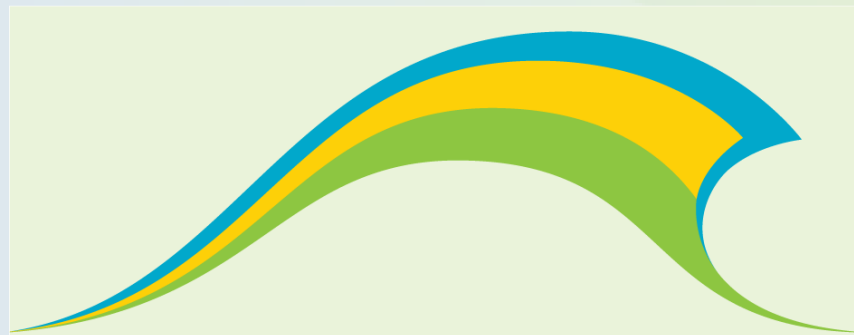


The Co-operative Model: A Durable and Sustainable Enterprise

Réseau de recherche pour mesurer la
DIFFÉRENCE COOPÉRATIVE



Measuring the Co-operative Difference
RESEARCH NETWORK

by
Ian MacPherson
Emeritus Professor of History
University of Victoria

Co-ops do not get the respect they deserve....

They should be more widely appreciated for....

- Their size (1 billion members, serving 3 billions)
- Their diversity (300+ kinds)
- Their social significance (social capital, cohesion, empowerment, democratic practice)
- Their age!!! – yes age is not spelled “b-a-d”

Hurrah!

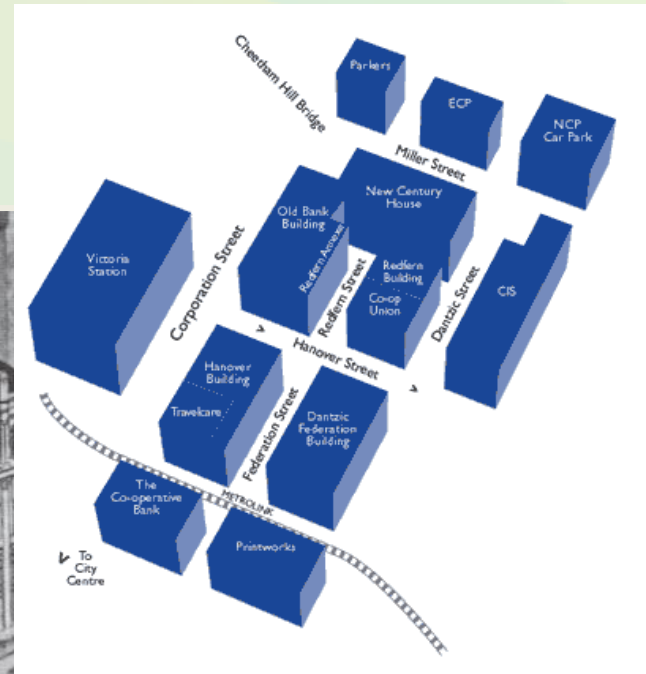


Right on!!!

The lengthy legal basis

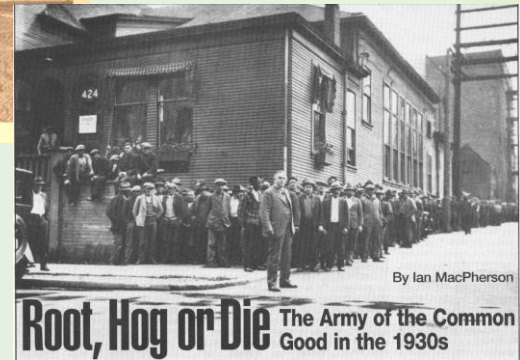
- The varieties of institutional forms
- An unending process
- Importance of the nineteenth century
- Early elaborations of the co-operative model
- The importance of legal frameworks
- The relationship with national identities, culture and social relationships

The British Experience



Other European Movements

- Community co-operative banks → credit unions
- Agricultural/rural co-ops
- Worker co-ops
- Service co-ops (housing, insurance, health, etc.)



Expansion beyond Europe

- Empires and co-operatives
- Settler co-ops
- Independence era co-ops
- The new waves

Culture





The old and the new

- The continuing and exaggerated split
- Generations – of co-ops and people
- The impact of communications

Why the staying power of co-ops?

