

UNIVERSITY OF
NEW BRUNSWICK



Exploring 50 Years of Canadian Theses on Co-operatives

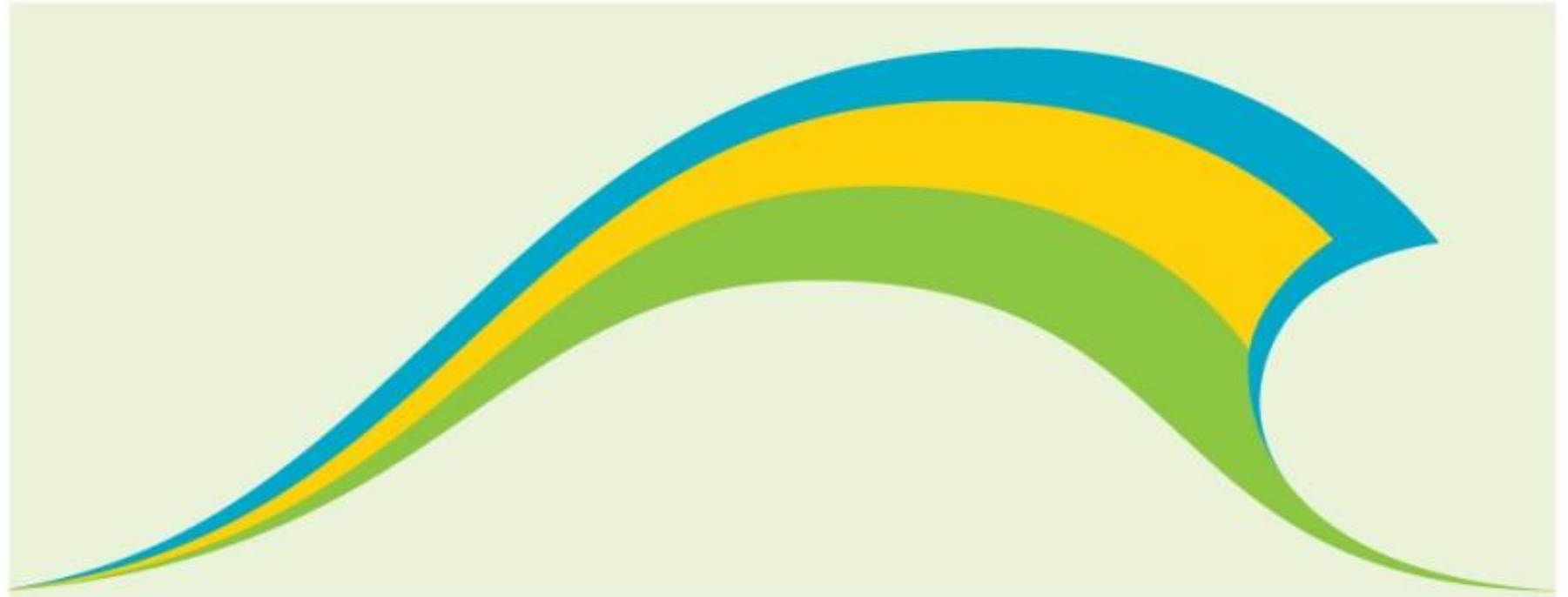
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ANSER & CASC Meetings
Brock University, May 28, 2014

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.

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 seems 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

