The Cooperative Business Movement, 1950 to the Present

The United Nations declared 2012 the International Year of Cooperatives, emphasizing that there is an alternative to privately owned firms. At a time when greed and mismanagement have caused world financial and economic crises, co-ops offer another type of business for economic activities that is less exposed to aggressive capitalism. This book provides a problem-oriented overview of the development of cooperatives during the last fifty years. This worldwide study addresses the major challenges cooperatives face, such as introducing organizational innovations to acquire necessary risk capital and implementing growth-related strategies, the wave of demutualization in developed nations, and the ability of cooperative enterprise to construct an original consumer politics. The contributors to this volume discuss the successes and failures of cooperatives and ask whether the co-op is an outdated model of enterprise. They document a wave of foundations of new co-ops, new forms of collaboration between them, and a growing trend toward globalization. Generally speaking, these authors show that this special kind of business will doubtless continue to thrive and to maintain an important position in a rapidly changing world economy.

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Comparative Perspectives in Business History

In the early decades of the twenty-first century, the world economy is experiencing its most profound transformation since the Industrial Revolution. Firms, communications systems, and markets for products, services, labor, and currencies are all breaking out of national boundaries. Business enterprises today must negotiate a global environment in order to innovate and to compete in ways that will protect or enhance their market shares. Governments must respond in new ways to the periodic crises that occur in all market-centered systems. At the same time, governments and firms find it essential to understand the different perspectives growing out of local, regional, and national experiences with business and economic development. This has become a crucial competitive advantage to companies and a vital skill for those who study them. Comparative Perspectives in Business History explores these developments in a series of volumes that draw upon the best work of scholars from a variety of nations writing on the history of enterprise, public and private. The series encourages the use of new styles of analysis and seeks to enhance understanding of modern enterprise and its social and political relations, leaders, cultures, economic strategies, accomplishments, and failures.

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The Cooperative Business Movement, 1950 to the Present

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