

Title The development of market-oriented cooperatives within the fruit industry in the Mekong delta, Vietnam: a theory building approach to understanding rural development outcomes

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Abstract

This paper presents the preliminary results of one case study from a longitudinal research project. The purpose was to develop a theoretical framework to explain the dynamic development of market-oriented cooperatives within the fruit industry in the Mekong Delta based on empirical data collection and analysis using the grounded theory method. In a transitional economy, collective action is promoted as a means to ensure an active role for producers during the agricultural transformation process. However, cooperatives do not operate in isolation of their context and sustaining the progress of cooperative development depends on the ability of participants to continually resolve conflicting demands from both internal and external stakeholders. A case-based theoretical model, comprised of four core categories: Transitioning, External support, Inhibitors and Member commitment, is derived from the data and highlights the complexity of cooperative development and the impact of the local context. Interactions between these categories are discussed. Member commitment is seen as driving cooperative development.