



Towards a Commons-oriented City:

An overview of developments in Europe

By Vasilis Niaros

Ghent, June 2017

P2P • Foundation

Contents

Acknowledgments	2
1. Introduction	2
2. Commons-oriented Municipal Coalitions	4
2.1. The City of Barcelona	5
2.1.1. The election of Barcelona En Comú	5
2.1.2. Policies and initiatives related to the commons	6
2.1.3. Concluding remarks	9
2.2. The City of Bologna	10
2.2.1. The Bologna Regulation on urban commons	10
2.2.2. Developments after the adoption of the Regulation	11
2.2.3. Concluding remarks	12
2.3. The City of Frome	13
2.3.1. The birth of Flatpack Democracy	13
2.3.2. The Independents for Frome in action	14
2.3.3. Concluding remarks	16
3. The Role of Grassroots Initiatives in City-Making	16
3.1. Developments in the Global North	16
3.2. The Assemblies of the Commons	18
3.2.1. The concept	18
3.2.2. The assembly of Lille	19
4. Conclusions and Recommendations	20
5. References	23

Acknowledgments

This report was created in the context of the author's residency program at the Timelab (Ghent) in Spring 2017. It is also a supplement to the project "Ghent as the Commons City of the Future", led by Michel Bauwens. The author is indebted to the Timelab, and especially Evi Swinnen, for their incredible support and critical feedback. Moreover, I am grateful to Michel Bauwens and Vasilis Kostakis for their constructive comments and valuable insights in this report. Last, I would like to thank Chris Giotitsas for handling the editing. All errors remain the author's sole responsibility.

1. Introduction

Urbanisation is a trend of our times, with the largest share of the human population globally living in cities; a trend that is only increasing (United Nations, 2014). Cities are economic centers that through the consumption of massive resources lead to heavy environmental impact (Glaeser, 2011) as well as to social contestations and conflicts (Foster & Iaione, 2016). It has been argued that such contestations are rooted in the neoliberal vision for urban development adopted by many city administrations, which are commodifying the collective resources of the city (Niaros et al., 2017). For the last few years we are witnessing a large scale of corporate buying of whole pieces of cities, leading to a shift from "mostly small private to large corporate modes of ownership, and from public to private" (Sassen, 2015).

Such a transformation introduces a de-urbanising dynamic that has significant implications for equity, democracy and social rights. While local governments are accommodating the interests of major companies, the true needs of the citizens are overlooked. This creates the need for a new conceptualisation of a city that will be able to deal with the current issues in more imaginative, inclusive and sustainable ways.

As a response, an intellectual and social movement is emerging that reclaims control over decisions about how the city develops and promotes greater access of urban resources for all citizens (Foster & Iaione, 2016). To this end, the concept of the "commons" is brought into the spotlight, which is demonstrating its power as a key ingredient for change in diverse contexts around the world (Bauwens et al., 2017). Indeed, the commons can provide a framework and a set of tools to open up participation in "city-making".

The commons is a concept and practice that has been steadily gathering increased attention and advocates. Deeply rooted in human history, it's difficult to settle on a single definition that covers its broad potential for social, economic, cultural and political change. Commons, as described by David Bollier (2011), are a shared resource which is co-governed by its user community, according to the rules and norms of that community. More specific, a commons is:

- A social system for the long-term stewardship of resources that preserves shared values and community identity;

- A self-organised system by which communities manage resources (both depletable and replenishable) with minimal or no reliance on the Market or State;
- The wealth that we inherit or create together and must pass on, undiminished or enhanced, to our children. Our collective wealth includes the gifts of nature, civic infrastructure, cultural works and traditions, and knowledge;
- A sector of the economy (and life) that generates value in ways that are often taken for granted – and often jeopardised by the Market-State.

In addition, Peer to Peer (P2P) theorist Michel Bauwens has offered the following framework to explain some of the dimensions of the commons:

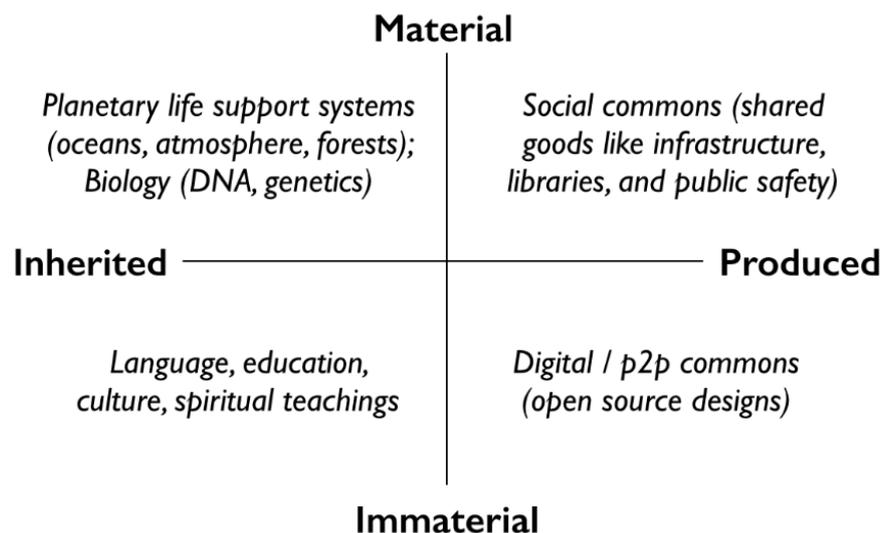


Figure 1: Four types of commons (Araya, 2015).

According to this approach, there are four types of commons to distinguish. The first one is the material commons we inherit (top-left quadrant), such as the oceans, the atmosphere, the forests, etc. The second type is the immaterial commons we inherit (bottom-left), like language and culture. The third type type is the immaterial commons we create (bottom-right). This is where the hugely important knowledge and digital commons come in, since it this digital commons that is currently exploding. Last, the fourth type (top-right) is the as yet underappreciated potential for the created material commons, i.e. productively manufactured resources (Araya, 2015).

Although there is an extensive literature on commons, it remains a challenge to transpose its insights into the urban context in a way that captures the complexity of the city. Through the “urban commons” perspective the city is viewed as a platform for sharing and collaboration, participatory decision-making and P2P production (Iaione et al., 2017). Urban residents share data openly and a number of resources in common, such as parks, streets, squares, abandoned buildings, and other urban infrastructure.

