

De la coopérative au marché. Entreprenariat privé
versus entreprenariat collectif

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Work is society

Each type of society is the result of a specific form of work organisation

Each form of work organisation creates a specific form of social relations and as a result a specific society

Each form of work division goes with a specific set of values. For example, the « gift economy » vs the « market economy »; « capitalism » vs « socialism »

Differences between contemporary societies result from differences in work organisation that translate into different set of values

Ex. Québec's social economy and strong public enterprises (result from Québécois quest for autonomy and identity) vs Alberta's neoliberalism (based on individualism and quest for profit)

Three forms of enterprises

Public enterprises

Goal: to provide services or produce good and services for the benefit of all the members of the society. Risks are also shared by everybody. Usually they do not intend to generate benefit.

Private enterprises

Goal: to produce good for the benefit of the sole investors. Risks are also taken by the sole investors but they try to externalise it.

Co-op enterprises

Goal: to produce services or goods for the benefit of its members. Risks and profits are shared by the sole members but the whole community can benefit of the co-op activities.

Cycle of the co-op

The causes for the creation of a co-op

Lack of proper services or businesses

Market too small

Few state input in the economy

Monopoly of a private enterprise

Political or economical decolonisation

Québec, Nunavik

Consolidation

Institutionnalisation or decline

The co-op and the First Peoples of Canada

Aboriginal co-op are of great interest for social scientists because of their success

Co-op are 4 time more numerous (per capita) in the North than in the rest of Canada

133 Aboriginal co-operatives in Canada

An empowerment tool. A way to maintain « sharing »

However

Today Aboriginal peoples create more companies than other Canadians

Private sector is growing 8 times faster amongst Aboriginal communities

The question

- Is this the end of the co-op mouvement among Aboriginal community?
 - Institutionnalisation or decline?
- Will the new work organization affect the social relations within inuit communities?
- Our study : The FCNQ: *Fédération des coopératives du Nouveau-Québec*

The co-op in Nunavik : a whiteman idea. An inuit success

Rational to introduce the co-op in the North

To help the Inuit to cope with the collapse of the furtrade

To introduce the Inuit to modern economy

Inuit rational to adopt the co-op

- To free themselves from the HBC compagny
- To gain control over inuit art
- A political incubator

In 1959, 20 Inuit hunters from Kangiqsualujjuaq then called George River, paid \$1 each to launch a cooperative.

In 1967 five cooperatives (today 14) created *La Fédération des Coopératives du Nouveau Québec*.

Numerous services:

Retail stores, Banking, post offices, cable TV and Internet services.

Management training, staff development and auditing service.

Marketing of Inuit art across Canada and around the world.

Hotels, a travel agency, hunting and fishing camps.

Bulk storage and distribution of oil & fuel supplies.

Construction projects for housing, schools, etc.

The co-op « more than a store »

The FCNQ is the largest non-government employer in Nunavik;
over 260 full-time and 50 seasonal employees in the North
120 full-time employees in Montreal.

Sales - \$1.1 million in 1967
- \$143 million in 2004

The JBNQA : the beginning of a new area for Nunavik

Public-run enterprises step in the economy

Makivik is invested of the mandate to protect the rights, interests and financial compensation provided by the JBNQA

Creation of the Kativik Regional Government

Numerous employment created by the regional and municipal governments

Repercussions on the Co-op

Regional economy dominated by public sector

Competition for qualified workers and resources

Co-op is not anymore the only source of Inuit proud

Young people less involved in coop

However co-op still are key actors in Nunavik because

they are institutionnalized and provided all services that the government (municipal and regional) cannot

As a result Nunavik has a mixt economy public/co-op, which create a specific form of society and social link

Contemporary Economic constraints

Nunavik has the youngest population in Canada with a median age of 20 years old.

Between 1971 and 2001, the region's population more than doubled.

Theoretically, to meet the demand for employments the increase in jobs needs to be at least 300%.

Growth of regular, full-time jobs does not benefit Inuit as much as Whites

The government still wants to help

A common sense opinion: private sector is the key to Aboriginal community development

Numerous programs are created to help Aboriginal people to create business.

Former Prime Minister founded the *Capital for Aboriginal Prosperity and Entrepreneurship Fund*, whose investments seek to further a culture of economic independence, ownership and entrepreneurship amongst Aboriginal peoples, through the creation and growth of successful businesses.

Positive responses

Young Aboriginal people are more aware of funding opportunities and take more advantage of it than other young entrepreneurs.

Many young Aboriginal start small business, many more dream of becoming entrepreneur.

In every regions of Canada many Aboriginal businesses are sucess stories

Will the private entrepreneurship kill the “inuit way”?

A first answer

“[...] the market economy is transforming the social organization of the Inuit. [...] This phenomenon is the direct result of the generalized application of economic rationality” (Chabot, 2003 : 32)

Gifts will be maintain in Inuit society until the Market will be able to provide every goods and services necessary

Capitalist economy because it is an autonomous sphere desembded from society is inevitable and will affect every society independently of the will of their population

“We don’t live anymore in the past. People don’t share the way they use to do, if you want to eat you need a job.”

“Coop: a business like any other. Don’t wait for them to get a job.”

A second answer :

The “inuit way” will survive underneath the market economy

Atautsikut/Together – working to develop as a people, leaving none behind

We were ceated to serve our people, if our young peoples want to create private enteprises we have to help and train them

Co-op and private sector are not opposed

Internet to allow carvers to sell by themselves

Businessmen perspectives

Doing business it is just a way to make a living and to be proud of yourself.

People are tired to be on welfare. I don't want to become rich, I just want to survive like my ancestors did.

The co-op is a good starting point. Both for the community because the coop helps to initiate economic development, and it is also good for the people because you can learn with the coop how to do business.

Coop are not in our way they do their job and we do our. There are things the coop do better; there are things we do better than private companies.

Business is also solidarity

Although some businessmen pretend to adopt a “capitalist” approach in fact they most of the time:

Favour Aboriginal recruitment

Have culturally adapted work conditions

Want to “resist” the big corporations and fight discrimination

Work to create a better future for everyone

Think success is a mean to make Inuit proud of themselves

Conclusion

False contradiction between individualist and community oriented discourses.

Similare values inhabit Coop entrepreneurs and private entrepreneurs. (Peugeot versus Renault)

The contemporary inuit society: a mixt between a still predominant public-run enterprises, a strong institutinnalized co-op sector and a pivate sectors more oriented toward community building than profit.

This combinaison between the three forms of economic actors is not the product of fate but is the result of collective goal and value and can be oriented by the people itself.

Several other examples in First Nations

Uashat : A businessman « We are socialists... »

Strategic hiring

South Indian Lake (MB)

Alliance between private businesses, Band Council and Co-op.