

Chapter 8



Community Trouble

Cooperative Conundrum

This chapter discusses the nexus between personal relations and cooperatives, drawing from the tensions already described previously between labour in the co-ops and informal income opportunities around and outside their framework. Exposure to the demands of market institutions has been noted as the major factor in the development of hierarchies and unequal divisions of labour within cooperatives.

I just discussed how state and cooperatives unintentionally reproduce women's roles as registered landowners *because* of the standardisation of labour the state and cooperatives promote. The cultural codes that surround these roles also reflect state policies (the benefits system) and cooperatives' strategies (not hiring women as fieldhands) and are therefore relevant to both mafia and anti-mafia families. While registration of land to women was not a novel idiom but indeed a well-embedded cultural practice considered foundational for local livelihoods and views of community life, the role of wives as *capoaziende* became more entrenched in the broader political economy when their husbands entered regulated employment, as it brought an unimpeded flow of unemployment benefits for their husbands when needed.

The continuity in cultural codes shows itself to be compatible with cultural variation and pluralism in a changing Sicily (Schneider and Schneider 2006), which proves the historical dynamism of the concept as these codes adapt to novel circumstances – anti-mafia families, benefit strategies and the like. Inasmuch as it counts for employment, and all work within the household is non-valourised in monetary terms, registering land to wives opened up the potential for more income opportunities as well as for stratification within co-ops.

The dynamics of such practices implies they can be open to manipulation by powers external to the co-ops, including the mafia itself. After all, my overall analysis of dynamics within anti-mafia cooperatives avoids assuming that it is simply the influence of access to markets that compromises internal cooperative relations as well as the specific political role ('anti-mafia') that co-ops had locally. In this way, 'community participation' appears more of a problem than a solution. The point here is

to demonstrate that cooperative participants may well belong to different ‘communities’. Hence, appeals to cooperative ‘mutuality’ (Heckscher 2015) can – unwittingly – very well contradict economic democracy in cooperativism. On the one hand, local workers of anti-mafia cooperatives are drawn towards ideas of community pertaining to alliances with localised, stratified struggles. Such peasant dissent, however, can reproduce unequal relations of power that can even reflect mafia rhetoric and practice. On the other hand, the co-op administrators’ understanding of community in state-sponsored ways also endangered the co-ops’ work relations.

Building on points already explored, the chapter hence proposes to rethink the dichotomy between ‘community’ and ‘wage employment’ as mutually dependent, albeit contradictory. The aim is to examine cooperatives within the tensions that their politicised anti-mafia principles create as they relate to their participants’ livelihoods. These principles are rooted in idealised versions of what community can stand for. Most of the data presented here relate to peasant mobilisations in Sicily, where co-op members actively participated alongside *mafiosi*, guided by a sense of ‘community’ radically different to the anti-mafia co-ops’ community ideology.

This begs for revisiting a widely influential theorisation of community and economy’s dialectics, pertaining to the work of Stephen Gudeman on tensions between market and community (2008). The ‘base’, centred around the house is, for the influential economic anthropologist, a way to think and construct the community. Some of this discussion speaks to the present book’s anthropological conceptualisation of cooperatives that moves beyond seeing them as enclave institutions committed to specific views of community. Such views can resonate with what community ‘is’ (or indeed should be), what community participation implies and how community economics can be served by cooperativism. The normativities ingrained in these politicised drives of cooperatives are put to the test in the complex Sicilian landscape, where people’s lives can involve both the social life of mafia and that of anti-mafia. Gudeman’s take can help, but we should be attentive when we rely on dichotomies or relational pillars, however subtle, between community and economy. We can benefit, instead, from reviewing whether community is, or can be, a starting point for cooperatives at all. Our Sicilian lens here implies that a path laid for cooperativism by normative distinctions between community and economy, where mutuality is served by the cooperativisation project, can prove slippery.

While I have mainly focused on women when discussing anti-mafia families, including the narratives of ‘female’ land tenure, the claims to community I refer to here are ‘manly’. It is men, situated in the

public space that talk about women and about land. Gendered divisions of labour in agriculture, often surrounded by ‘mystique’ (Ferguson 1994: 160–66; Mosse 2004: 62), help comprehend people’s livelihoods outside the terms of a standardised wage-employment political economy. I have talked already about the masculine idioms of co-op workers I’ve observed when working the fields. Their irregular, seasonal and contingently gendered agrarian work is central to the constitution of smallholders’ political organisation and dissent.