Nevertheless, many scholars have been focusing on a transition from a city where urban commons are present to one where the city itself is conceived as a commons [see only Foster

& Iaione (2016), Ramos (2016), Stavrides (2016)]. One of the main characteristics of the city as a commons is openness, which provide the flexibility and resilience needed to meet the increasing demands of rapid urbanisation. Keeping in mind, however, the limited resources of cities in general, being open makes them vulnerable to rivalry. Rivalry could potentially create conflict in different kinds of commons leading not only to the sacrifice of one urban good (e.g. a park) for another (e.g. housing) but the sacrifice of the needs of the weak for those of the more powerful (Iaione et al., 2017).

Reconciling the tensions that arise from rivalry for common resources is no easy task, nor is the resolution of redistribution inequalities. A solid beginning, however, would be for these resources to be managed collaboratively by the actors who have a stake in or rely upon these resources. Treating the city as a commons, we strive to move away from the prevailing public regulatory tactics to more collaborative tools and practices that empower citizens to actively contribute in how resources are accessed and distributed. These tools and practices entail different forms of resource pooling and cooperation between several actors, including public authorities, civil society organisations, knowledge institutions (e.g. universities or museums), businesses and citizens (as individuals).

This report explores such forms of collaborative city-making that promote inclusive urban regeneration and create a more just and democratic city. Section 2 presents three European cases of municipal coalitions that work towards that direction, following different approaches. Section 3 is then set to discuss the role of grassroots initiatives in achieving citizen-driven transformation and propose a step forward. Last, Section 4 summarises the main findings and presents a tentative proposal for the future.

2. Commons-oriented Municipal Coalitions

This section explores three cases of city councils that offer alternatives to the incumbent municipal form. The aim is not to be all inclusive but rather to explore different approaches of city councils that are aligned with the proliferation of the commons and facilitate citizen participation in city-making.

The first case is that of Barcelona En Comú that is the political coalition governing the city since 2015. Barcelona is an exemplary city in the way it has been working on the commons, making evident the importance of such a transition. Next, the case of Bologna and the Regulation for the Care and Regeneration of the Urban Commons is explored, which illustrates the potential of a partner city legislation in facilitating the co-governance of the shared resources in the city. Last, the case of the Independents for Frome (UK) and their Flatpack Democracy toolkit is presented. In 2011, this civic coalition displaced the political parties in the town council and demonstrated how a group of individuals can create independent politics.

The main method used in this report is that of the exploratory case study, using data from the various sources. The data gathered consist mainly of online available information, including

internal working and communication documents developed by members of the examined organisations and shared via online repositories such as the P2P Foundation wiki. Furthermore, a significant body of information is provided at the websites of the organisations, and various online videos featuring interviews and conversations with the people involved. Moreover, a number of online media have over time covered various stories about the cases. Last, data has been gathered through personal communications of the author with key persons from the cases.

2.1. The City of Barcelona

2.1.1. *The election of Barcelona En Comú*



The outcome of the municipal and regional elections in May 2015 has transformed the political scene in Spain.

New citizen coalitions with roots in community groups won unexpected victories in seven major cities, including the three largest ones (Madrid, Barcelona, Valencia). These coalitions open the door to a different sort of transition, offering an alternative to neoliberalism. Their political culture has its origins in the social and political movements that emerged in the wake of the 2008 financial crisis and the 15-M protests (Baird, 2014). They also identify with the commons, and in some cases even include the term in their names, e.g. Barcelona En Comú, Zaragoza En Común. Their programmes reflect the introduction of the commons as a novel way to do politics (Ambrosi, 2015).

One of the most prominent cases is that of Barcelona. On 24 May 2015, Barcelona En Comú (formerly known as Guanyem) was elected as the minority government of the city. Led by housing rights activist Ada Colau, Barcelona En Comú (BComú) describes itself as a citizen platform and a confluence of various social movements and radical political groups (ROAR Collective, 2015). However, while the initiative arose from social movements, it ended up incorporating several existing political parties in its platform, such as Podemos and the Catalan Greens-United Left party (Russell & Reyes, 2017). Like Ada Colau herself, three out of ten BComú's councillors are not associated with any political party. This mix of loosely associated groups and individuals has contributed to increasing the platform's appeal in some of the city's most deprived areas (Baird, 2015).

The BComú electoral programme was drawn up by over 5000 people, with contributions made in open assemblies and online (Baird, 2015). This process resulted in a political platform that stressed the need to tackle citizens' problems rather than those of business and political elites. Hence, the platform came up with objectives such as ending austerity, halting evictions, improving living standards, curbing mass tourism and reclaiming the urban commons (ROAR Collective, 2015). They also pledged to open up local government, democratise government institutions and promote direct citizen participation as a way to strengthen social movements (Sagrans, 2015).

2.1.2. Policies and initiatives related to the commons

Upon entering government, BComú began to implement an Emergency Plan¹ that included measures to halt evictions, and subsidise energy and transport costs for vulnerable people (Russell & Reyes, 2017). Additionally, they crowdsourced a code of political ethics for candidates, called *Governing by Obeying*², which includes salary and term limits as well as a commitment to financial transparency (Bergren-Miller, 2015).

At the end of 2016, the council voted in favour of the remunicipalisation of water in the metropolitan area of Barcelona, paving the way for water to be taken out of the private sector. According to the Councillor for Presidency, Water and Energy, this motion will bring “more transparency, higher service quality, and lower tariffs” (BComú Global, 2016). Moreover, BComú is planning to establish a municipal energy company within the next two years (Russell & Reyes, 2017).

At this point, the difference between the “public” and the “common” should be highlighted. As Michael Hardt (2011) argues, our choices are not limited to businesses controlled privately (private property) or by the state (public property). The third route is that of the commons, meaning resources and services produced and distributed by the people for the people. This is what the Barcelona project is about. It is a movement that enables citizens to take control of their city to solve their problems through the combination of collective experience and expert knowledge (Russell & Reyes, 2017).