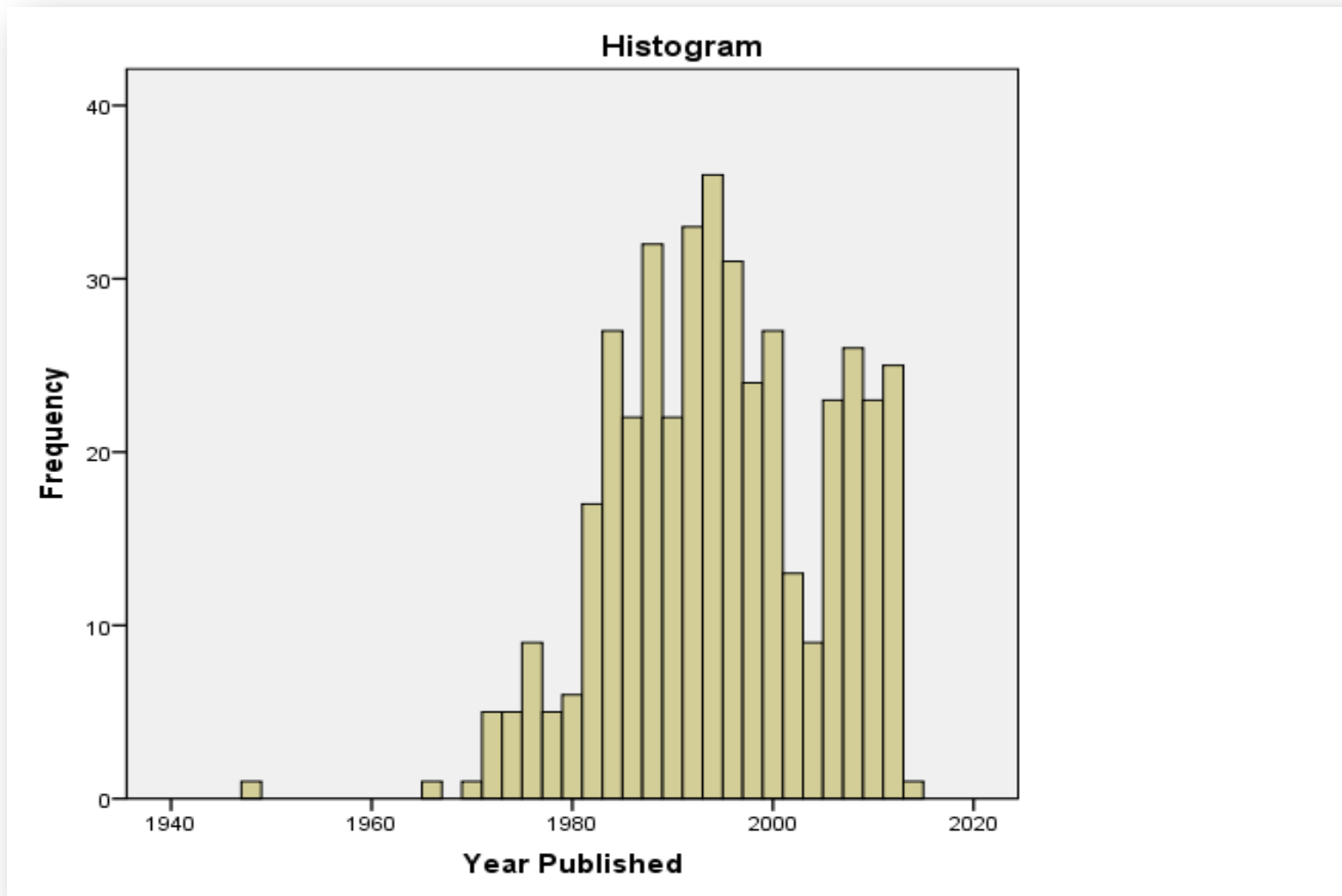


Figure 2: Approx. Age of Author in 2014

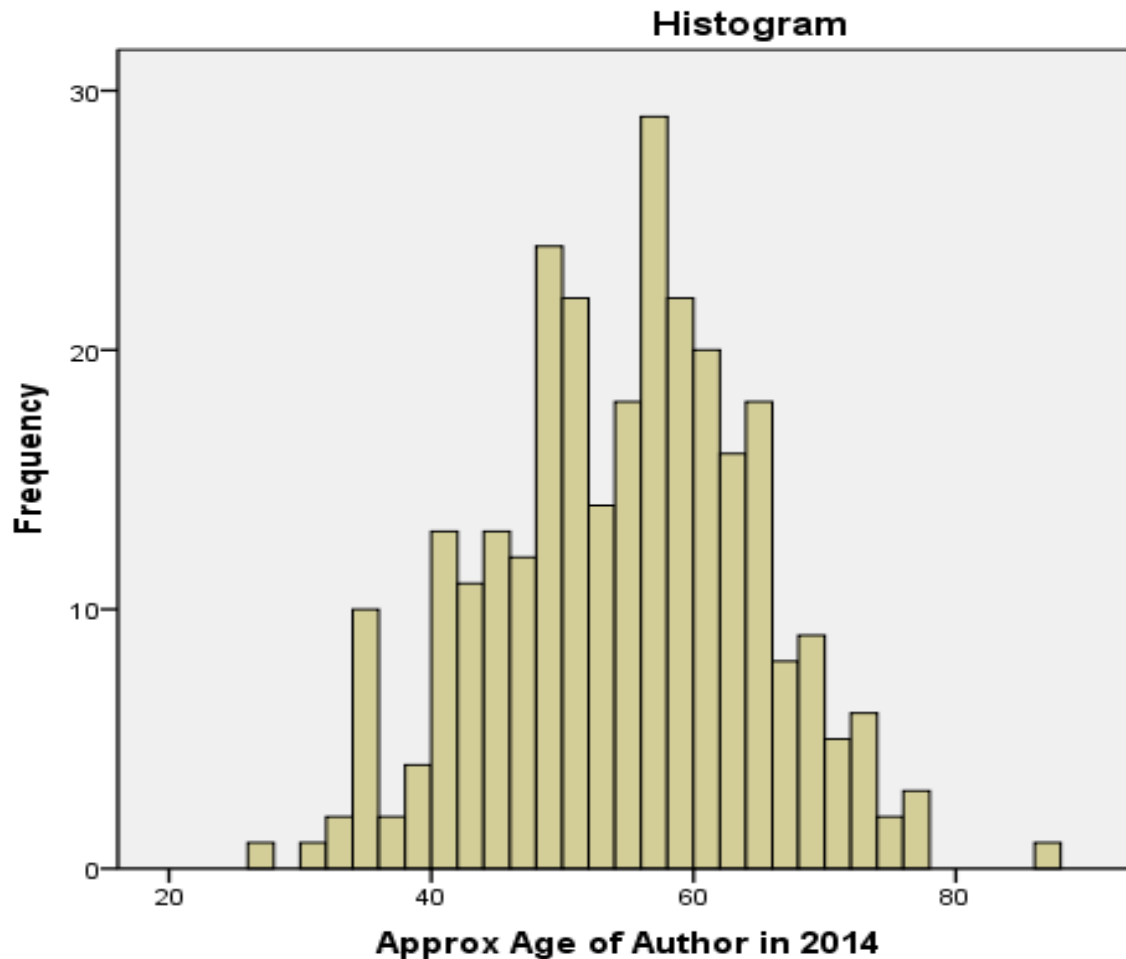


Figure 3: Approx. Age at Time of Publication