Claims to Community Participation

It would be a methodological mistake to commence the analysis from that idea of community. What matters here is inquiring on what exactly is meant by community *on the ground* – and the point is that there are many ideas on community, and thus many ‘communities’ in the co-ops. Learning what happens in co-ops’ workforces when groups have different viewpoints on what community is could be the anthropological endeavour here.

We can start a critical anthropological take on this problem by being reminded of the work of Susana Narotzky and Gavin Smith. Along these lines, and in the context of the corporatist hegemony of references to ‘community’ in regionalist rhetoric in Spain, Narotzky and Smith propose a critical reading of ‘community’ ideologies (Narotzky 1988, 1997: 120; Narotzky and Smith 2006). Both Narotzky and Smith criticise explicit references to cooperativism as ‘community economics’ for being a state-produced ideologically manipulative scheme that reproduces hierarchy (G. Smith 1999; Narotzky 2004).

The analysis that follows here, arguing beyond the paradigm of cooperatives as community economics, does not see market influence as the only cause of the shortfalls of cooperativist principles, unlike the implicit criticism of the market and the political system, in Smith and Narotzky. References to community, some of which can be state-sponsored, can also hide existing conflicts among co-op participants, as in the case of the anti-mafia cooperatives. The data here raises the question of ‘which community’ is meant when community participation is understood differently by members of cooperatives and especially when *different factions* in an already stratified division of labour make claims to different understandings of ‘community’.

My argument hence draws on definitions of what community *is understood to be* within our research participants’ paradigms. In these Sicilian cases, one cooperative faction sees the state as representative of commu-

nity – as against the Mafia. At the same time, another faction holds an understanding of community that is informed precisely by the personalised, unequal relations of patronage associated with the Mafia. How can we locate ‘community’ in such contemporary cooperativist configurations?

The main aim of the analysis that follows is to question the concept of cooperatives as ‘community economics’, in order to suggest an anthropological approach that takes into account the internal factions’ differing concepts of community. This is associated with a different kind of ethnographic discussion than the chapters on food activism, kinship and householding ideologies and practices. Rather than the somehow introverted ethnography of those chapters, which focused on co-ops’ inward-looking institutions, what follows draws from members’ activities outside the realm of co-ops – activities, however, that constitute, partly, the social life of co-ops. The question driving the ethnography here is how claims to community often reinforce inequality and reproduce social phenomena, such as the mafia, that cooperatives are meant to diminish.

Community for Cooperative Administrators

As discussed throughout the course of this book, the Consortium was delegated to distribute all confiscated land within the eight municipalities of Spicco Vallata and oversee its use. The rhetoric used by the Consortium in this redistribution of assets presents a just state actively intervening to restore to an (idealised) community what has been ‘stolen’ from it. State documents explaining the rationale behind the confiscations (Focus 2001: 1) present *mafiosi* as having ‘usurped’ the agricultural land from what was allegedly ‘in the common domain,’ available to ‘the community’ (Focus 2001: 4). As discussed, the land was allocated to the cooperatives because ‘they represented the community’ (Libertà 2009: 2) and were founded to promote ‘an economy of legality and solidarity’ (Libertà 2010: 2).

Administrators subscribed to the Consortium’s claims to community, despite the fact that these claims are largely imaginary. Specifically, there was only one short-lived historical case of collectively owned land in Spicco Vallata during the 1946 peasant land occupations (Santino 2009), but rhetorically the confiscations all draw on this post-war revolutionary interlude in the late 1940s (Rakopoulos 2014a; see also here, pages 67–69). Accepting the Consortium’s state-produced rhetoric that the confiscated land symbolises ‘a resource for the area, an opportunity for development and civil growth’ (Frigerio and Pati 2007: 5), the cooperatives’ administrators perceive that the newly created cooperatives can ‘democratically accommodate the land returned to the community’ (Frigerio and Pati: 37).

The Consortium's promotion of state intervention in Spicco Vallata aims at the restitution of assets to 'the community' (Frigerio and Pati.) in the sense of 'reconstituting unlawfully usurped land back to the collectivity' (Focus 2001). According to the administrators then, the cooperatives represent the 'collective'.

