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Centre for the
Study of Co-operatives

Higher Education about Co-ops in Canada & the US: Hypothesis, Data, Action

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3 June 2016

CASC/ACE - Calgary



A problem

1. I believe people could more frequently use co-operatives to fulfill their needs & aspirations
2. people need to know about co-operatives in order to be able to decide where and how to use them
3. higher education has become an increasingly important way to know about the world
4. most people who access higher education will not learn about co-operatives during their studies
5. I have an obligation to do what an academic can do: understand, propose ideas, act

Previous studies

- Lan 2005
- MacPherson 2007
- Sousa 2010
- Amendah & Clamp 2014 (U.S.)
- Miner 2014
- Hancock & Brault 2016
- my question: student numbers, regardless of discipline, program, or methodology



Understanding co-ops & H.E.

- my perspective is as practitioner of education and theorist of organizations
- individuals can act; their innovations can gain ground to the extent they gain traction in existing institutions, to change those institutions
- we need to understand the institutional field of higher education:
 - theory
 - data

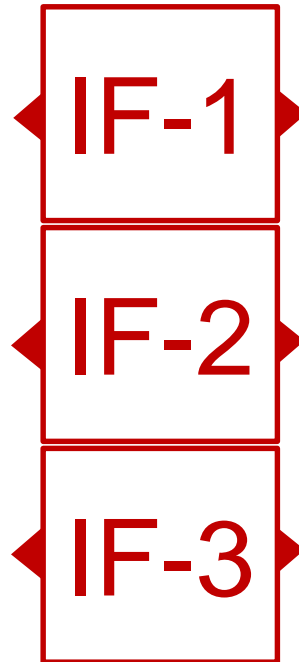
Theory/Hypotheses

Strategies by co-ops:

individual networking

incentives

institutionalised



Strategies by faculty:

faculty resources

fee for service

“for-free”

Data

- very simple survey of CASC members and selected ACE members (with request to forward and reminders)
- purpose: to promote discussion
- February-March 2016
- responses covering:
 - 28 individuals (CASC/Canada)
 - 8 individuals (ACE/U.S.)
 - 1 international

21 Institutions

UBC

SFU

Mt Royal

U of S

U of W

U of M

OISE – U of T
York

HEC

Sherbrooke

Cape Breton

UNB

Mt St Vincent

St Mary's

Idaho

Mass.-

Amherst

Evergreen-

Pinchot

Iowa State

Greenfield

Wis.-Madison

Missouri

Data

- 26 (Canada), 7 (US) regularly teach a substantial course component (or more) about co-ops
- total students:
 - 1,060 u/g, 330 grad per year (Canada)
 - 370 u/g, 31 grad per year (US)
- in Canada, u/g heavily concentrated at U of S (253), Mt Royal (220?) followed by York (140), SFU, U of W, OISE, U of M
 - grad: Sherbrooke, HEC, St Mary's



Approaches & concentrations

- types of co-ops covered roughly equally
(Canada: ag 18, CUs 16, retail 15, worker 15, housing 12, multistakeholder 12)
- topics: principles 22, governance 19, social economy 17, management 15, development 15
- aspects/disciplines: history 14, sociology 10, economics 8
- most involve practitioners
- materials used: highly variable!



Concluding questions

- data incomplete: **worth doing more?**
- exposure of students to co-ops seems to be low: **is this accurate?**
- educational experiences are scattered: **reflects interests of individual faculty members?**
- students appear to be concentrated where resources are institutionalised: **does this bear out the hypothesis?**
- materials vary: **worth sharing recommendations?**

Discussion

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