

UNIVERSITY OF
NEW BRUNSWICK



Exploring 50 Years of Canadian Theses on Co-operatives

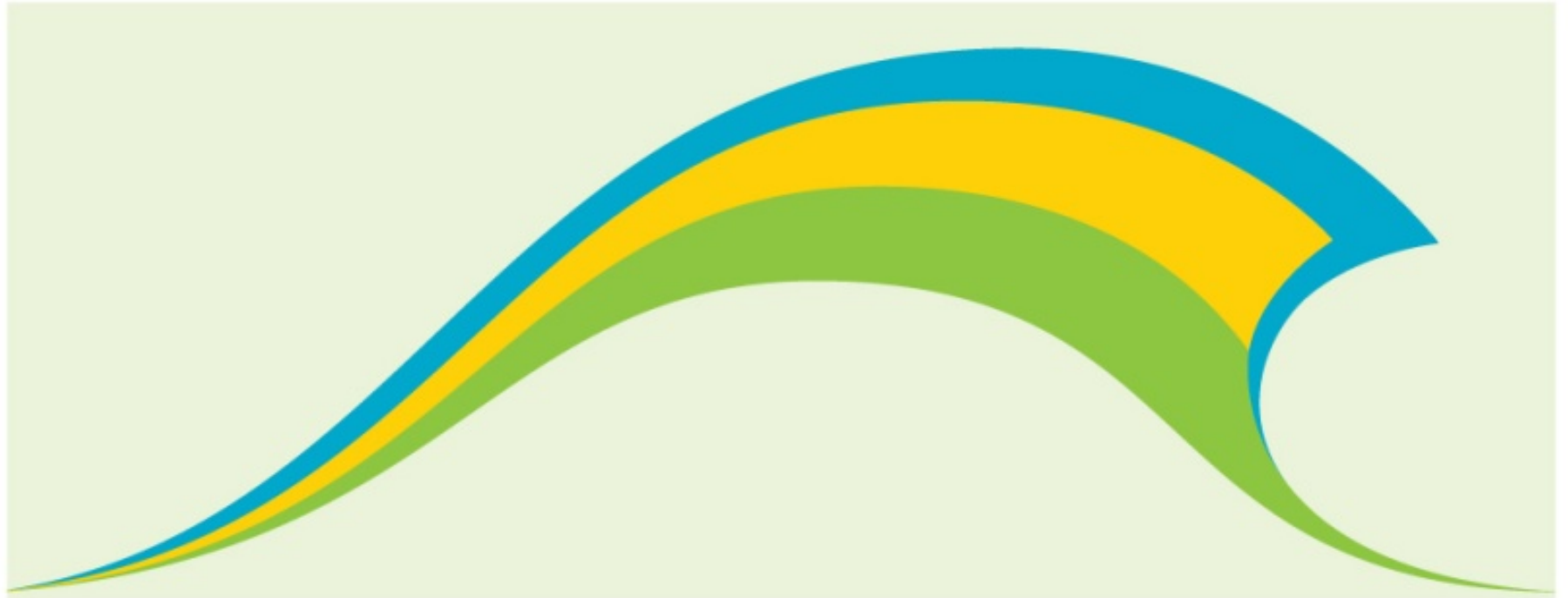
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Brock University, May 28, 2014

Acknowledgements

- The inspiration for this paper came from the author's reading of Dr. Will van den Hoonaard 2006 exploratory study "Trends in Canadian Sociology Master's Theses in Relation to Research Ethics Review. 1995-2004" published in *the Journal of Empirical Research on Human Research Ethics*.
- The research for this paper was undertaken as part of the *Measuring the Co-operative Difference Research Network*, a Community-University Research Alliance funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada and managed by the Canadian Co-operative Association (now CMC).

Réseau de recherche pour mesurer la DIFFÉRENCE COOPÉRATIVE



Measuring the Co-operative Difference
RESEARCH NETWORK

Introduction

- This project mines the abstracts found on the [Theses Canada Portal](#) of [Library and Archives Canada](#) to explore a corpus of 424 Canadian university theses on co-operatives.
- The initial research question we wanted to answer was “how many university theses relating to co-operatives are produced annually in Canada?”
- We also wanted to see what could be learned about these works and their “young” authors.
- A “Canadian thesis” is defined here as a thesis published (issued) by a Canadian university, regardless of the citizenship of its author.