As administrators commuted every day from Palermo to work in the cooperatives' offices in Spicco Vallata and were not living there permanently, their understanding of community with regard to the co-ops' activity was divorced from local experience and was more aligned to the urban civil society in which their lives were embedded (see the analysis of the 1990s anti-mafia movement in Schneider and Schneider 2002b; 2006). The administrators' legally bound regulation of labour, which they called 'standardisation' presented work in the cooperatives as legal, remunerative, safe and non-hierarchical.

The core idea driving administrators was that anti-mafia cooperativism was providing employment and all their enclaving attempts were made in the good faith of protecting this environment that offered local agrarian jobs. But as seen extensively throughout this ethnography, the actual livelihoods of co-op worker-members were more complex. As remuneration from the cooperative was not sufficient to make a living, the local co-op workers continued to seek other means of livelihood. Workers, unlike administrators, engaged in the informal activities already described, outside the cooperative framework, to complement their family income.

It should be noted that the idea (and ideal) of cooperativism *as a form of work* (implied in the politicised project of curbing the mafia) is critical because it opens the way to rethink the definition of work beyond labour. This is, of course, already in contradiction with legal definitions, notably the one encapsulated in the standardisation of waged work on the model of employment. The work of what Marxists call social reproduction (Narotzky 1997: 158–59) always falls off the map since it is mostly not commodified and also generally assumed to be mainly women's work. (At the same time, the work of creation of *non-market value* [e.g., political], such as the cooperatives themselves, is, if anything, even more ignored *as labour*). Taking this hidden labour into account re-signifies the range of meanings of informal practices. It also points to the direction of politicisation around defending this informality. Developing against a backdrop of registered ('standardised') work, these practices become impregnated with new potentials vis-à-vis not only the co-ops but also state regulation at large. Informal work activities become a crucial facet of social reproduction, as important as 'employment' (Narotzky 1997: 36–37) and, in the case of benefits, dependent on it.

Smooth employment relations in the cooperatives were *also* dependent on informal work, as informalities alleviated stratifications (within the manual workforce) and across workers and administrators, bringing all members to comparable income statuses. But co-op workers were also part of a greater community of smallholders, with its own political agendas and everyday concerns. Mafia was part of that community. It was, at the time of fieldwork, no longer the grandiose and violent mafia of the Tarinisi operating in an international heroin ring, with Barbetto as the San Giovanni main figure, but rather a more low-key group, operating in an agrarian configuration.

As agrarian wage labour in Spicco Vallata has historically been unregulated and highly exploitative, some local networks in the informal economy were controlled by the mafia (Lupo 2011; and as shown in the urban context of Palermo, per Falcone 1993; Cole 2007). In this setting, the anti-mafia cooperatives' promotion of regulated work proved unable to contain local workers' practices that derived from other, more immediate definitions of community, including ongoing relations with *mafiosi* (as shown in the following section).

'Mutual Aid': Informal Work Exchange among Co-op Workers and Other Peasants

In late October 2009, just after the harvest, peasants (including most of the co-op's worker-members¹) took to the streets, angered because they thought that the prices offered by local wineries for the grapes their vineyards produced were exploitative, averaging twenty eurocents per kilogram (see table 7.1). They demanded compensation for their losses through EU subsidies administered by the Sicilian Autonomous Region. In a 'spontaneous protest', unrelated to the local agrarian unions, thousands gathered outside the majestic medieval building of the Parliamentary Assembly of Sicily. A coffin engraved with the words 'Spicco Vallata' was on public display, symbolising the death of the area. One man from San Giovanni was quick to explain that 'there has never been so much law enforcement and regulation of our activity . . . and so we have to be more vocal'. Some demonstrators held a banner that read: 'Stop penalising us, stop the fines.' By 'penalisation', they meant the enforcement of the law against *lavoro nero*, or unregistered work. After the success of the anti-mafia cooperatives and the administrators' talk of 'standardising' labour relations, state agents had taken the issue of registered work more seriously. The police often raided the fields to check on labourers' documentation proving their legitimate, contractual work. The employers were penalised with heavy fines for unreported work.

