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Unity Makes Strong: Cooperative Farmer Organizing and Agrarian Corporatism in Denmark and Norden

Bakgrund/Frågeställning

Unity makes strong: Cooperative organizing in Norden

This paper follows the trajectory of cooperative organizing of economic life in Norden from the early modern village community to the modern cooperative business. Focusing on Denmark, it argues that as the traditional village community and estate system dissolved, peasant-farmers invented new organizational forms. Firstly religious, political, and social organizations within the new parish communities, and later the cooperatives as a way to strengthen the economic position of peasant-farmers within society at large. It demonstrates that while at first a local and practical solution, the cooperatives gained momentum due to socio-political conflicts in the later 19th century and became embedded within a wider rural cultural and organizational network. This gave especially Danish economic development a distinctively associational characteristic as cooperative organizations consolidated on a national level. By the 1960s, however, international economic pressures as well as shifts in national political interests led to rural depopulation, increasing farm sizes, centralization, and the dissolution of rural culture and organizations. While cooperative businesses survived this dramatic transformation, their former associational aspect was lost as their business aspect became disembedded from wider organizational and cultural networks. Today, while recent initiatives are attempting to breathe new life into the cooperative tradition, it is questionable whether they will succeed in an entirely new economic and social reality.

Metod och Resultat

Konklusion