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Canadian universities participate in the program voluntarily by submitting approved theses and dissertation to Theses Canada. Library and Archives Canada (LAC) staff are happy to provide advice to Canadian universities that are establishing electronic



See Also:

[AMICUS](#)



| Title Keywords Used in Search | Number of Records Found | Number of Records Excluded (false positive and duplicates) | Number of Records Kept in the Study |
|--|-------------------------|--|-------------------------------------|
| “Co-operatives” OR “Co-operative” | 156 | 43 | 113 |
| “Co-ops” OR “Co-op” | 20 | 18 | 2 |
| “Cooperatives” OR “Cooperative” | 627 | 387 | 240 |
| “Credit Unions” OR “Credit Union” | 4 | 1 | 3 |
| “Caisses Populaires” OR “Caisse Populaire” | 9 | 0 | 9 |
| “Desjardins” | 102 | 55 | 47 |
| “Caisses” AND “Acadiennes” | 2 | 0 | 2 |
| “Caisse” AND “Epargne” | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| “Caisses” AND “Epargne” | 5 | 0 | 5 |
| “Cooperant” OR “Cooperants” | 14 | 13 | 1 |
| “Cooperator” OR “Cooperators” | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| “Cooperativeness” | 1 | 1 | 0 |
| Total | 944 | 520 | 424 |

E-LOCATIONS: http://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/obj/t_hesescanada/vol2/002/MR63774.PDF

NAME(S) : *[Gagnon, Claire, 1958-](#)

TITLE(S) : Culture gap in co-operatives [microform]
: an exploratory case study

PUBLISHER: Ottawa : Library and Archives Canada =
Bibliothèque et Archives Canada, [2011]

DESCRIPTION: 2 microfiches.

SERIES: Canadian Theses = Thèses canadiennes.

NOTES: Thesis (M.B.A.)--University of New
Brunswick, 2008.
Includes bibliographical references.

STUDENT ABSTRACT: A culture profiling methodology was applied in a case study of two co-operative stores. A qualitative approach, comprised of in-depth interviews, observation and document review, was followed by a quantitative approach involving management, employees and current and past directors. The survey included the competitive values framework (Cameron & Quinn, 2006) and supplemental questions relating to market and quality orientations, and member/customer satisfaction and loyalty. Respondents from both subject co-operatives indicated that predominant clan attributes were preferred. The co-operative with higher self-reported ratings in member orientation reported no gap between current and preferred culture. The operationalization of member orientation and co-operative culture or identity as a competitive advantage were considered.

NUMBERS: Canadiana: 2011206793X

ISBN: 9780494637746

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One Example of Excluded Record

Bennett, N.L. (1979). *Some aspects of co-operative pup-rearing in a pack of captive timber wolves (Canis lupus)*. M.Sc. Thesis. Halifax: Dalhousie University.

Oldest Thesis on Co-operative Found in the Study

McCutcheon, W.W. (1948) *Economic organization and development of the United Farmers Co-operative Company, Limited*. M.Sc. Thesis. Toronto: University of Toronto.

Main Results

- The *Université de Sherbrooke*, where IRECUS is located, is found to be the top producing Canadian university for theses dealing with co-operatives.
- Universities located in the Province of Quebec published nearly 60% of theses on co-operatives even though the province represents only 23% of the Canadian population.
- There is a strong international focus (especially on French-speaking Africa) in theses relating to co-operatives that have been published by Canadian universities.

Main Results, Continued

- The early 1990s represent the peak period for thesis publications on co-operatives, but recent years (since 2005) have also demonstrated a solid level of activity with between 11 and 15 theses published every year.
- Over the entire 1970-2012 period, the average number of Canadian university theses on co-operatives and credit unions is around 10 per year.
- The theses are not generally focused on theoretical issues and the case study approach is often used as the methodology of choice.
- It remains perilous to attempt to categorize the co-operatives studied both in terms of the nature of the organization and in terms of sector of activity, with some obvious exceptions such as housing or financial co-operatives.

