

INTRODUCTION

« Usual » fields of research of the Chair in Public Relations and Marketing Communication: Professional practices and their evolution

- From needs to perceptions, from perceptions to needs: connecting practitioners, managers, public's representations, expectations and academic research

General context of the Co-operative and Communication project

« If communications should lead to a mode of cooperation, cooperation should lead to a mode, not to say a system, of communication » wrote Henri Desroche in 1992.

In a socio-economic context of long-standing crisis, which implies public mistrust towards traditional economical models, what model(s) and what « system » of communication would suit the cooperative movement?

MAIN GOALS

- Building a bridge between preoccupations of practitioners (all kinds of co-ops) AND scholars' reflections (from multidisciplinary fields)
- Working at an international level to provide best practices comparisons
- Taking evolutive dimensions of context into account:
 - Globalization and crisis
 - New technologies
 - Communicators' roles and professional identities

GENERAL HYPOTHESIS

Authors assume that co-operative organisations represent an alternative model to traditional capitalist types of organisations.

In this perspective, co-operative organisations may need new strategies to communicate in order to position themselves as real and trustworthy alternate enterprises to work with, to work **in** and to **buy** from.

TWO FIRST STEPS OF RESEARCH

1. Study of perception for the International Summit of Co-operatives, Quebec City, October 8th-11th, 2012

- Focus groups with IPSOS
- Members and non-members, aware of being part or not of a co-operative organisation
- 5 countries: Canada (Quebec City), United Kingdom (Manchester), France (Paris), Argentina (Buenos Aires), Japan (Tokyo)
- Exclusive's results during the Summit, on October, 9th, 2012



2. International Forum on Communication Issues for Cooperatives, Quebec City, October 8th, 2012

- Includes communication practitioners of the cooperative sectors AND scholars
- Several countries already participating: Canada, United Kingdom, France, Japan
- 4 main themes:
 - How to communicate efficiently with members and non-members?
 - What definitions and what missions must be promoted?
 - How to mingle web 2.0 and cooperative spirit?
 - The co-op movement as a model for the future: what roles can communication play in the future of cooperatives?
- Call for papers until June, 15th (extension possible, please ask the organisers)

FIRST EMERGING ISSUES

Educational mission

- Consumer-citizen behaviors at stake
- Diversity of legislations/ diversity of relations with governments

Scales of understanding and scales of promotion

- Internal perceptions versus external perceptions

Involvement and duty

- Beliefs
- Misunderstanding

TEMPORARY CONCLUSION

An exploratory stage and a field of research to be built

Common background references with existing researches

- public sphere concept
- relations with the media
- reputation theory
- participation theory
- digital communication...

Specific Challenges

- Due to their alternative structures (Favreau, 2010) and to their particular relations to motivation and involvement values (Simmons and Birchall, 2003), co-operative organisations face new communication challenges while external and internal tensions occur between expectations, perceptions and realities, ideologies and practices.

- Definitions and missions of these organisations thus need to put forward the science of cooperation and to call into question « the assumption of faithfulness » (Leadbeater, 2012) so as to provide the publics with scales of communication for a better understanding

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