

Cooperative Societies in Greenland and Nunavik: A Lesson on the Importance of Supporting Structures

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Abstract

We present different types of cooperatives in Greenland and Nunavik, Canada, in order to assess two different developments. A first approach to comparisons leads to an anomaly suggesting the necessity of empirical analysis in the two regions. Why is it that Greenland never really managed to create a cooperative movement? Except for consumer cooperatives, the remaining types of supply and worker cooperatives were a failure. There were isolated success stories for a limited period of time, but the general picture remains the same. Most of these cooperatives are liquidated, and we never saw multi-purpose cooperatives established. Quite the contrary took place in Nunavik, in the northern part of Québec in Canada. Here we saw a viable cooperative movement, and everywhere local communities established multipurpose cooperatives. At the same time a strong cooperative association evolved. It seems that cooperative supporting structures are essential to a cooperative success in an Arctic region.