Analysing collective action in industrial ecology from a political science point of view: the case of the bioresources-based materials for the building industry in France

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In the past thirty years, the emergence of a new framework for public policy in France – sometimes described as “multi-level governance” – has changed the way industrial policies are shaped. In this context, Industrial Ecology is progressively taken into account in the public and private policy programs but in a nontraditional way as it uses new tactics, techniques and instruments in the wake of the “governance” paradigm.

This research seeks to observe and analyze how social actors grab the Industrial Ecology concept and integrate it in their program of action. We are using a political science perspective that focuses its attention on how an idea is implemented within a policy and how knowledge transmission between political and industrial actors produces power relationships.

As a case study, we are focusing on a new industrial branch which is the bioresources-based materials for the building industry in France. Over the past two years, the French government has been convinced for the developing of this branch in order to lead to the progressive “greening” of real estate assets. From this perspective, it is supporting a dedicated association that brings together a few interested personalities with diverse backgrounds and economical actors, such as the cement industry, a rural housing organization and hemp producers, etc. The goal of the “C&B Construction et Bioressources” association is to develop at a regional level a chain of firms able to produce “sustainable buildings” with local and renewable resources from agriculture and forestry.

With our research approach and case study, we are identifying
1) the way Industrial Ecology concepts, knowledge and tools are integrated and are appropriated by the association and its stakeholders
2) the reasons of its occurrence
3) the effects on the concrete action of the association, on its discourses as well as its influence over its stakeholders.