In this context, of particular interest is BComú’s support towards the Social and Solidarity Economy (SSE) sector. Today, there are 4,718 SSE organisations in Barcelona that represent just 2.8% of the total enterprises, but generate around 8% of the city’s employment and 7% of its GDP (Ajuntament de Barcelona, 2017a). BComú considers that the SSE sector should play a predominant role in the construction of a new socio-economic model for the city.

With the aim of contributing to this transformation, a municipal initiative was taken to develop the Impetus Plan for the Social and Solidarity Economy³. This plan is comprised of a diagnosis, the development process and the set of actions desired to be carried out in 2016-2019. The policies envisaged respond to two major objectives: i) to promote the generation of new initiatives and the transformation of traditional commercial companies into SSE organisations; and ii) to reinforce existing SSE initiatives and facilitate coordination between them (Ajuntament de Barcelona, 2017).

More than a hundred meetings with various actors were held, which enabled the production of a joint Impetus Plan (Ajuntament de Barcelona, 2017a). As illustrated in Figure 2, the following sectors were represented: social and solidarity economy; commons collaborative economy; citizens (over three hundred citizens’ proposals have been taken into account); city council departments; other sources of inspiration (e.g. documents produced by the local and international SSE sector).

¹ https://barcelonaencomu.cat/sites/default/files/pla-xoc_eng.pdf

² <https://guanyembarcelona.cat/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/codietic-eng.pdf>

³ https://www.slideshare.net/Barcelona_cat/the-impetus-plan-for-the-social-and-solidarity-economy-20162019

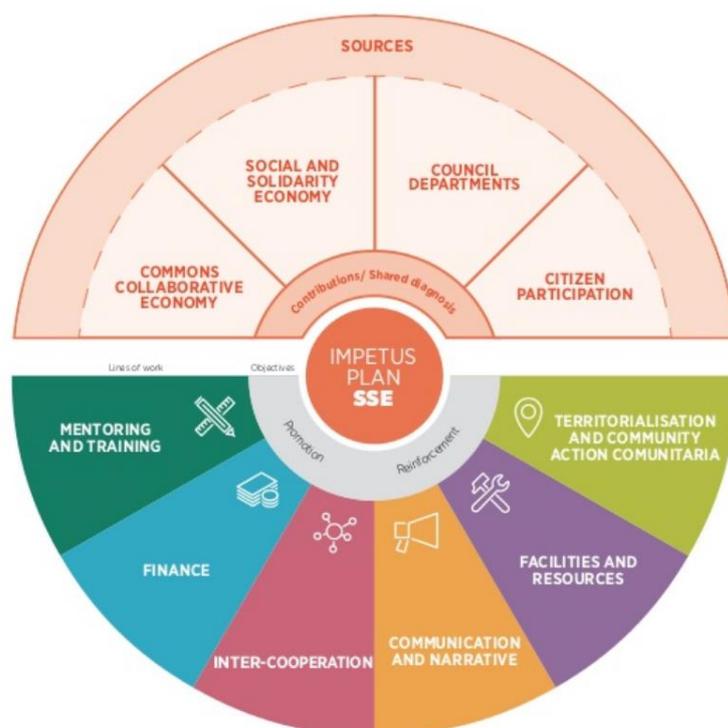


Figure 2: The planning process for the Impetus Plan for Social and Solidarity Economy in Barcelona (Ajuntament de Barcelona, 2017).

As part of the Impetus Plan, the Commons Collaborative Economy (CCE) was brought into the spotlight. Barcelona could be considered as a global reference point for the commons economy, as evidenced by P2Pvalue’s directory⁴, with more than 1000 practical examples of commons-based peer production in Catalonia alone. Although initially the definition of CCE was not clear to some members of the city council – they mostly thought of Uber or Airbnb (Bergren-Miller, 2017) –, the platform soon realised that boosting CCE is an act of co-creation with commoners, not a government project alone. Thus, the city established a co-creation policy framework to open up the dialogue (Bergren-Miller, 2017). This ecosystem is comprised by four layers (Figure 3).

The first layer is related to an inter-area body inside the city council, which coordinates issues around transport, housing, tourism and labor. This layer operates solely within the municipal government.

The second one is BarCola⁵, a coworking group which brings together the city council and representatives from the CCE sector (e.g Fab Labs, Free Knowledge Institute, Ouishare, Wikipedia etc). BarCola meets almost every month with the aim to assess the progress in the sector, recommend policies and enhance the dialogue between the SSE and commons-oriented production.

⁴ <http://directori.p2pvalue.eu/>

⁵ <http://procomuns.net/en/about-2/barcola/>

Procomuns⁶, the third layer of the ecosystem, started as an event in March 2016 to open participation in the formulation of policy proposals for the city council. Four hundred people attended and discussed how the CCE could be supported. This three-day event resulted in the Procomuns Declaration that includes 120 policy recommendations⁷. The declaration was communicated to the Barcelona City Council, but also to the European Commission and other organisations. Currently, Procomuns is a monthly meetup, where various issues are addressed.



Figure 3: The co-creation policy framework for CCE (Ajuntament de Barcelona, 2017b).

The last layer is Decidim Barcelona⁸, a web platform for citizens to co-create the Municipal Action Plan for the city. Over 10,000 proposals were registered by the site's 25,000 registered users (El Periódico, 2016). The Decidim platform is now being adapted to run participatory budget pilots and be used in the development of new infrastructure.

As a result of the co-creation policy framework for CCE, Barcelona now has a Collaborative Economy Action Plan⁹. Examples of the measures included in this plan are: i) La Comunicadora¹⁰, a training programme for collaborative economy initiatives; ii) a circular economy/reuse programme to map and use city council's underutilised infrastructure; and iii) the support of various events (Bergren-Miller, 2017).

In parallel, the Barcelona City Council commissioned the Free Knowledge Institute to prepare a report on how to develop a strategic vision of the knowledge society that facilitates citizen empowerment through technology (Tebbens, 2016). This report advocates for the commons and suggests policies for a more sustainable and democratic Smart City.