An Example of a Theoretically-oriented Thesis

Johnston, H.E. (1999) *Social movement identity: An application of the theory to the cooperative housing movement in Toronto*. M.A. Thesis, Sherbrooke: Université de Sherbrooke.

An Example of a Thesis Clearly Using the Case Study Approach

Gao, H (1993) *CRS Worker's Cooperative: A case study in cooperative evolution and survival*. M.A. Thesis. Burnaby: Simon Fraser University.

Conclusion

- The “typical” graduate student who did a thesis on co-operatives in a Canadian university is:
 - French-speaking;
 - Male;
 - Born around 1960 (currently aged around 54 years old);
 - Published an M.A. thesis that was not centered on a theoretical issue but focused on a producer or a financial co-operative;
 - This work was published when he was approximately 33 years old (in 1993) while studying at a Quebec-based university.

Limitations and Avenue for Further Research

- While this study contributes (by its novelty) to our understanding of co-operative research in Canada, doubts remain as the representativeness of the non-random sample used.
- Further research could include the exploration, in more depth, of the actual content of these Theses, as well as...
- Analyzing the impact these Theses have on the academic literature on co-operatives (by establishing if anyone is citing these works?).

| Variable Name | Summary Description |
|-------------------------------|---|
| AMICUS | ID number |
| Year Published | Year of Thesis publication by university |
| University | University issuing the thesis |
| Province of Univ. | Canadian province where university is located |
| Location Focus | Geographic focus of Thesis (if any) |
| Case Study? | Does the Thesis seem to be using a “case study” approach? |
| Degree | Degree conferred (e.g., M.A., M.B.A., Ph.D, etc.) |
| Co-op Type | Type of co-operative (nature of the organization) |
| Industry | Main area of activity or industry of the co-operative |
| ISBN # | International Standard Book Number |
| Foreign Country | What foreign country (outside Canada) is the Thesis focusing on (if any)? |
| Focus on Theory | Does it seem that the Thesis has a focus on theory? |
| Gender of Author | Gender of the author (determined using first name) |
| YOB of Author | Year of birth of the author (if available) |
| Approx. Age of Author in 2014 | Approximate age of author in 2014 |
| Approx. Age of Author at Pub. | Approximate age of author at time of publication |
| Master's vs PhD | Master's Thesis OR Doctoral Dissertation? |
| Language | Language of thesis (English, French, Other) |
| Regions | Canadian regions (West, Central, Atlantic) |
| Continents | Africa, N. America (excluding Canada but including the Caribbean countries), S. America, Asia, Europe and Oceania |

Table 2: Theses by University

| University | Freq. | Valid % | Cum. % |
|----------------------|------------|------------|------------|
| 1. U de Sherbrooke | 134 | 31.6 | 31.6 |
| 2. U Laval | 40 | 9.4 | 41.0 |
| 3. UQAM | 37 | 8.7 | 49.8 |
| 4. U of Saskatchewan | 22 | 5.2 | 55.0 |
| 5. U of Manitoba | 17 | 4.0 | 59.0 |
| 6. McGill Univ. | 15 | 3.5 | 62.5 |
| 7. U of Guelph | 14 | 3.3 | 65.8 |
| 8. U of Alberta | 13 | 3.1 | 68.9 |
| 9. U of Toronto | 12 | 2.8 | 71.7 |
| 10.UQAC | 11 | 2.6 | 74.3 |
| Others (n=26 Univ.) | 109 | 25.7 | 100 |
| Total | 424 | 100 | 100 |