In discussions I joined at the demonstration, people kept repeating the phrase, *'Ci rubiamo tra di noi'*, which literally translates as, 'We are stealing from each other'. Although whimsical, the phrase has a telling contextual translation: 'It's mutual stealing'. In the heated atmosphere of the demonstration, the expression was a response to accusations and criminal charges that they as 'employers' were robbing their 'employees' of social security contributions. As a co-op worker clarified to me, 'if this is stealing, it is mutual, as between us it is turn and turn about: today's "employer" is tomorrow's "employee"; so we are "stealing" from each other. Demonstrators referred to this reciprocal exchange of labour as 'mutual aid,' alluding to it as a 'community practice'; payment for work exchanged hands under the table. A day's work normally amounted to a mutually agreed average of thirty euros. People from the cooperatives shared the viewpoint that it was unfair for the state to penalise peasants for their informal mutual aid networks.

However, deployed in a discourse of friendship and conviviality in the village, the claim of mutuality did not recognise the unequal relations of power in this agrarian labour market – and the way mafia patrons benefited from the system. In fact, the practice of 'mutual aid' was informed and encouraged by local *mafiosi* landowners, who aimed to further radicalise the demonstrations. Sharing with dissenting peasants the term 'mutual aid', they identified in this system a 'Sicilian way of life' that they wanted to defend, drawing on discourses of 'community' understood as shared by all peasants. The rhetoric on the maintenance of 'community mutual aid' obscured the class differences involved. The implied integration through community mutual aid was equally premised on friendship relations among peasants *and* on the mafia's overarching patronage.²

In November 2009 in Principe, a Spicco Vallata village, seven hundred peasants gathered and burned their citizen ID cards in a public ritual disowning their Italian citizenship to express how they felt 'abandoned and penalised by the state.' The anti-mafia cooperative administrators condemned the event as excessive and dangerous. The role of *mafiosi* and politicians close to them was fundamental in encouraging *sicilianismo* in the event, as *mafiosi* influencing the demonstration hailed 'the unity of the peasantry' and the 'common interests of all Sicilians'. *Mafiosi* who had prompted the Principe event called for similar activism across all Spicco Vallata villages and publicly encouraged Sicilians to 'follow the French farmers' example' (a reference to demonstrations earlier that year) in rejecting the state and its symbols. The *Carabinieri* police marshal thought that such massive 'resistance' could hardly be prosecuted, so the police were deployed in an observational role only.

The activity of the *mafioso* Baffi, who we have encountered earlier (see, e.g., page 126) is characteristic. He was a widely popular figure, recently out of prison, and regarded as an incumbent mafia 'boss' of the area. The day after the Principe event, hundreds of peasants, among them co-op workers, gathered in the municipal hall of San Giovanni to discuss the way forward for their demonstrations. The hall was packed. All the chairs were given to senior San Giovanni citizens, while the younger crowded where they could. At one point, Baffi grabbed the microphone and addressed the public of fellow '*contadini*' (peasants), smiling confidently as he started speaking. His speech animated the crowd. He advocated a mild Sicilianist separatism, an idea with which Sicilians today identify very loosely and not in an explicitly political fashion, but that has a long and tormented history with the mafia playing a leading role, especially in the late 1940s and early 1950s (Paternò 1977; Spataro 2001).

'His charisma speaks for all of us,' said an old man sitting beside me. Baffi attacked the police prosecution and insisted that the 'mutual aid' system was 'established as a tradition in the area' and was something that 'Sicilians just do and should be proud of doing.' He repeated this tactic a few days later at the next gathering. On that occasion, he appealed to 'Sicilian unity' and expressed 'disregard for the miserly state of Rome,' which 'wants to suck taxes out of Sicily' and 'penalise local peasants'. Baffi told me later that 'the law enforcement uses anti-mafia talk to put fines on us, as if everyone here is a *mafioso*.'

I noticed another *mafioso* I knew, Numia, of the same generation as Baffi, who was present there to discuss with peasants in an affirmative manner. This was particularly odd because Numia was not a farmer but actually a barber, a profession whose interests were totally unrelated to the event. His presence there confirmed that the local mafia was invested in influencing, in 'giving a tone' to the event and the mobilisation, as a farmer told me confidentially. Right beside me stood an old gentleman who introduced himself as 'just another *contadino*'; I soon found out after asking around that he used to be the personal driver of Toto Riina, the leader of the Tarinisi clan, back in the 1980s.

That same evening, I joined Pippo for dinner. Having spent the whole day in the event, talking endlessly, we were starving by 7 PM. He took me to the pizza place at the central square, a beautiful establishment run by a cousin of Barbetto, unrelated to mafia. There, we noticed Baffi dining with the mayor Malva, who also came from the event and in fact had acknowledged the *mafioso* while the latter was on stage. We went by their table to greet them as Pippo knew them both, and we all had a brief chat.