⁶ <http://procomuns.net/en/>

⁷ <http://procomuns.net/en/policy/>

⁸ <https://www.decidim.barcelona/>

⁹ <http://www.smart-society-project.eu/wp-content/uploads/socialCharter/brusselsMorningDecember.pdf>

¹⁰ <http://freeknowledge.eu/article/la-comunicadora-story-continues>

As part of this vision, the municipality is funding the *Ateneus de Fabricació*, a network of public FabLabs that is envisaged to spread to every neighborhood as part of the public infrastructure. These places, established by the former mayor of Barcelona, Xavier Trias, but further promoted by BComú, provide access to high-tech machines and promote learning on digital manufacturing. The ultimate goal is that citizens will appropriate digital fabrication and create socially innovative ways to develop livelihoods and improve their neighborhoods. BComú aims at a sustainable city that, by 2040, will manufacture half of its material needs locally (Smith et al., 2017).

Another innovative project by BComú that is worth observing is related to mobility. The new plan will restrict traffic to a number of big roads, drastically reducing pollution and turning secondary streets into “citizen spaces” (Bausells, 2016). Such transformation will take place through the creation of *Superilles* (superblocks), mini neighbourhoods within which car-circulation will be reduced at its minimum, favoring the development of green areas and new spaces for collective living. The city aims at reducing its car use by 21% over the next 2 years, while at the same time freeing up nearly 60% of streets currently used by cars (Spigarolo, 2017).

However, this is an imperfect process as some residents in Poblenu neighborhood (one of the four current superblocks) protested against the plan. The argument is that circuitous routes and making driving in the city less convenient and complex is something that local drivers find unacceptable (O’Sullivan, 2017).

While the aforementioned developments are taking place within Barcelona, BComú is also promoting and sharing its experiences abroad. BComú is also illustrating that a new transnational political movement is underway. To this end, it has established an international committee to facilitate learning from other cities such as Naples and Messina (Russell & Reyes, 2017). Barcelona has been active in international forums, taking a leadership role in the Global Network of Cities, Local and Regional Governments¹¹. These moves look to bypass the national scale where possible, prefiguring post-national networks of urban solidarity and cooperation. A tangible outcome of this level of supranational urban organizing was the rejection of the Transatlantic Trade & Investment Partnership (TTIP). In April 2016, BComú hosted a meeting that led to the agreement of the Barcelona Declaration, with more than 40 cities committing to the rejection of TTIP (Russell & Reyes, 2017).

2.1.3. Concluding remarks

Barcelona En Comú is not a traditional party. It illustrates how movement activists can work with existing political parties to create new platforms that foster greater participation in governance. The aspiration is to get citizens and civil society organisations directly involved in city-planning, not just as consultants, but as active political agents.

BComú’s intention to strengthen the commons collaborative economy is evident. However, transforming city systems to make them more commons-friendly is a structural challenge

¹¹ <https://www.uclg.org/en/organisation/presidency>

with many administrative, legal and political complexities (Bollier, 2016). It is, thus, unclear how the established bodies (e.g. BarCola) and plans (e.g. Impetus Plan for SSE) will evolve.

It could be argued that a well-planned and consistent position of the coalition in this area is of utmost importance for the sustainability of the developed projects. Nevertheless, this is not assured since BComú controls only 11 of the 44 city council seats. Hence, progressing the party's agenda requires engaging in the traditional mechanisms of city politics.

On the other hand, BComú should remain connected to social movements and provide an ongoing link between activists and institutions, by avoiding its “institutionalisation”. In other words, as David Bollier (2016) asks, “will activists transform conventional politics and government systems into new forms of governance — or will they themselves be transformed and abandon many of their original goals?”.

In all, the community empowerment and network logics displayed by city platforms such as BComú, Ahora Madrid and València en Comú, could inspire new bottom-up electoral coalitions in other places. It remains to be seen how such a network of radical municipalism will develop.

2.2. The City of Bologna

2.2.1. *The Bologna Regulation on urban commons*

In 2011, a group of women in Bologna, Italy wanted to donate benches to their neighborhood park, Piazza Carducci, which lacked any place to sit. So they called the city government to get permission to put in benches. Soon, they were frustrated as their offer was bounced from one municipal department to another until finally they were told it was impossible. In fact, it was illegal for citizens to contribute improvements to their hometown (Gorenflo, 2015).

As a response, the City of Bologna initiated a policy process to reshape the relationship between citizens and the local administration with regard to urban resources and services. In the context of the City as a Commons¹² project, led by LabGov¹³ and supported by the Fondazione del Monte di Bologna and Ravenna, the City of Bologna experimented for two years in three neighborhoods. As a result, in February 2014, they adopted a regulatory framework titled The Bologna Regulation on Civic Collaboration for the Urban Commons¹⁴ (LabGov, 2014). Urban commons in the Regulation are conceived as public spaces, green spaces, abandoned buildings and other infrastructure. However, its definition expands to the quality of life in the city and the concept of human flourishing (Foster & Iaione, 2016).



¹² <http://comunita.comune.bologna.it/beni-comuni>

¹³ LabGov (the Laboratory for the Governance of Commons) is an “in-house clinic” and think tank that is concerned with collaborative governance, public collaborations for the commons, subsidiarity (governance at the lowest appropriate level), the sharing economy and collaborative consumption - <http://www.labgov.it>

¹⁴ <http://www.offidocs.com/osessionx01/#/client/REVGQVVMVABjAGRIZmF1bHQ=>

The central tool of the Regulation is the pact of collaboration, which allows the city to enter into agreements with residents and other actors (e.g. NGOs, local entrepreneurs, civil society organisations, knowledge institutions), for the “care and regeneration” of the urban commons across the city (Foster & Iaione, 2016). In addition, the regulation provides technical and monetary support to the collaboration, and offers ways of defining the borders of the particular resource to be managed. It also contains norms and guidance on the importance of sustaining common resources and maintaining their inclusiveness and openness. Finally, the regulation foresees that the City supports the willingness of inhabitants, private owners, and commercial businesses to create street or neighborhood associations to manage public space, parks, and abandoned spaces (Foster & Iaione, 2016).

In this context, the city is considered as a collaborative social ecosystem. Instead of seeing the city simply as an inventory of resources to be administered by politicians and bureaucratic experts, the Bologna Regulation pursue “public/commons partnerships” that bring people together into close, convivial and flexible collaborations (Bollier, 2015). In all, the Regulation can be considered as a sort of handbook for civic and public collaboration, and also a new vision for government.