1

- Not readily sold
- Distribution of power
- The democratic process
- Reduced capacity for financial raids by small groups
- The community binds
- The avoidance of fads
- Basis in culture

Why the staying power of co-ops?

2

- The capacity to mobilize resources
- The breadth of available resources
- Their legal form
- Their capacity for renewal
- Effectiveness of co-operative entrepreneurship

The longevity of co-operative movements

- Several a century or more
- Roots in long-lasting economic and social situations
- Capacity to adjust to new situations
- Effectiveness of federated structures
- Continuing importance of co-op legislation
- Value of expanding co-op possibilities

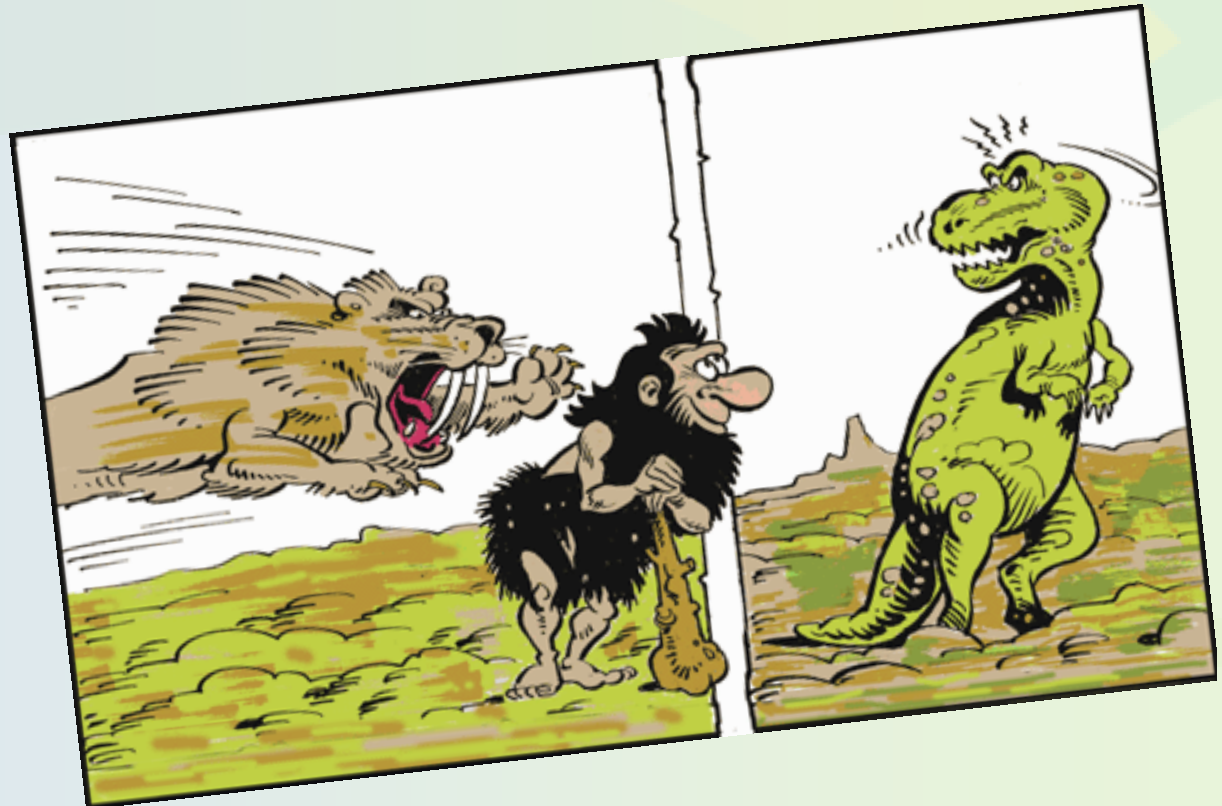
The longevity of Co-operation

As old as humankind

Basis in human nature

Value of mutuality and reciprocity

The importance of examples



Context

- Institutions vs movements vs contexts
- Connections with other movements or social change
- What co-ops offer
- What they fear
- What they reflect

Context – the nineteenth century



Context - today



THANK YOU !!!!!

cluny1@uvic.ca