Baffi was 'angered with the politicians' although he noted that 'Malva was different'.

This high concentration of *mafiosi* as well as their acceptability with peasants and local elites alike in the *contadini* dissent was indicative of their intentions. The *mafioso* Baffi's appeal to this assumed sense of community among the peasants allows for comparisons between the two realms in which cooperative workers were involved: what *they* recognised as community (the 'mutual aid' informal work exchange) and what their administrator colleagues saw as community (the standardised employment in the cooperatives). Both made ideological claims to be among equals when in fact they were segregated across class differences.

'Community Economics' in the Context of Cooperatives

The discourse of a 'community-based' way of life involving a 'mutual aid' system is a logical attempt to safeguard a long-standing repertoire of commodified informal economy practices considered illicit by the state in a context where the rising tide of anti-mafia activity in the area has reinforced the state's regulatory mechanisms. Community rhetoric hence forms an integral part of the reproduction of the mafia's power to exercise labour patronage and instigate a cross-class sense of belonging to a peasantry that is in fact stratified.

The appeal of *mafiosi* like Baffi was cross-class. His abstract claims to the values of community and 'mutuality' as ways of life reproduced this class stratification. By obscuring internal stratification, the mafia's influence on peasant mobilisation intensified many people's beliefs that 'only unity can save the peasantry'. In the same way, through their struggles they aimed to incorporate this informal status *within* what were becoming increasingly more complex livelihoods involving ever more regulated wage employment frameworks.

It was popular with the administrators in Palermo to think that the formal would subsume the informal – as in the rhetoric of anti-mafia cooperativism – based on ideas about community promoted by administrators and state agents (the Consortium Progress and Law). The cooperatives, however, did not succeed in fully encompassing locals in a realm of stable employment as they, unlike the administrators, continued their practices of seeking income outside the regulated cooperative framework.

The administrators' ideal of cooperativism as a form of regularised work in a state-protected community was of course implied in the politicised project of curbing the mafia. Looking at labour more broadly –

beyond formal waged work – it becomes clear, however, that informal work activities are a crucial facet of social reproduction, as important as ‘employment’ (Narotzky 1997: 36–37). The integration of peasant workers of Spicco Vallata into a regime of regulated work (‘employment’) in the cooperatives, then, conflicted with their established ideas of community associated with informal work.

An influential theorisation of ‘community’ in the context of cooperatives is Stephen Gudeman’s argument on the tension between market and community in the modern economy (2008). For Gudeman, economies vary depending on the degree to which people produce for the self or group (community) or for others (market) (2001), a main local model being ‘the house’, counterpoised to and set outside market exchange, and aiming to ‘maintain’ what are actually subsistence economy relations (Gudeman and Rivera 1990). In this model of community economy, the ‘base’, the making and sharing of a commons consolidates the community (Gudeman 2001: 27–30). Caring for the base ‘is a central concern in community, for the base makes a community as it is made’ (36).

Relating this framework to the dynamics in Spicco Vallata, however, suggests certain deviations. For in Spicco Vallata, the hidden exchange of money for labour is glossed over as ‘community economy’. Invoking this local ‘way of life’ draws on ideas of mutuality and, alongside those, claims to income; maintaining the ‘mutual aid’ scheme was a crucial financial matter. But the local ‘traditions’ it refers to should be questioned – the ‘mutual aid’ scheme of work cannot be classified as exchange *as* mutuality (2008: 27). In Spicco Vallata, exchange of money implied commodification of labour. In comparison, the notion and use of ‘community’ by the Consortium Progress and Law and among administrators denotes a sense of decommodification of land – setting it outside the market. Among peasants there seems to be a making of (ideas of) commons as political claims; but there is hardly a sharing of commons in what seems an internally variegated and compartmentalised peasantry where the mafia obfuscates difference.

Moreover, for cooperative workers it is the cooperatives’ employment that forms ‘the base’ of their livelihood. The base here is neither work on their own plot nor the system of mutual exchange that is a supplementary transaction of work for extra cash. In fact, although the remuneration of the manual workforce from the cooperatives was nowhere as good as the administrators’, wages from the cooperatives were the main source of income for their households.