2.2.2. Developments after the adoption of the Regulation

Since the approval of the Regulation, 280 pacts of collaboration have been signed (Iaione et al., 2017). During the City as Commons conference, held in Bologna in 2015, the Deputy Mayor of the city, Matteo Lepore, outlined some key collaborative projects where citizens incorporated commons thinking and practice into municipal governance. These projects included:

- Neighborhood regeneration projects;
- An experiment where restaurants and bars work directly with neighbors to set rules for their businesses and cooperate on regenerating the community;
- A program to draw upon parents’ ideas and skills in improving kindergartens;
- A civic crowdfunding prototype to support projects that the city cannot wholly fund;
- An ambitious program of urban gardens; and
- Creation of digital platforms to support commons projects of all varieties (Walljasper, 2016).

Further, a number of the efforts are aimed at supporting Bologna’s poor populations. For instance, a women’s association called Re-Use with Love¹⁵ made a collaboration agreement with the city to turn an unused city-owned building into an “ethical boutique”. Volunteers receive donations of clothes, shoes and accessories and organise appointments for needy residents to shop (the goods are for free). In addition to the space, municipal support includes advertising of the effort and training of volunteers (D’Antonio, 2015).

Another example of a citizen-driven initiative is the movement known as Social Streets¹⁶. It started on Bologna’s Via Fondazza, where residents launched a Facebook group dedicated to

¹⁵ <http://www.reusewithlove.org/>

¹⁶ <http://www.socialstreet.it/>

bringing neighbors together. Over time, group members initiated more concrete actions such as providing bikes for a system of neighborly bike sharing. According to D'Antonio (2015), Social Streets groups now have launched on 400 other streets and squares worldwide, including 57 in Bologna alone.

Last, *Dentro Al Nido*¹⁷ (Inside the Nest) is a project focusing on the restoration of schools (Gorenflo, 2015).

The aforementioned projects illustrate the Regulation's impact. However, it does not stop there. In 2015, LabGov coordinated the second phase of the Bologna program, the CO-Bologna¹⁸ process, which aims at applying the same design principles of the governance of the urban commons to other local public policies. The activities under the CO-Bologna project correspond to three areas: living together (collaborative services), growing together (co-ventures), making together (co-production) (Bauwens, 2015a). A core aspect of the project is the establishment of an Office for Civic Imagination. This is a policy innovation lab, structured as a co-working area internal to the municipal administration, through which civil servants can work together on finding solutions to urban problems and implementing them in accordance with the principle of civic collaboration (Iaione et al., 2017). Finally, the CO-Bologna process also includes the evaluation of the Bologna Regulation, in order to understand the impact of the public policy on urban democracy (Iaione et al., 2017).

Apart from the Regulations and its advancements, the City of Bologna enacted other public policies related to the commons, such as the invitation to tender *Incredibol*¹⁹ and the co-design process called *Collaborare è Bologna*²⁰. The first tool is a comprehensive plan to use abandoned or unutilised public assets as collaborative spaces. The second is a neighborhood collaborative planning process for understanding what the communities are willing to run as commons and co-design solutions to install forms of governance of the urban commons (Foster & Iaione, 2016).

It becomes evident that the City of Bologna is quite serious about becoming a city of collaboration. City officials regard it as a unifying vision, and almost a brand identity. In fact, Luca Rizzo Nervo, the city's development officer, hopes to create a national and international network of collaborative cities (Bollier, 2015). Torino is already in the process of adopting the Regulation, while a number of other Italian cities, including Milan, Rome and Florence, have expressed interest in the concept (Bollier, 2015).

2.2.3. Concluding remarks

The Bologna regulation shed light on a landmark reconceptualisation of how government might work in cooperation with citizens. Through this case, it is illustrated that new kinds of experimentalist and adaptive governance and legal tools are needed to allow citizens and other actors to enter a co-design processes for the city.

¹⁷ <http://www.dentroalnido.it/>

¹⁸ <http://co-bologna.it/>

¹⁹ <http://www.incredibol.net/en/>

²⁰ <http://www.urbancenterbologna.it/en/collaborare-bologna-en>

The City of Bologna has been internationally recognised for the Regulation and the successful implementation of pacts of collaboration to govern urban commons. Indeed, there is a growing number of civic-state collaborations in Bologna that have an actual impact on the city and its inhabitants. Thus, it could be argued that the Regulation has opened up a new development path that takes citizen participation to the next level.

Nevertheless, such a reform might not be sufficient to recognise and protect the urban commons. A cultural change in public administrations would be necessary in order to increase awareness on the concept of commons. Towards that direction, the City of Bologna has developed initiatives to train civil servants in understanding and applying the model of shared administration of the commons. They also try to change their methodological approach from a theoretical to a more experimental one.

However, the City officials' ambition is much higher than that. Their envisage Bologna as an entire city powered by sharing and collaboration, which is part of a global network of cities on the same path. However, the replication of the Bologna Regulation and other tools in different cities could be problematic. Although the Regulation promotes citizens' participation in shaping the city, it is still a top-down process.

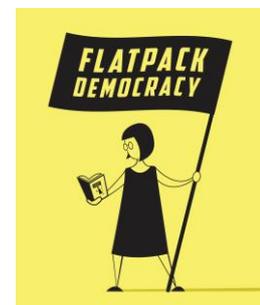
2.3. The City of Frome

2.3.1. *The birth of Flatpack Democracy*

It all started in Frome, a market town and former industrial centre of 26,000 inhabitants located in Somerset, England. In contrast to the pattern of post-industrial desolation in northern cities, Frome has successfully regenerated itself to become a hub of arts and culture (Reading, 2012). Unemployment is low, but so are average wages, and there are many of the same social problems that make the news in more well-known places (Harris, 2015). Politically speaking, many of the town's residents have some of the self-organising philosophy, while its collective politics have a greenish hue (Harris, 2015).

In 2011, a group of local activists, disillusioned with the dominance of political parties, decided to come together and put up candidates for all of the town council's seats. Thus, the Independents for Frome (IfF)²¹ group was created. IfF operates primarily at election times, by enabling independent candidates to stand local elections in Frome. The councillors elected can then work without party political ideology to make the best decisions they can for Frome, without a formal leadership (IfF, 2017a).