Table 3: Theses by Province of University

| Province | Freq. | Valid % | Cum. % | % Can. Pop. |
|-----------------------|------------|------------|------------|-------------|
| 1. Quebec | 253 | 59.7 | 59.7 | 23.1 |
| 2. Ontario | 58 | 13.7 | 73.3 | 38.7 |
| 3. British Columbia | 28 | 6.6 | 80.0 | 13.3 |
| 4. Saskatchewan | 27 | 6.4 | 86.3 | 3.1 |
| 5. Alberta | 22 | 5.2 | 91.5 | 11.1 |
| 6. Manitoba | 17 | 4.0 | 95.5 | 3.6 |
| 7. Nova Scotia | 10 | 2.4 | 97.9 | 2.7 |
| 8. New Brunswick | 7 | 1.7 | 99.5 | 2.2 |
| 9. Newfoundland | 2 | 0.5 | 100 | 1.5 |
| 10. PEI & Territories | 0 | 0.0 | 100 | 0.7 |
| Total | 424 | 100 | 100 | 100 |

Table 4: Theses by Region of Publication

| Province | Freq. | Valid % | Cum. % | % Can. Pop.* |
|---------------------------|--------------|----------------|---------------|---------------------|
| 1. Central Canada | 311 | 73.3 | 73.3 | 61.8 |
| 2. Western Canada | 94 | 22.2 | 95.5 | 31.1 |
| 3. Atlantic Canada | 19 | 4.5 | 100 | 6.4 |
| Total | 424 | 100 | 100 | *99.3 |

Table 5: Theses by Geographic Location of Focus

| Location Focus | Freq. | Valid % | Cum. % |
|---------------------------------|--------------|----------------|---------------|
| Foreign or International | 152 | 35.9 | 35.9 |
| Quebec | 139 | 32.8 | 68.7 |
| Not Applicable | 33 | 7.8 | 76.5 |
| Canada as a whole | 23 | 5.4 | 81.9 |
| Ontario | 20 | 4.7 | 86.6 |
| British Columbia | 9 | 2.1 | 88.7 |
| Alberta | 9 | 2.1 | 90.8 |
| Saskatchewan | 9 | 2.1 | 92.9 |
| Manitoba | 8 | 1.9 | 92.8 |
| Multiple Provinces | 7 | 1.7 | 96.5 |
| Any Atlantic Provinces | 15 | 3.5 | 100 |
| Total | 424 | 100 | 100 |

Table 6: Theses by Continent of Focus (excluding those focusing on Canada)

| Continent | Freq. | Valid % | Cum. % |
|---------------------------------|------------|-------------|-------------|
| Africa | 68 | 44.7 | 44.7 |
| N. America (less Canada) | 25 | 16.4 | 61.1 |
| S. America | 19 | 12.5 | 73.6 |
| Asia | 16 | 10.5 | 84.1 |
| Europe | 6 | 4.0 | 88.1 |
| Oceania | 2 | 1.3 | 89.4 |
| Multiple Continents | 16 | 10.6 | 100 |
| Total | 152 | 100 | 100 |

