

Call for Papers

Market, Justice and the Cooperative as a Political Institution

International Conference

September 27-28, 2018

Chaire de Coopération Guy-Bernier

Université du Québec à Montréal

Is the cooperative a better firm structure? Is it more likely to fulfill the role of an enterprise in the market given its specific structure of ownership, modes of governance and organizational values? Is it more likely to meet the requirements of justice, such as protecting liberty, equality or efficiency in society? These questions have been neglected in a least two important ways. Firstly, the mainstream view among governance and management scholars is that the corporation, not the cooperative, is the most desirable firm structure. Yet, the literature does not provide much scope to deeper justifications for economic markets, what a just political-economic regime is, and to how this might lead one to preferring one firm structure over another. Secondly, although a portion of the political philosophy and social sciences literature has been debating about issues of social justice and market fairness, scant attention has been paid to the private organizations within the market and the implications of theories of justice for the structure of the firm. A common view in that literature, if such a view exists, is that a cooperative structure is more desirable because it embodies other organizational values, it is not only focused on profit maximization, and it offers a better protection against the unjust concentration of wealth, economic power, and political power.

Who should own the private organizations of the market? Investors, workers, consumers, or other groups? What ought to be the specific modes of governance of these organizations? What should their values be? These questions are likely to have important implications for social justice issues. Organizations in these markets are wealthy, powerful, and have an impact on the daily lives of a large number of people, namely because they employ many of them.

The Chaire de Coopération Guy-Bernier will host an international conference at the Université du Québec à Montréal in order to address these issues. We invite applications dealing with these questions from a normative or empirical approach, including but not limited to:

- What is the role of the market in a just society?
- What are the respective benefits of both economic cooperation and competition?
- What is the social purpose of an enterprise? How can cooperatives best fulfill it?
- What is the role of the cooperative in mixed regime of political economy, such as property-owning democracy or market socialism?

- What are, or ought to be, the distinctive features of cooperatives as opposed to other firm structures?
- What is the legacy of the Rochdale cooperative model? Do the Rochdale principles remain important today: voluntary and open membership, democratic member control, political neutrality, member education, community involvement, and so on?
- What are, or ought to be, the ends and means of cooperative governance?
- Should cooperatives promote worker participation and democracy within them?
- What are the distinctive cooperative values, why do they appear, why do they endure?
- Should cooperatives be managed on the basis of values?
- Would giving more scope to values within the market be desirable?

Submission process

To submit a paper for the conference, please send an extended abstract of no more than 1000 words and a 250-word biography. The abstract should be anonymized and prepared for blind-review. Please use this Web site to submit your application:

<https://www.sondageonline.com/s/conf-coop>

Dates

Deadline for submission: **March 15, 2018**

Notification of acceptance: **May 1, 2018**

Conference: **September 27-28, 2018**

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