

LOCAL FOOD NETWORK: POLICIES AND PRACTICES OF INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

Community-Supported Agriculture: local actions with larger impacts for a social ecological transformation. An Italian experience, an international perspective to rethink the territory and the city

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Reports say cities keep expanding, consuming fertile land and enlarging transport infrastructures to allow for their increasing affluence to be satisfied by external resources and goods. However, if tragic social and ecological incidents regrettably start emerging, their systemic nature is no (yet) widely acknowledged. As a matter of fact, the social and ecological limits of the current industrial economic paradigm on this planet let us glimpse an upcoming exhaustion to be possibly prevented through a positive transformation. If the quest for an improved efficiency of the same paradigm seems not much more than a diversionary, we maintain that the demand should be targeted instead, and the rethinking of the territory, the city, and its supporting environment is necessarily involved. In this perspective, food seems a good start in such a transformation, for its ability to shape the territory both for its production and for its delivery, while representing one of the basic human needs. We present an example of communal self-management for organic agricultural production, inspired to model of Community-Supported Agriculture (CSA). This project was started in the urban sprawl of massively industrialised North-Eastern Italy by committed individuals and grassroot groups, already active in discourses on ecological sustainability, social equity, social and solidarity economy, transition and post-growth. After describing the functioning of the model as well as of the case study at issue, also framing it in a multi-scale dimension, we analyse its benefit both at a local level and at larger levels, involving the shape of cities, their relations with the countryside, the needed transport infrastructures as well as the preservation of land, water bodies, and local resilience and quality of life in general. From individual-to-collective self-determination and bottom-up initiative through food plans and other tools to be participatorily defined with all the actors of a given area, a CSA can represent the trigger of a virtuous paradigmatic shift in more or less institutional policies for the maintenance, regeneration, and strengthening of territory and urban environments

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