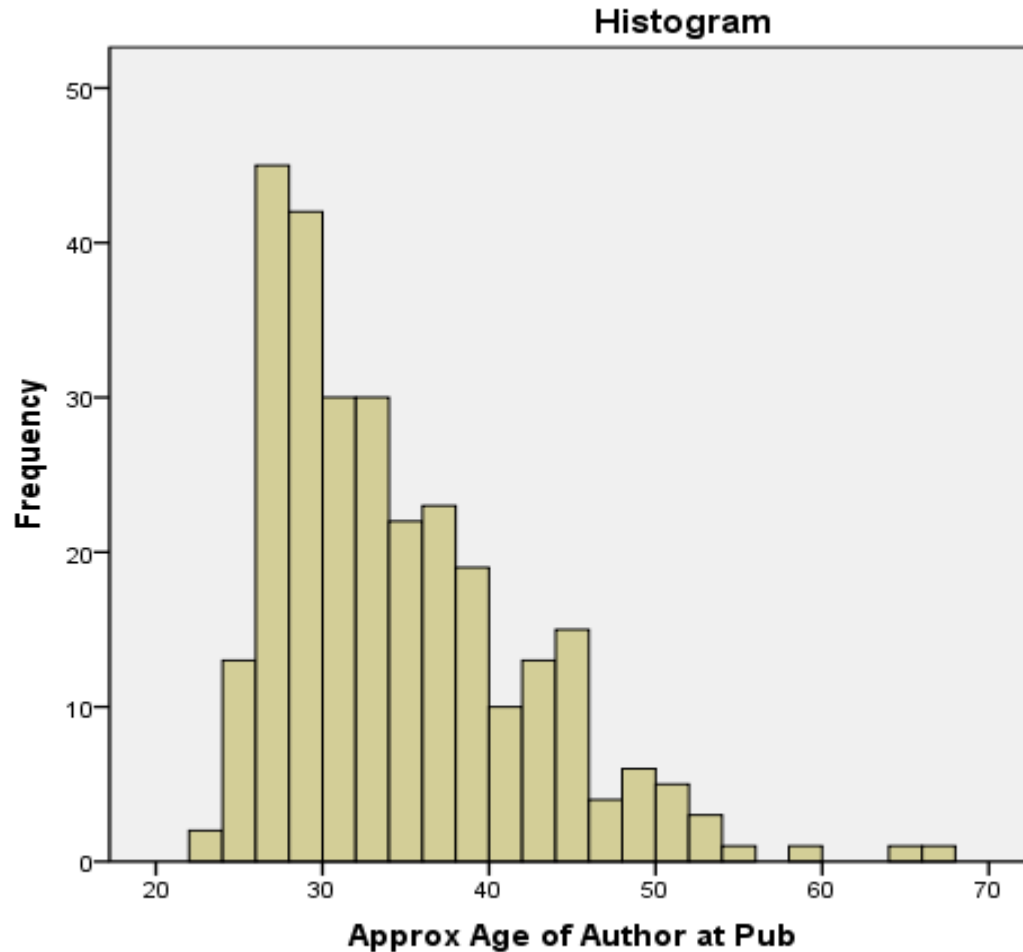


Table 7: Types of University Degrees

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).