The workers’ idea of a moral economy, as often happens in agrarian movements (Edelman 2005), centred on belonging to the immediate

community, exchanging face to face favours and minor work for pay and pursuing their livelihoods outside of and parallel to the 'standardised' formal economy of cooperatives' wage employment. Hann's critique of the moral economy concept is hence relevant when approaching the mafia's endorsement of the 'mutual aid' practice (2010: 196). It is important to note that neither Polanyi – associated with the moral economy concept (1957) – nor E. P. Thompson (1971, 1991) – considered to have fathered the notion – account for the fact that the normative nature of a moral economy appears to include activities that are of ambiguous moral content, for the sake of bettering people's livelihoods. Hann has already noted this problem, hinting to the ambiguous morality of the moral economy (Hann 2010). In the case of Spicco Vallata, peasant 'community' struggles often develop in ways not beneficial to the majority of the differentiated peasantry they presumably represent (McMichael 2008).

Gudeman points to the dialectic between the different realms of 'mutuality' and 'market' (2008: 24), drawing on the presumed solidarity of community relations that rest on self-help and subsistence agriculture (Gudeman 1978; 1986; Gudeman and Rivera 1990). Nugent points out (1981) that in Gudeman's earlier work he downplayed the issue of commodified work, arguing that 'the ghost of subsistence' overshadows the introduction of wage labour into what Gudeman (1978) calls the 'community' sphere. In Gudeman's recent books, this scheme looks more open to cross-influence: aspects of mutuality in the market are acknowledged (2009: 26). In that respect, cooperatives form enclaves of mutuality, used by a community in relation to a market in ways often detrimental to other participants in that same market (Gudeman 2008: 103).

This is where it is important to note that the cooperatives are configured into 'factions', formed by task-specific tiers whose members come from different places and social classes. When assessing what 'community' might mean for co-ops' different conceptualisations of community by members of different factions thus generates differing relationships to the cooperatives' core aim to curb the mafia.

The administration faction's take on community is skewed from the relationality of their class position, vis-à-vis the locality and the state. The Consortium's promotion of state intervention in Spicco Vallata, endorsing an abstract 'discursive normativity' (Ferguson 1994: 30), aimed at the restitution of assets to 'the community' (Frigerio and Pati 2007). Administrators, being Palermitans, middle-class and not owning land, were more inclined than workers to align with these normative lines, their sense of the 'community' being divorced from local experience. Steinmetz's idea of the languages of the state's situatedness in social cir-

cumstances (1999) can be applied here vis-à-vis the urban civil society in which the administrators' lives were embedded, in line with Schneider and Schneider's analysis of the 1990s anti-mafia movement (2002b).

'Community' – so charged a term in Spicco Vallata – for workers implied viticulture cooperation intrinsically entangled with the anti-mafia movement's local history. The values they endorsed were relational and dynamic: their cooperative participation expanded notions of kinship, creating anti-mafia families, and endowed work with masculinised idioms, as workers felt proud that they 'embodied' the co-ops. Continuities in their livelihood practices and the proximity with neighbours' land plots (especially as seen in the next chapter) caused creative, albeit messy, interactions with fellow locals – even *mafiosi* – to occur. These interactions allowed for interconnections between processes outside (e.g., informal work) and inside the cooperatives' activity (waged labour), often merging co-op work with local life (e.g., in 'uncomfortable' encounters at confiscated plots, as will be seen later), this way imploding the cooperatives' 'standardisation' framework.

It might be reasonable to point out that the community appeals and jacquerie-type dissent of peasants and co-op workers alike in Spicco Vallata cannot be accounted for with notions of (post-)peasant 'hybridity' (Kearney 1996: 68). The plural attempts of co-op worker-members to defend their livelihoods are not exactly hybrid, I think. 'Hybridity' suggests mingling. But even though people build on entirely diversified and often contradictory categories of income, here the two realms of formal and informal labour correspond to two different, juxtaposed ideas of community. The first is the Consortium Progress and Law's idea that community is achieved through state intervention; the second implicitly pitches community *against* state regulation. These ideas interpenetrate and cross-fertilise each other in the experience of the peasants involved in anti-mafia cooperatives. But they cannot be 'hybridised' because informal labour and standardised employment cannot be brought into the same space (the cooperatives) without friction.