IfF's main aim is to "take political power at a local level, then use it to enable people to have a greater say in the decisions that affect their lives" (Hicks, 2016). It becomes obvious that their intention is not to replace one set of individuals struggling within the system with



²¹ <http://iffrome.org.uk/>

another, but to create a new, inclusive democracy, starting from the grassroots up (Macfadyen, 2015).

At the local elections of May 2011, IfF candidates won ten seats (out of seventeen), which gave them an outright majority on the town council (Flatpack Democracy, 2014). After four years in power, in May 2015, IfF took all seats on Frome's town council, with vote-shares as high as 70% (Frome Times, 2015). As a result, there were no councillors elected from the main political parties, as Liberal Democrat and Conservative councillors lost their seats. However, there was success for the Conservatives in the General Election; and for the LibDems and the Greens on Mendip District Council (Frome Times, 2015).

One of the keys to IfF success is that their councillors adhere to a set of values and guidelines called Way of Working²². According to that document, the five core values are:

- Independence: Make decisions without reference to a shared dogma or ideology;
- Integrity: Make decisions in an open and understandable manner;
- Positivity: Look for solutions while involving others in the discussions;
- Creativity: Use ideas from within the group and the wider community;
- Respect: Understand that everyone has an equal voice and is worth listening to.

The Way of Working guides the work of the IfF councillors and underpins the open, positive and constructive approach to local politics. It also enables them to make decisions in the best interest of Frome, while not emulating the party political system that they feel is counter-productive at the town level (IfF, 2017a).

This model of local politics developed by IfF has been captured in Peter Macfadyen's book titled Flatpack Democracy²³. In this book, Macfadyen, as a co-founder of IfF and former Frome mayor, provides an analysis on why the grouping was formed, what tactics they used to win the elections and what they have achieved so far. The main substance of the book is the provision of detailed advice to other local activists who might be inclined to follow IfF's approach. Among others, there are chapters on choosing candidates, preparing the campaign, and media strategy. As a do-it-yourself guide to creating independent politics, Flatpack Democracy could be of great benefit to those who wish to make similar changes elsewhere (Leach, 2015).

2.3.2. The Independents for Frome in action

Since their first election in 2011, IfF has initiated, developed and led a series of projects to better understand the needs of the local community. One of their goals is to replace the overly-bureaucratic council structure with a new model based on cooperation, goodwill and common sense. Towards that direction, IfF has opened up its decision-making processes to local involvement and influence, and has several achievements to its credit²⁴.

²² <http://iffrome.org.uk/our-successes/ways-of-working>

²³ <http://www.flatpackdemocracy.co.uk/thebook/>

²⁴ It should be noted that, although there is no direct reference to the "commons", the activities described in this subsection could be considered as adherent to the concept.

To begin with, IfF has an increased interest on projects related to energy and sustainability. This focus has led on to a joint venture between the council, community group Sustainable Frome, and Bath & West Community Energy to set up Frome Renewable Energy Cooperative²⁵. The aim is to provide a vehicle for local people to invest in, and get a reasonable return from, renewable energy projects with the surplus going to a Community Fund (Macfadyen, 2015). The Cooperative has already initiated other energy projects such as Frome Open Homes, a weekend showcasing cost and carbon saving measures throughout Frome (Macfadyen, 2015).

In addition, IfF councillors were instrumental in setting up Frome Development Community Interest Company (FDCIC), which enables individuals, groups and organisations to undertake specific projects and initiatives. The focusing areas are that of sustainable economic development; social cohesion and community building; and “social health” in Frome (IfF, 2017b). FDCIC was initially granted £50k per annum for 5 years from the Muriel Jones Foundation but there is potential to attract further support from the public and private sector (IfF, 2017b). FDCIC is also involved in jointly funded projects such as Fair Frome²⁶, which provides support to the local credit union, food bank and emergency housing (Leach, 2015).

Moreover, in 2015, the council put up funding of £7k for social enterprise Edventure: Frome²⁷ to get a new “share shop”. It is called Share – A Library of Things²⁸ and is a place for people to connect, share skills and borrow objects for nominal sums, from drills and rollerblades to sewing machines and circular saws (Williams, 2015). This project is an attempt to reduce waste and train young people. The ultimate goal is to help participants become successfully self-employed through doing something that has a community benefit (Williams, 2015). The project was supported by the council for six months, after which it had to become self-sustaining.

Further, there is a strategy for the management of the green spaces and the needs of pedestrians and cyclists. The council has identified a number of spaces around the city that have great potential, and they are working with the local community to improve them or safeguard them for the future. For instance, a local group has led a project to build a new playground and cycle track. The town council facilitated the whole process by securing funding and finding local architects to do the work for free. However, the local group ran the consultations and made the decisions (Vize, 2012).

Last but not least, IfF has been working on promoting the practices developed in Frome. The speedy creation and unexpected success of IfF generated a lot of enthusiasm and the idea is spreading. The Flatpack Democracy book has sold more than 1,000 copies, and Macfadyen is regularly in touch with similar groups of independents in other towns of Somerset (Harris, 2015). Most notably, in the elections of 2015, two more groups took control of their local councils, namely the Independents for Arlsey and the Buckfastleigh Independents. In these

²⁵ <http://freco.org/>

²⁶ <http://fairfrome.org/>

²⁷ <http://edventurefrome.org/>

²⁸ <https://sharefrome.org/>

different parts of England, people followed the core principles in the Flatpack Democracy book very closely (Harris, 2015).

2.3.3. Concluding remarks

The case of Frome illustrates how local councils can play a key role in enabling communities to increase their resilience and face their challenges. This could be possible when local citizens work together on making their city better, instead of following the political agendas of a party. The example of the Independents for Frome has shown that people with differing ages, backgrounds and variegated political hues can collaborate without holding back the ability to make decisions.

Most importantly, IfF seems to have succeeded in reviving public interest in local issues in a sizeable town. In Frome, people now take a particular interest in what is happening in their own locality and in enhancing the local wellbeing. Through the creation of a more thriving and sustainable community, IfF has enhanced local democracy, inventiveness and ingenuity (Hicks, 2016). However, the majority of voters in Frome might have not noticed any big changes, since achieving increased, meaningful participation is long process.

