

PROUDLY PRESENTING THE INAUGURAL SEMINAR IN

The MacPherson Talks

Rethinking the Economics of Co-operatives

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Co-operatives continue to grow and thrive in many countries, despite the dire predictions of traditional economics, which heralds their disappearance or at least marginalization. This short-sighted approach depends on at least three limitations: 1) assuming that only the market and authority can co-ordinate economic agents; 2) placing too much importance on the motivation of self-interest in economic transactions; and 3) reducing the concept of entrepreneurial action to the profit motive.

These limitations must be overcome if we are to develop a new approach to the economics of co-operatives that will help us achieve a more useful understanding of these organizations. This presentation will explore a number of alternatives that challenge traditional economic thinking, culminating in the suggestion that spontaneous co-operation can be seen as the dominant, though not exclusive, co-ordinating mechanism of co-operative enterprises. It also suggests that co-operatives can be more efficient than other entrepreneurial forms and can contribute to the generation of higher social welfare than that achieved by conventional public and private enterprises.

Trained in both sociology and economics, Carlo Borzaga has research interests in co-ops, social enterprises, and the economic role of nonprofit organizations and their interactions with welfare policies. He is a member of the EMES European Research Network and chair of IRIS, a network of Italian research centres investigating social enterprises. He is co-editor of the newly launched international *Journal of Entrepreneurial and Organizational Diversity* and consults widely for international organizations, including the OECD, ILO, and the European Commission.



Tuesday, 15 September 2015, 3:30–4:30 pm

Saskatoon: Prairie Room, Diefenbaker Building, U of S Campus

Regina: Room 210, 2 Research Drive, University of Regina

Live streamed at <http://live.usask.ca/?sn=15011>

Reception to follow in the River Room, Diefenbaker Building, U of S Campus

Reception sponsored by the U of S College of Arts and Science



The MacPherson Talks honour the late Dr. Ian MacPherson, one of the leading lights of the international co-operative movement. Historian, educator, author, and passionate co-operator, Ian personified the relationship between Canadian co-operative academics and co-op practitioners. The MacPherson Talks will be held annually at the Centre for the Study of Co-operatives.

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