

For a European example of food commons, de Angelis provides a profile of the work of Campi Aperti, Bologna (p. 294) that from the late 1990s has developed a growing co-operative network of five regular community supported agriculture markets. For each market, a monthly general assembly is held with consumer and farmer members to co-manage the food commons. Bimonthly general assemblies are held bringing members of all five markets together. Farmers are guaranteed a fair trade price, set by members of each market. The assured quality of the local food, the treatment of the animals and the land is vetted and inspected by the consumer members. Local and organic food produced includes fruit, vegetables, herbs, pasta, cheese, meat, as well as flowers, oils, soap and detergents, seedlings and beverages. Today the system has expanded to an organic growing acreage approaching 250 hectares and equivalent to a food growing area close to Bologna of 300 large Premier league football pitches (see www.campiaperti.org).

In other northern Italian cities (including Milan and Venice) and regions (Val di Susa) farmers and consumers have joined a national network called Genuino Clandestino that is replicating the commons (chapter 8). Campi Aperti has developed a solidarity economy partnership in Bologna and under the City's radical new by-law (the Bologna regulation for 'the commons') the co-operatives have negotiated a lower rate of 5 per cent of trade for market space which is half the city's conventional charge.

De Angelis examines other commons, including the Solidarity Clinics in Greece and shows how the growing awareness of commons (including Wikipedia, free software, Creative Commons Licensing; our cultural inheritance, public spaces, libraries, museums; car sharing, etc.) is informing a new set of political alliances to overcome austerity. Bologna and Barcelona are in the forefront of innovative policies by local government to recognise, nurture and support the emergence and development of a co-operative commons economy. As De Angelis observes, not all co-operatives are commons. To be a commons, co-production by stakeholders, non-hierarchical practices and active democratic member involvement in planning, designing, developing and co-managing the commons is crucial. Most importantly, commons need self-consciously and strategically to unite to co-develop a new integrated mode of production for people and planet.

Given the dominance of the state and market duopoly, political conflicts go with the territory. The major difference that De Angelis shows is between commons and capital. Capital is driven by a mission to develop shareholder value and expand capital. For commons, money is a servant and not a master as its mission is to develop commonwealth not commodities. Historically the co-operative movement has pursued the development of co-operative commonwealth as its mission, but this vision and mission has been for too long neglected. De Angelis shows powerfully how to revive this radical mission for meeting a growing range of basic needs in the 21st century.

The Reviewer

Pat Conaty is a Research Associate of Co-operatives UK and a Fellow of the New Economics Foundation.

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