



## UK Society for Co-operative Studies 51<sup>st</sup> Annual Research Conference

Friday 31<sup>st</sup> August – 2<sup>nd</sup> September 2018

Hosted by:

FairShares Institute for Cooperative Social Entrepreneurship  
at Sheffield Business School, Sheffield Hallam University, S1 1WB

# Diversity in Co-operation: People, Places and Organisation

## Call for papers, posters, panels and practical activities

The co-operative movement, even with its agreed values and principles, has always wrestled with the diversity of people, places and organisational variations that have emerged under the banner of co-operation. This creates a specific challenge as the global movement attracts new advocates in the wake of the 2008 crisis.

As Prof Stephen Yeo's (2004) work reminds us:

Before [the Webbs' 'division of labour'] the impulse [...] had been to bring such work together in whole people, by means of co-operative mutual associational forms, working [against] capitalist divisions by which they were surrounded. This impulse challenged – and fully realised would have transformed – capitalist divisions of labour, transforming the meaning of, and sites for, government, production and consumption.

Yeo's argument was that mutual associations were excellent places to handle and manage the diversity of interests and identities that exist in people, places and society. Our identities and interests have become fragmented by industrial, geographic and demographic divisions as well as the diversity of co-operative legal forms.

**In this conference, we invite you to submit presentations, proposals, panels and activities that consider issues and impacts from the diversity of people, places and organisations that contribute to the co-operative movement.**

Today's co-operative movement is made up of a plethora of co-operative identities divided by industrial sectors (housing cooperatives, agricultural co-operatives, marketing co-operatives) and by collective economic roles (producer, worker and consumer co-operatives). Another dimension of diversity is the representation of minority interests. In 2009, Co-operatives UK launched Co-operative Diversity Action to focus on race and gender equality within and beyond the co-operative economy. This work continues today at Olmec Co-operative CIC through business advice and support services.

Yeo's vision of the co-operative movement is one that builds a political economy in which working people are not pigeon-holed and separated by their identity as a consumer, trade unionist or civilian, but are integrated into co-operatives as 'whole people' in mutual associations that accommodate all three of these social interests.

Please submit your proposal for a presentation, paper, panel or practical activity to one of the tracks described below (or the Open Space stream if none are suitable).

### Note for practitioners:

We particularly welcome contributions by practitioners who wish to share new thinking that has developed within a co-operative enterprise or network. We welcome presentations on:

- the emergence of new thinking
- how new thinking has been developed into new accounting, management, marketing or governance practices
- how new practices have impacted on producers, workers, consumers (and other stakeholders).

### Bursaries for PhD Students from the EMES Association:

We will be holding a PhD Colloquium on 31<sup>st</sup> August (on the eve of the main conference). Fees for PhD students include both the colloquium and the main conference.

**A limited number of bursaries are available from the EMES Association (EMPOWER-SE COST Action)** for PhD students from 'target inclusiveness countries' who wish to present their work on social and/or financial co-operatives at this conference. Bursaries provide up to €1,000 towards fees, travel and accommodation.

#### Target Inclusiveness Countries include:

Bosnia-Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Croatia, Hungary, Lithuania, Latvia, Luxembourg, Malta, Montenegro, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovenia, Slovakia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Republic of Serbia and Turkey

#### Bursaries may also be considered for students from near neighbouring countries:

Iceland, Norway and Switzerland, Armenia, Georgia, Lebanon, Morocco, Russian Federation.

Please contact [rocio.nogales@emes.net](mailto:rocio.nogales@emes.net) to apply for a bursary (EMPOWER-SE Grant Manager).

Please copy all bursary application correspondence to [r.ridley-duff@shu.ac.uk](mailto:r.ridley-duff@shu.ac.uk) (EMPOWER-SE WG4 Leader / UKSCS Conference organiser).

## How to make submission to UK SCS 2018:

We welcome proposals from both academics and practitioners engaged in the study of co-operation and co-operatives. Please create an abstract (maximum 750 words) that describes your proposed presentation, paper, panel or practical activity **by 14<sup>th</sup> July 2018**:

Submission Point: <https://easychair.org/conferences/?conf=2018ukscsconference>

- If you submitted a paper last year, you can login with the same account details.
- If you are submitting for the first time, click 'Create an account' and follow the instructions.
- After logging in or registering your account, choose 'Enter as an author' to make a submission.
- Fill out contact details for authors/presenters and provide your title, abstract and keywords. At least one author/presenter will need to register for the conference if the submission is accepted.