Last, regarding the replicability potential of the practices held in Frome, it stills remains a question whether Flatpack Democracy is something that is scalable to a national level. As Peter Macfadyen (2015) argues, at the level of a town council, it may be possible to resolve the differences in the priorities, demands, needs and interests of local residents in the open participatory way, without the need for party politics. Nevertheless, this approach could become more problematic while moving up to the different governmental levels.

3. The Role of Grassroots Initiatives in City-Making

3.1. Developments in the Global North²⁹

In the previous sections, we saw how commons are arising through local experiments initiated and supported by city governments, which are inviting citizens to participate. However, as described in the cases of Barcelona, Bologna and Frome, behind such administrations there is an active structure of social movements, civil organisations and citizens working towards the regeneration of the urban environment through a commons-oriented approach.

In the book “Towards a co-city: From the urban commons to the city as a commons”, edited by LabGov and P2P Foundation, the authors use a large variety of case studies to map where urban commons innovations are occurring (Iaione et al., 2017). Initiatives from cities that transform themselves into “sharing cities” are included, such as Seoul, San Francisco and Milan, as well as examples from the Global South like Medellin, Nairobi and Dakar. All of

²⁹ It should be noted that this subsection is a reworked excerpt from the Iaione et al., 2017.

these case studies will soon be published on the Co-Cities platform³⁰. For the needs of this report, we will focus more on the book's conclusions about the commonalities and divergences found in the case studies of Global North (Europe and United States).

To begin with, the book highlights the existence of sophisticated urban commons policies that facilitate local initiatives. As also seen in Section 2, many cities in the western/northern world have taken turns towards participatory, sharing and commons-oriented policies. However, there is an increasing number of integrated citizen coalitions that operate in cities, with little or no support from local authorities. These projects are multi-year, multi-stakeholder, and integrative.

Such projects are very careful in defining their inner governance and relations with external parties, such as governments and business, to avoid being co-opted or captured by them. Quite a few of them are struggling to adapt the proper governance model, between “horizontalist” aspirations and “vertical” needs for institutionalisation. It is mentioned that there are several difficulties in cooperative governance, so most projects are now moving to poly-centric governance models. Whether bottom-up or top-down, all projects include participatory processes, which points to a deep cultural shift.

In addition, local initiatives in the Global North have a strong interest in both social and ecological sustainability. For instance, some of them work with migrant and refugee populations in poor neighborhoods, while linking their activities to waste management and recycling. This notion is based on the fact that ecological issues affect mostly the poor and that solving them could create new economic and social opportunities, such as jobs, skill development and income.

As for the commons, they are clearly seen as a tool for economic development. For example, Barcelona's Fab City initiative aims at re-localising part of their food and industrial production within the next 50 years, through the creation of fabrication labs. Another project, Evergreen Cooperative in Cleveland, plans to use the purchasing power of “anchor institutions”, such as hospitals and universities, to create a local economy based on local coops. In Savannah, there is also an attempt to create an economy around the recycling of construction and demolition waste. Further, 596 Acres in New York is moving from public spaces to the creation of locally-run commercial zones through Real Estates Investment Cooperatives. Also, in Sarantaporo (Greece), there is a wireless community network that is now helping local farmers by providing them with access to agricultural information that is vital for their economic function. The common aspect of these examples is that sharing and collaboration is not just seen as a “nice thing to do”, but as a key ingredient for the creation of a thriving local economy that works for all inhabitants.

Through the aforementioned analysis, it becomes evident that there is a grassroots desire to initiate social change. To achieve this, mutual coordination of such initiatives is essential. As Michel Bauwens (2013) argues, we should mutualise our forces and create a new set of political, social and economic institutions that can have “transitional” effects.

³⁰ <http://www.collaborative.city/>

The next subsection discusses the idea of the Assembly of the Commons as an attempt to project civil power and influence at every level of society. The case of the Assembly of Lille is more thoroughly investigated.

3.2. The Assemblies of the Commons

3.2.1. The concept

In 2013, Michel Bauwens introduced the concept of the Assembly of the Commons as part of his “Proposed next steps for the emerging P2P and commons networks”. An Assembly of the Commons (AoC) is described as a local or affinity-based association of citizens that brings together all those who contribute and maintain common goods, material or immaterial (Bauwens, 2013). It is constituted of representatives from various types of initiatives such as urban gardens, makerspaces, housing cooperatives, complementary currencies, but also people from local authorities and universities. Such alliances can be active on any scale, i.e. topical, local, transnational etc.

The main aim of the AoC is to make common resources more inclusionary and recreate civic power around the commons. However, each AoC is developing its own “social charter” which describes in details the values and practices underpinning the assembly, and provides the incentives for its management and protection.

There are several functions envisaged for these assemblies. To begin with, AoC is a forum to exchange experiences and facilitate the debate on issues around the commons. During the meetings of the AoC, which can be held on a bi-weekly or monthly basis, participants can identify and disseminate activities that are taking place within their initiatives or networks. To facilitate this processes, the AoC can also lead the organisation of events on relevant topics. Their impact can be maximised by connecting to other assemblies and forming regional, national and transnational federations (Bauwens, 2015b).

Another important feature of AoC is that it could provide a platform to formulate policy proposals that enhance civic infrastructures for the commons (Bauwens, 2013). Such proposals can then be communicated to the relevant authorities. In addition, the assembly could assess the impact of present policies and negotiate proposals for the future with public institutions, based on the needs of their community. In this sense, the AoC could promote the establishment of public-commons partnerships that increase access to the commons and prevent their enclosure. It should be highlighted that an AoC is not linked to any particular political grouping but supports, pluralistically, all forces that favour the further strengthening of the commons (Bauwens, 2015b).

As a next step, the AoC could promote the creation of the Chamber of the Commons³¹, the sister assembly of ethical entities that create livelihoods for commoners and contributors to common goods (Bauwens, 2015). An example of such a body is the Xarxa d’Economia

³¹ http://wiki.p2pfoundation.net/Chamber_of_the_Commons

Solidària (XES)³² in Barcelona, which constitutes the most important community organisation for the social and solidarity economy in Catalonia.

