



How to survive in a world of « big » ? Diversification, vertical integration or a rise in the level of regulation to go beyond the GO « green washing » ?



How to cope with the inflation of so-called « green electricity » offers ?



How to improve EnR's electricity supply capacity to meet consumer growth ?