Figure 1: Publication Year of Theses

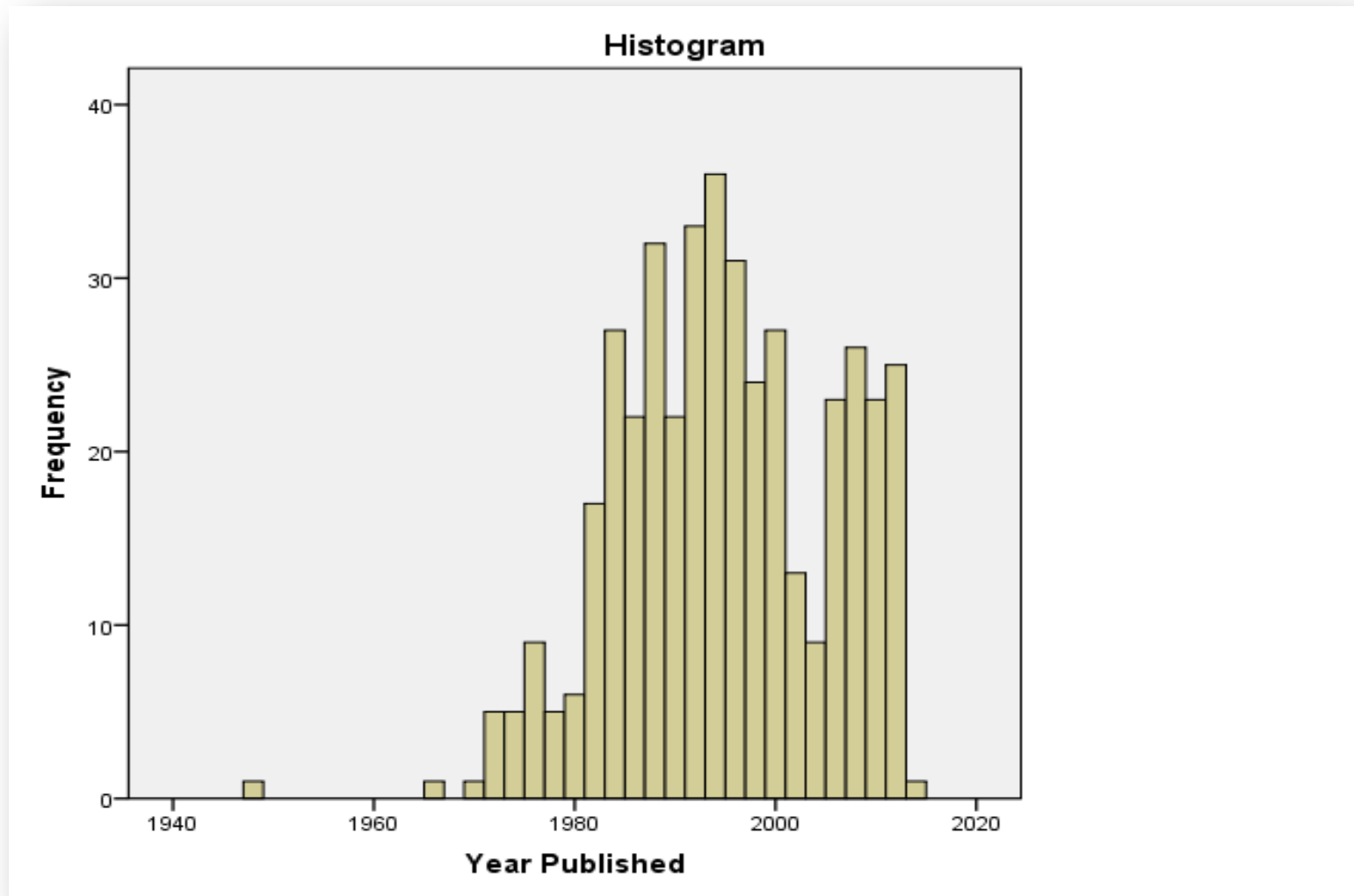


Figure 2: Approx. Age of Author in 2014

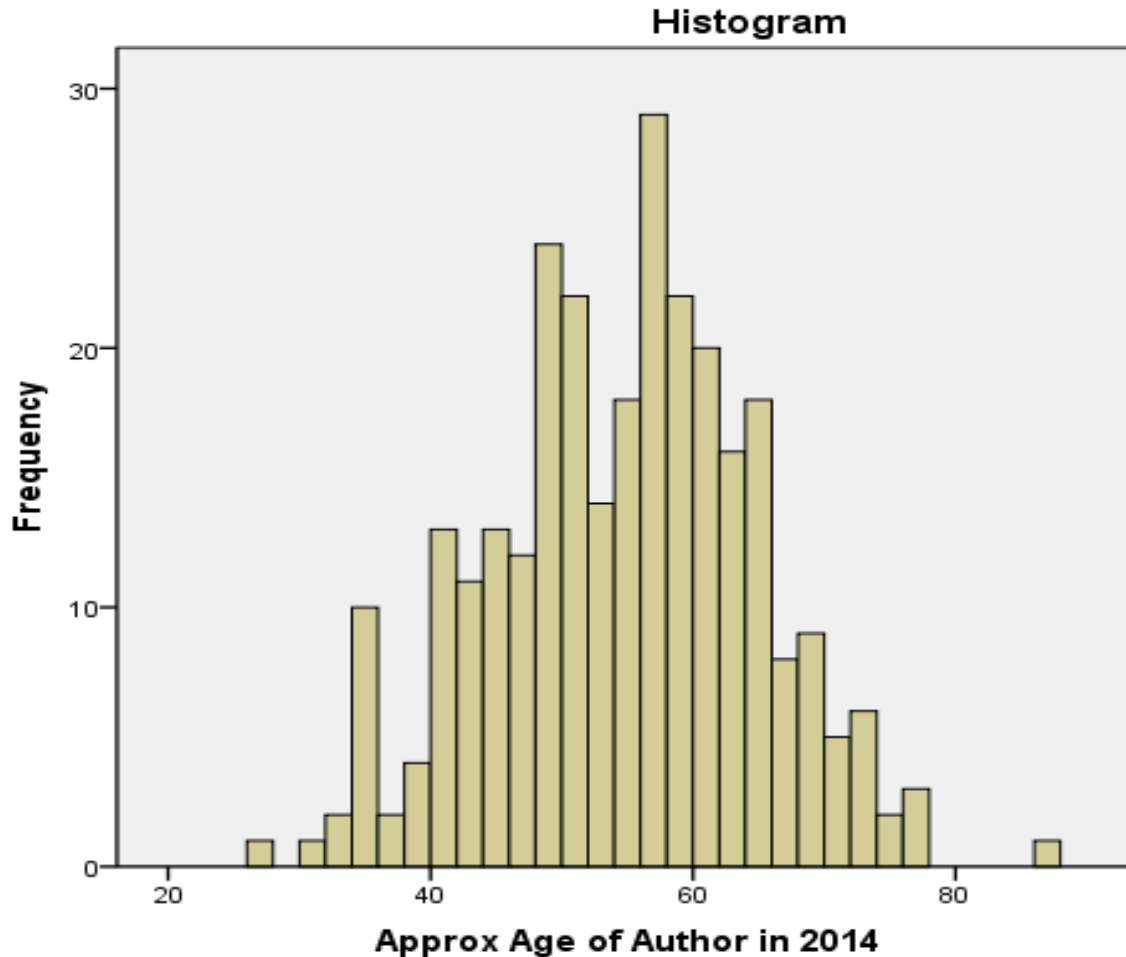


Figure 3: Approx. Age at Time of Publication

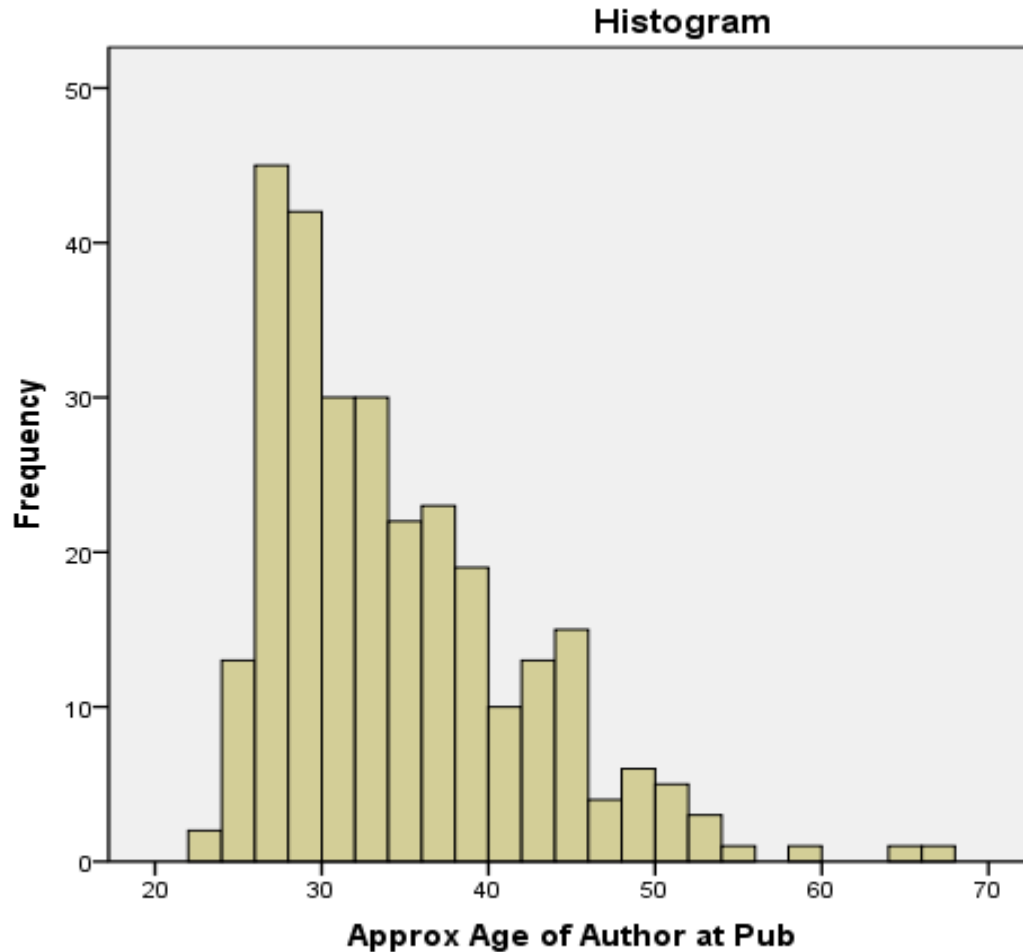


Table 7: Types of University Degrees

| Location Focus | Freq. | Valid % | Cum. % |
|----------------------------|------------|------------|------------|
| Doctoral (Ph.D. & D.B.A.) | 74 | 17.5 | 17.5 |
| M.A. (various disciplines) | 243 | 57.3 | 74.8 |
| M.Sc. | 52 | 12.3 | 87.0 |
| M.B.A (and equivalent) | 25 | 5.9 | 92.9 |
| M. Planning | 8 | 1.9 | 94.8 |
| M.S.W. (Social Work) | 8 | 1.9 | 96.7 |
| M. Environmental Studies | 6 | 1.4 | 98.1 |
| M. Architecture | 4 | 0.9 | 99.1 |