### Abstract format (suggested):

Please organise your abstract so that it provides details that can be peer-reviewed (maximum 750 words):

- Title (or your presentation, paper, panel or practical activity)
- Corresponding author
- A short statement about the issue/question your submission addresses
- A concise summary of the approach to studying the issue/question
- A summary of findings and/or contribution of your submission
- References to previous papers/studies (max 6)

If you wish to upload a full paper with your abstract, set the filename to:

**UKSCS2018-FirstAuthorName-StreamNumber-SubmissionType.pdf**

### Examples

UKSCS2018-Myers-T2-Paper.pdf

UKSCS2018-Bickle-T7-Presentation.pdf

**If you have any problems uploading a file, please send it via email to:**

[r.ridley-duff@shu.ac.uk](mailto:r.ridley-duff@shu.ac.uk)

or

[jan.myers@northumbria.ac.uk](mailto:jan.myers@northumbria.ac.uk)

## Tracks in the UKSCS 2018 Conference

### T1 - Co-operative History

Historically, the movement has a plethora of records that detail the formation of small, grassroots co-operatives and mutuals across Europe, North America and Japan in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century. Despite its long history, the co-operative movement and co-operative business has remained secondary to the investor-owned models of industry and services provision. Diversity issues have affected the history of the co-operative movement. Whilst some early co-operatives societies excluded women, the Rochdale Pioneers admitted women from the outset, and women played an important part through the Woman's League for the Spread of Co-operation (1883) and later the (re-named) Women's Co-operative Guild (1885). Historical accounts of collective and individual contributions are needed to deepen our understanding of co-operators as well as co-operatives, and how their social histories contributed to the diverse range of organisational forms and sectoral initiatives.

### T2 - The Politics of Co-operation

2017 marked the centenary of the UK co-operative movement's involvement in party politics, and the election of the same year resulted in a record number of Labour and Co-operative Party members getting elected to the UK's parliament. The "politics" of "co-operation" – the way in which collective co-operative endeavour sets out to affect (and has succeeded in effecting) political changes in attitudes to wealth and power distribution - is particularly salient as technology creates new opportunities and challenges. How - for example - has the Mondragon Co-operative Corporation maintained a highest to lowest pay differential of 5:1 for over 60 years when US corporations now report a ratio of 400:1? This track seeks to explore the political impact of co-operation, both at a local level in workplaces and within the wider infrastructure of party politics. Does the co-operative movement need its own political party, or is it sufficient to lobby other political parties? How do we view relationships to political parties in the light of the goal of political neutrality set out by the Rochdale Pioneers?

### T3 - Co-operation in Public Service

A new drive for diversity in cooperative organisations has been catalysed by the ideological drivers of the neo-liberal market economy. Reforms to public bodies (and public services) have presented opportunities for a co-operative response. How should the co-operative movement, and co-operative organisational forms, be utilised in the delivery of public services? How might they offer alternatives to private finance initiatives and the transfer of state-managed enterprises to private ownership? There are clear examples of the challenges presented by the use of co-operative models in the provision of public services (Myers, 2017). In light of a call for more co-operation and co-operatives in public service delivery by the UK shadow chancellor, how can co-operation between charities, trusts, mutual and community benefit societies offer new models of stewardship to safeguard public services without the creeping or seeming inevitable slide towards a commodified 'market society' (Sandel, 2012)? To what extent do Italy's social co-operatives and Belgium's co-operative associations provide models for the UK?

### T4 - Co-operative Education

Following the reforms that brought about the creation and conversion of hundreds of schools to co-operative schools and academies, what are the prospects for Co-operative Higher Education? In

terms of structures, governance and management, where can we look for models on which to build co-operative universities that inter-cooperate at an international level? Co-operative education combines programmed (class-based) education and experiential learning (through work-based learning, structured work experiences and internships). What balance between directed and self-directed learning should drive the education experiences of students in co-operative schools and universities? What new pedagogies from the field of social innovation might promote co-operative principles, values and ways of working? Woodin (2014) suggests that co-operation and democracy in educational settings is a complex process and in need of deliberation and debate. What do we mean by a 'co-operative pedagogy'? Should it be renamed 'co-operative andragogy' in co-operative universities to reflect adult learning norms? What place do co-production, co-construction and co-operative learning theory have as learning and assessment strategies in face-to-face and (increasingly) digital environments? Can co-operative education add to the diversity of educational experience, support a critical pedagogy for personal and collective emancipation (Friere, 1972, 1974; Rancière, 1999)?

### **T5 - Co-operative Retailing, Marketing and Sustainable Development**

As the internet is increasingly monopolised by a small group of big players - Facebook, Amazon, Twitter and Google (Wu, 2010) how can new co-operative marketplaces be developed and supported by co-operation among co-operatives? How can new technologies be used by co-operative retailers to provide new benefits and opportunities that attract and build membership of their co-operative? How can sustainably grown local foods be integrated into the retail outlets of independent co-operative retailers?

