



The Wine Cooperatives of Gironde : What Future Prospects **Nathalie Corade, ENITA de Bordeaux**

Since late the 90's, which corresponds to the beginning of the " wine crisis", many reorganizations have taken place in the world of the wine cooperatives in Aquitaine like in Gironde. Indeed, as an answer to the numerous reports which have been written these last years (Berthomeau 2001, Cesar 2002, Pomel 2006), the wine cooperatives of Gironde have done mergers and others economic concentration processes (including commercial).

A first research work has been done between 2004 and 2006 and showed that the main form of the movement was the mergers. Indeed, between 1994 and today the number of wine cooperatives decreased from 56 to 44. Since the first mergers in the late 60 twenty mergers of cooperatives have taken place. An initial analysis of the movement which happened late 90 early 2000 in the vineyard Girondin, shows that it is an organizational response to the environmental uncertainty (E Rigamonti, 2006). This environmental uncertainty comes from the "wine crisis" and from the arrival of new competitors on the international wine market. The aim of the concentration process is therefore to integrate the new rules of the competitiveness or at least to give itself the means to better control these rules. By this way, the wine cooperatives seek to reduce uncertainty ie to better control the development of their competitive position. The mergers are the strategic leverage of this policy of reducing uncertainties.

Between the work done between 2004 and 2006 and now new changes have occurred. They confirm the assumption that we did in 2006 on the continuity of the process. So we have done a new study. When the 2006 work has focused on cooperatives which were engaged in a process of merger, the new one(June-August 2007)was focused on cooperatives that had not made this kind of change. From the results of a survey done in 2007 on 20 co-operatives which have not yet at that time made a merger or a commercial union with others cooperatives and from the analysis of restructurings made in the period 2006-2008 (trade groupings around the bulk wine), it is possible to glimpse of possible developments in the world of cooperatives. Also with regard to seeking the reduction of uncertainties related to the desire to control better its competitive positioning, it appears to us that the present organization of wine cooperatives is unable to ensure optimal reduction of this uncertainty. Others changes should therefore occur in order to better achieve this goal. The paper will aim to show these various trends and potential.