| LL.M. (Law Master's) | 2 | 0.5 | 99.5 |
| Others | 2 | 0.4 | 100 |
| Total | 424 | 100 | 100 |

Table 8: Main Types of Co-op Reported in Theses

| Types of Co-operatives | Freq. | Valid % | Cum. % |
|--------------------------------|--------------|----------------|---------------|
| Financial Co-op | 97 | 22.9 | 22.9 |
| Producer Co-op | 80 | 18.9 | 41.8 |
| Housing Co-op | 48 | 11.3 | 53.1 |
| Worker's Co-op | 21 | 4.9 | 58.0 |
| Consumer Co-op | 16 | 3.8 | 61.8 |
| Multi-stakeholder Co-op | 16 | 3.8 | 65.6 |
| Women's Co-op | 9 | 2.1 | 67.7 |
| Other or Unknown | 137 | 32.3 | 100 |
| Total | 424 | 100 | 100 |

Table 9: Industry of Co-op (with NAICS Code)

| Industry and Cognate NAICS Code | Freq. | Valid % | Cum. % |
|--|------------|-------------|-------------|
| Agriculture, Fishing or Forestry (11) | 101 | 23.8 | 23.8 |
| Financial (52) | 99 | 23.3 | 47.1 |
| Housing (53) | 50 | 11.8 | 58.9 |
| Retail including Food (44-45) | 21 | 5.0 | 63.9 |
| Health (62) | 9 | 2.1 | 66.0 |
| Energy (21) | 6 | 1.4 | 67.4 |
| Education (61) | 6 | 1.4 | 68.8 |
| Other, Unknown or Not Applicable | 132 | 31.2 | 100 |
| Total | 424 | 100 | 100 |

About the Author

Luc Thériault holds a Ph.D. in sociology from the University of Toronto. He is currently Professor of sociology at the University of New Brunswick (Fredericton, Canada). He is also Vice-President of the Association for Nonprofit and Social Economy Research (ANSER-ARES).