### **T6 - New Approaches to Co-operation**

In 2010, *Affinities: A Journal of Radical Theory, Culture, and Action* ran a special edition on new co-operativism to highlight how a new generation of co-operators are not necessarily looking to the examples of 'old' co-operatives. What new entrepreneurial incubators and networks are supportive of co-operative learning and organising? Do they practice co-operation in new ways and challenge taken for granted assumptions about the nature of co-operation? What roles will Open Access and Creative Commons publications have on the development of the cooperative economic paradigm (Rifkin, 2014), and how should co-operatives participate to build a commons-based economy? Are crowd-funding, -lending and -equity evolutions of the co-operative model or a new form of capitalism?

### **T7 – Leadership and Management in a Co-operative Context**

Co-operative institutions make specific demands regarding the role, nature and practice of leadership. Yet, the organisation of internal arrangements cannot be exercised in a vacuum and regulatory guidance often favours hierarchically structured rather than collectively governed and managed work processes and structures. Which forms of co-operative, and cultures of co-operation, are best able to sustain co-operative values and principles? This track considers the theoretical and practical implications of leading and managing within a values-driven framework in which democratic accountability is expected from leaders and governing bodies. How can participation, active membership and control, communication and collaboration amongst co-operatives be catalysed through co-operative leadership, management and entrepreneurship?

## **T8 - Co-operative Governance and Accounting**

Balancing economic indicators, good governance and social impact is a critical challenge for co-operatives. In 2014, the ICA committed the international co-operative movement to UN sustainable development goals, and the UK Department for International Development has hosted workshops on co-operatives and corporate governance to highlight challenges in policy and regulatory environments. The contribution of co-operatives and mutuals remains 'poorly understood and perennially underestimated' (Ernst & Young, 2012, p.3). So how can co-operatives update their governance and accounting systems to meet new commitments to sustainable development? How might the rising popularity of social and integrated reporting create opportunities for cooperatives to develop governance systems that create economic, social and environmental impact? With new and emerging organisational models (particularly platform co-operatives) how can governance and accounting practices use technologies to pursue SDGs on inclusive workplaces and institutions?

## **T9 – Open Stream / Open Space**

If your proposal for a paper, presentation, panel or practical activity does not fit naturally into one of the above tracks/themes, then you can submit it to the Open stream. This will give you to the maximum flexibility in making presentations as well as arranging impromptu discussion throughout the conference.

## Indicative programme

Friday 31<sup>st</sup> August 2018

### START OF UKSCS 2019 DOCTORAL COLLOQUIUM

**9.30 – 10.00** Registration and Welcome (Doctoral / Early Career Researcher Colloquium)

**10:00 – 15:00** Doctoral Colloquium

The colloquium provides an opportunity for doctoral students and early career researchers to present their work to other doctoral students and selected academics from the organising committee. All topics and methodological approaches within the broad field of co-operatives, co-operativism, social enterprise and mutualism will be considered.

10.00 – 12.00 Learning Sets (15 – 20 mins/person to discuss an issue arising out of their studies)

12.00 – 13.00 Lunch

13.00 – 15:00 Collective discussion (abstraction) of issues arising out of the morning learning set

(Please choose this option on your booking form only if you are a doctoral student or early career researcher planning to attend both the colloquium)

**15:00 – 15:45** UKSCS Board Meeting

### START OF UKSCS 2019 CONFERENCE

**16:00 – 18:00** UKSCS AGM

16:00 – 17:00 Chair, Financial, Member and Journal Reports

17:00 - 18:00 Strategy Development with Members (with facilitators)

**18:00** Registration and Welcome to the Inaugural Professional Lecture by Rory Ridley-Duff

18:30 – 19:30 – Diversity, Co-operation and the FairShares Model

**19:30 – 20:00** Drinks / Canapes Reception

20:00 onwards Informal networking

### Saturday 1<sup>st</sup> September 2018

09:00 - 10:00 Main conference registration

10:00 - 11:15 Conference Opening & Keynote 1

11:15 – 11:30 Break

11:30 – 13:00 Parallel sessions 1 (2 papers)

13:00 – 14:00 Lunch

14:00 - 15:00 Plenary & Keynote 2

15:00 - 16:30 Parallel sessions 2  
16:30 - 17:00 Tea/coffee  
17:00 – 18:30 Parallel sessions 3

15:00 – 18:30 Co-op AGM (Space for 50 people) – Booked 7332

20:00 – 22:00 Formal dinner (Hallam View, Owen Building)

## Sunday 2<sup>nd</sup> September 2018

9:30 - 10:30 Parallel Sessions 4  
10:30 – 11:30 Parallel Sessions 5  
11:30 – 11:45 Tea/Coffee  
11:15 – 13:00 Closing Plenary – Co-operation in Europe

13:00 - 14:00 Packed Lunch  
14:00 Close of conference

**Some parallel sessions will be organised as Open Space to accommodate late submissions, impromptu panels or creative approaches to studying.**