The Problem of Community

The state's intervention entailed the promotion of 'legality' values and relationships antithetical to local obligations, from kinship to local reciprocities. This came at the cost of egalitarianism and industrial democracy within the cooperatives, and the earlier ethnographic narrative is another configuration of this idea. Branding and enacting community

values was another such field of inegalitarian effects. To brand co-ops as community-participation initiatives can often lead to the reproduction of unequal structures as well as structures reproducing inequalities out there 'in the community'. Unquestioned claims to 'community' for cooperatives might unwittingly render them amenable to contradictory influences. In this case, mafia influence and legalistic state discourse compete to become the main determinants of what 'community' stands for.

The community participation for which co-ops strive contains interacting realms of labour markets protected by the state and a set of labour relations rooted in mutuality with the workers' peasant neighbors. However, the latter are exposed to manipulation by the classed interests of the mafia's agrarian labour patrons. The co-ops, then, contain both 'realms', in Gudeman's sense (market and community), and their community participation practices are rooted in different ideas of community, which inform diverse ideas of labour. Thus, co-ops are more complex and contradictory than often realised.

The reason is not *only*, as is often argued, their exposure to impersonal institutions such as states (Narotzky 1997) and markets (Kasimir 1996) or, indeed, neoliberalism (Vargas-Cetina 2005; Stephen 2005) but *also* their members' everyday embeddedness in sets of personalised relations of a stratified and classed character, glossed as mutuality. The personalisation of industrial relations – the instigation of diverse views of community – in this case proves detrimental to their egalitarian functions. But most importantly, community here (like kinship, food activism or reputation in previous chapters) operates as an idiom of division or a standpoint that exacerbates stratified difference.

The realm of personalised community is both commodified and unequal, while the realm of abstract markets is accessed by institutions (including cooperatives) typified as impersonal but actually peopled. Cooperative stratification is reinforced and reproduced by different conceptualisations of 'community' among co-op members' groups. Such conceptualisations, although enriching the co-ops' social fabric, also undermine their 'anti-mafia' consistency and ideological coherence.

My reading of Gudeman's scheme on tensions between community and market calls for such contextualised nuances, acknowledging the penetrative power of local actors (in this case, *mafiosi*) influential in the reproduction of 'mutual aid' informal economy schemes. In Spicco Vallata, cooperatives' work is conceptualised in different ways by different members. By and large the administrators subscribe to legal categories of regulation, such as co-op employment, and the workers to non-regulated practices of mutuality. Both these state-sponsored and

mafia-related categories in turn build strongly pronounced community idioms. Their 'mixed' livelihoods and 'pluriactivity' show that these realms permeate each other.

The fact that the main bulk of the cooperatives' workforce moves in both the impersonal market of regularised, 'fair' work relations *within* the co-ops and the personalised mutuality among peasants (and *mafiosi*) *outside* them suggests that the realms of market and mutuality are not entirely exclusive but continuously exercise interchangeable influence on each other. This can even take place within work institutions set on an agenda defending one such realm and condemning, if not struggling against, the influence of the other, such as the anti-mafia cooperatives.

How the everyday problems of the cooperatives regarding their land management played out on the ground has its own story. The multiple fractions and fissures within the co-op workforce resonated with other forms of conflictual relations around them, including those with their *mafiosi* neighbours. As the local agrarian community was composed, as we just examined, by *mafiosi* and anti-*mafiosi* alike, the relationality of their proximity became a contested issue. The rich social life it produced was ridden with the riddles of the contradictions I mentioned earlier when discussing community. The issue became largely how to reconcile being different but also being similar with the anti-mafia's enemies: the *mafiosi*.

NOTES

Some of the material in this chapter has also been published in 'Which Community for Cooperatives' (2015).

1. As discussed, workers earned wages from the cooperatives by labouring the confiscated land plots and also worked on their own land tracts (*pezzi di terra*), mostly vineyards; therefore, a part of their income came from selling their own grapes to the local wineries. Most, when I asked, acknowledged that the pay from the cooperatives was 'not enough'. They called themselves *contadini* (peasants), a term that encompassed all landowners, regardless of the scale of their production; their mean landholding was a modest 3.5 hectares. While the 'standardised' employment of the workers linked them with the co-ops' anti-mafia concept of community, their work as independent peasant producers implied other influences, drawing from other ideas of 'community'.
2. As elsewhere in the Mediterranean region, people's 'rural pluriactivity' went with a partial integration into wage dependencies arranged around claims to continuing the 'cultural tradition of a place' (Narotzky and Smith 2006: 27 and 31).