

# ROCHDALE CO-OPERATIVE MOVEMENT

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## Abstract:

This paper analyzes a social economy movement, Rochdale Pioneers. This paper will discuss the practices, ideas and institutions that allowed Rochdale to become successful and have the influence it had. In doing so, analyze the Rochdale co-operative movement and the conditions that facilitate and inhibit this movement, as well as, an analysis on the strengths and weaknesses, and the historical significance of Rochdale. However, these components within social movements change over time, thus, this paper examines the question of whether or not these changes helped the social movement adapt to its current situation or not. In conclusion, Rochdale was successfully able to adapt to its circumstances through its practices, ideologies and institutions, to form one of the first successful co-operatives.

## Research Question:

The purpose of this paper is to analyse social economy movements and the conditions that facilitate or inhibit such movements providing the basis for alternative regional and development models.

## Thesis:

The key focus is on how Rochdale adapts to particular problems in specific contexts, as well as the conditions under which Rochdale arose and the constraints under which Rochdale operated

## Approach:

To analyze social movements one useful model of a social movement is Develtere's Social-Movement Model, which includes three main components. The three main components are ideology, practice and institutions.

The ideology is the purpose of the social movement, which presents the vision of the society desired based on certain values and the means to achieve this society.

The practice is the method of action of the movement to mobilize the members and to facilitate participation.

The institutions, which allow for effective channeling of action in pursuit of the ideology (Fairbairn, 2001; p.30).

## Conclusion:

Rochdale was successful overall as it had all the features that a successful co-operative must have. Rochdale had a coherent ideology, a wide-range of practices, and institutions that facilitate these practices. Rochdale was created out of need, people needed a co-operative that would create a community that helped fulfill their needs of a better society. These needs were being met as Rochdale took up practices that were based on these goals. Finally, Rochdale created institutions that facilitated these practices and made certain that Rochdale existed for a long period.



13 of the original Pioneers



First Rochdale Shop

## Rochdale Pioneers:

Rochdale is a consumer co-operative established in 1844 as the Rochdale Society of Equitable Pioneers (Lambert, 1968; p.4). Rochdale is a co-operative movement that was created by members of society, in order to benefit themselves, as a response to the political, social and economic conditions (Lambert, 1968; p.4).

## What Is A Social Movement?

A social movement is an organized effort by a broad or narrow group of people in an effort to change the culture of the society, and these movements contribute to the formation of co-operatives (Fairbairn, 2001; p.28).

## Purpose, Practices and Institutions of Rochdale:

### Purpose:

- Rochdale had a coherent ideology that appealed to a broad base of people. Without this ideal Rochdale would not have been successful. These ideas made Rochdale appealing and relevant to members because there was a demand for such a purpose.

### Practices:

- Rochdale practices served a purpose, there were a range of practices. Actions that members undertook to resist change or change the way things are occurring. Rochdale practices served the members and the people's needs.

### Institutions:

- Rochdale institutions were created to facilitate the practices, to organize the members and to concentrate and manage the resources. Rochdale had many allies and created many different institutions to meet the needs of the people, allowing Rochdale to adapt to circumstances and remain stable.

## Co-operative Principles:

The influence of Rochdale was significant and positive. By far the greatest influence is the attempt to reformulate Rochdale principles by the International Co-operative Alliance (Axworthy; p.138). Through Rochdale Principles, theorists came up with key points that all co-operatives must have:

- Democratic Control
- Open and Voluntary Membership
- Limited Interest on Shares
- Return of Surplus to Members
- Co-operatives Education
- Co-operation Among Co-operatives (Axworthy; p.139)