



## Editorial

The theme of this year's UK Society for Co-operative Studies Conference was "Supporting the co-operative ecosystem". In a keynote at the conference, I gave an update on developments at the *Journal* over the past 12 months, implemented to keep the *Journal* relevant to the co-operative ecosystem of readers, authors, academics, and practitioners.

The *Journal of Co-operative Studies* has a long history dating back to its first issue in June 1967, when it was known as the *Society for Co-operative Studies Bulletin*. Throughout this time, the *Journal* has adapted to changing circumstances, adopting the current *Journal of Co-operative Studies* title in 1985 and later implementing inclusive approaches to publishing. For example, the green open access policy was introduced at a time when many academic articles were behind expensive paywalls, limiting general readers' access to them. The *Journal's* articles were freely available to everyone after a six-month embargo.

The academic publishing model is changing, however, and nowadays it is more common to have open access articles, sometimes funded by authors who pay to publish. Academic authors are also used to having a DOI (Digital Object Identifier) on their papers, which acts as a permanent, traceable link that makes it easier to find and disseminate research. Given this changed publishing landscape and following consultation with the *Journal's* Editorial Advisory Board, the UK Society for Co-operative Studies Board opted to remove the six-month embargo on publications and to add DOIs to all new papers. Our green open access policy is sometimes known as 'diamond open access' because it means that neither readers nor authors are charged fees. As an international peer-reviewed journal, we think that this is an important way of supporting the co-operative ecosystem because it makes published research accessible to readers, while also ensuring that prospective authors do not face prohibitive costs. Volume 57 will be the first full year of green open access without an embargo period and with DOIs on all papers.

The summer issue showcases the variety of co-operative research being undertaken. The issue begins with an article by Mercè Sala-Ríos, Mariona Farré-Perdiguer, and Teresa Torres-Solé that examines the social, political, and economic factors that could influence a person's motivation to join a co-operative. The authors argue that much of the existing literature on motivations focuses on micro-data or on case studies. Their quantitative study is novel in that it is a macro-level analysis, based on a sample of 25 European countries and studying four main factors: citizens' sense of community; the quality of a country's democracy; citizens' trust in government; and a country's economic performance. The findings suggest that trust

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in government is the most significant of the four factors, followed by the quality of a country's democracy and economic performance. They acknowledge, however, that data on co-operatives can be very limited and suggest that this could be an area of future research.

The second paper by Linda Bennison, Alexandra K. Williamson, and Ellie (Larelle) Chapple reports on accountability among farmers who are members of an Australian agricultural marketing, or distributing, co-operative. Food security within the global supply chain is a pressing issue and the case study asked fruit farmers about their accountability for fresh produce. The findings were counterintuitive, as there was a tension between the farmers, who said that their sole accountability was to themselves and their families, and the wider regulatory environment in Australia. The paper makes sense of these findings using the concepts of latent (unacknowledged) accountability and incremental accountability which builds along the supply chain. The authors argue that the "farm gate" acted as a physical and metaphorical boundary between a farmer, the marketing co-operative, and food supply chains. Latent accountability was connected to farmers' sense of autonomy and independence, meaning that there was often a poor relationship with the marketing co-operative and frustrations with the incremental accountability required along the food supply chain. The paper concludes by suggesting that research into global food security and supply chains needs to pay more attention to small producer co-operatives.

From Australian marketing co-operatives and fruit producers, we move to housing co-operatives. Peter Alexander Carl Pfatteicher, Olive McCarthy, and Carol Power present a history of housing co-operatives in Germany, spanning 160 years of development. The paper presents this history in five phases: the rise of housing co-operatives (1803-1914); World War I and the Weimar Republic (1914-1933); the decline of co-operative values and World War II (1933-1945); a comparison of housing co-operatives in East and West Germany (1945-1990); and post-1990 developments since unification. The paper examines the changing political, social, economic, and cultural contexts in Germany, demonstrating that despite challenges, housing co-operatives have persevered. Developing a supportive legal framework has been key to their survival, as it allowed for co-operative principles and values to become embedded. The paper concludes by considering initiatives that would encourage further co-operative housing development, an area that they regard as critical given ongoing housing crises around the world.

Our last special issue, *Robert Owen and co-operation* (Williams, 2023) was a marvellous collection of articles and essays that showcased the global reach, diversity, and continued relevance of Owen's work. It was guest edited by Professor Chris Williams, who brought together an impressive group of scholars from around the world. The Editorial Team were shocked and deeply saddened to learn of his untimely death. Chris brought vast knowledge, skill, friendship, and co-operative spirit to the special issue. He was a pleasure to work with. Chris was also a valued member of the *Journal's* Editorial Advisory Board. In "A memory of Chris Williams", Nick Matthews pays tribute to Chris, fondly recalling the learned, funny, and unexpected turns that their conversations would take.

The issue concludes with two book reviews. The first is Piero Ammirato's *Cooperative enterprises* which is reviewed by Amanda Benson. As someone who works in co-operative curriculum development, Benson is keenly aware of the need for a textbook dedicated to co-operative enterprise. She praises the ambition, scope, and comprehensive content in the textbook, praising Ammirato's skill at presenting complex information in manageable sections. While Benson notes that the sheer volume of information can be overwhelming at times, she is positive about the range of global, cross-referenced co-operative examples, particularly as they are placed within their political, social, and economic contexts. A significant aspect of the book is that it does not shy away from more problematic aspects of co-operative development such as wage differentials and failure to influence wider society. In sum, Benson suggests that the book will appeal to a wide readership.

The second review, by Alex Bird, is of *Cooperatives at work* which is written by George Cheney, Matt Noyes, Emi Do, Marcelo Vieta, Joseba Azkarraga, and Charlie Michel. The authors

discuss worker co-operatives using six key headings: crises and opportunities, democracy equity and justice, innovation to transformation, community to solidarity, co-operative ecology, and co-operative education. The text begins with an analysis of the dysfunctions of capitalism, then considers workplace democracy, and the revolutionary potential of worker co-operatives. The chapter on innovation is supported by a range of international examples and the chapter on ecology discusses the role of worker co-operatives in supporting a just transition. Finally, the authors explore the importance of co-operative education. Bird marvels at the seamless writing style of the six authors, who have produced a rich academic text that is also accessible to practitioner readers. He also adds that the range of examples used, as well as the ones that were omitted, demonstrate the breadth and depth of the co-operative movement.

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## References

Williams, C. (2023). Guest editorial. Robert Owen and co-operation: Introduction to special issue. *Journal of Co-operative Studies*, 56(3), 3-5.