It should be mentioned that the concept of the Assemblies of the Commons is still in the making, thus we shall see how the various functions will emerge and be adapted to the needs of each community. However, there are recent developments in some cities that illustrate the potential of such assemblies.

3.2.2. *The assembly of Lille*³³



One of the most active assemblies is located in Lille, France, where meetings are held on a monthly basis since 2015. The Assembly of the Commons in Lille³⁴ was initiated by a group of people who co-organised “Roumics”³⁵, an event focusing on digital inclusion and rights. During a workshop, the first group of people interested in the subject was gathered. After that event, two informal meetings took place to discuss the idea of the AoC. The third one, entitled “Building in action the Assembly of Commons”, was the first attempt to test the Assembly’s structure. To date, the Assembly is supported financially by a local association which pays for room rental.

During such a meeting, people from local commons-oriented initiatives are gathered and share their ideas, news and skills in the form of self-managed workshops. Participation is open and all members are able to offer their workshops there. People with various backgrounds are attending the Assembly. There are also wide disparities in terms of the participants’ relevance to the concept of commons; some are aware of it while others have just discovered it. Workshops can be held on the day of the meeting or separately. Their operation is decentralised but the members of the assembly are documenting them and leave written traces of their work on the Assembly’s wiki³⁶. This approach is based on “stigmergy” that is a mechanism of indirect coordination (Marsh & Onof, 2008).

After more than 15 sessions, numerous workshops and two seminars, the members of the Assembly have finalised their Charter of Practices³⁷. This document defines its basic objectives, ethics, tools, partners and other. The main goal of the Assembly of Lille is to create connections between local initiatives and promote the culture of the commons. Today, there are many commons-oriented projects in Lille, which the Assembly is attempting to map in an online tool³⁸. Moreover, the Assembly aims at developing a commons-consciousness, a vision of a desirable future, which is currently missing in most projects as they only focus on their own role.

³² <http://xes.cat/>

³³ It should be noted that the Assembly of Lille is a reworked excerpt from the Dereva, 2016.

³⁴ <http://lille.lescommuns.org/>

³⁵ <http://www.roumics.com/>

³⁶ <http://assemblee.encommuns.org/>

³⁷ <http://lille.lescommuns.org/des-pratiques/>

³⁸ <http://encommuns.org/>

Further, the Assembly is also exploring ways of collaboration with the local government. In this context, they are discussing about a General Political License which will allow the Assembly to work with the world of politics while maintaining the autonomy of the commoners (Bauwens, 2016).

The Assembly of Lille is also working on their Chamber of Commons³⁹. Although it is still a theoretical concept and no regular practice has taken place yet, the Assembly has made progress through the organisation of relevant workshops and is now at the turning point. They are ready to launch a functioning Chamber of Commons since a growing number of commoners in Lille want to sustain themselves by working on the commons.

As mentioned in the beginning of this section, the phenomenon of the Assemblies of the Commons is not present only in Lille. There are several other attempts in cities such as Toulouse, Ghent, Helsinki, Melbourne and others. In addition, there are structures that do not use the term “AoC” but act similarly, such as Procomuns in Barcelona (see Section 2.1.2). For the moment, the francophone assemblies are interconnected but there are no strong links with other assemblies. An attempt towards that direction is the European Commons Assembly⁴⁰ that facilitates pluralistic debate regarding the strategy and agenda for a united political vision. It supports activists’ continued engagement in concrete, collaborative and bottom-up actions and campaigns in Europe. Ultimately, it helps to build a flourishing European political civil society movement for the commons.

As mentioned before, the idea of the Assembly of the Commons is not mature yet. Rather, the majority of the existing assemblies is in the development phase, inventing their own operation as informal structures. However, the proliferation of the Assemblies of the Commons and their continuous networking could assist in fulfilling the need for a more democratic city.

4. Conclusions and Recommendations

The majority of the world population is now living in cities. The consequent increase of consumption in those places leads to heavy environmental problems as well as social contestations and conflicts. Hence, an alternative vision for cities that are not subsumed to the dictates of economic growth is needed. Commons could provide the framework for developing more inclusive and sustainable cities.

The concept of urban commons has been gaining a lot of visibility lately. They are seen as a way of reclaiming our cities, through a more open and participatory governance regime. Such a regime is not currently prevailing in city administrations. However, we have recently seen local governments attempting to follow a different approach that protects and strengthens the commons. Their main aim is to reject the exclusive focus on market-oriented logics as the

³⁹ <http://chambredescommuns.org/>

⁴⁰ <https://europeancommonsassembly.eu/>

rule for establishing order in political structures, and promote citizen participation in the city-making processes.

This new type of municipalism is spreading across Europe. The cases of Barcelona, Bologna and Frome demonstrate how cities can experiment with citizen-led initiatives and test new relationships with them, addressing the challenges of urban development and social cohesion. The aforementioned local administrations allow their inhabitants and other actors to enter a co-design process for a city. Contrary to rule-based bureaucratic command as the standard top-down coercive mechanism in contemporary life (Graeber, 2015), this process is designed for rapid citizen feedback and constant iteration. Of course, there are many challenges faced while attempting such a cultural change in public administrations. For instance, at issue is the inability of their personnel to understand the logic of commoning. Towards that direction, training civil servants to increase their awareness on the concept of commons is essential. In addition, while making city systems more commons-friendly is of great importance, it comes with many administrative, legal and political complexities.

We are simultaneously witnessing a growing number of grassroots initiatives in Europe, which work towards a commons-oriented approach in the city, with or without the support of local governments. “Commoning” is seen as an essential process for the creation of a thriving local economy that will lead to a socially and environmentally sustainable city.

This shared interest by local governments and grassroots initiatives for such a transition can only be achieved through the mutual coordination of their activities and the creation of the necessary political, social and economic institutions. A tentative proposal for the structure of this ecosystem is described below.

The first step is bringing together local initiatives that work on the commons (Figure 4). An attempt towards that direction, is the formation of the Assemblies of Commons (AoC) and the Chambers of the Commons (CoC). The former is used as a platform to disseminate activities and facilitate the debate on issues around the commons, mainly on a political level. Existing cases of such associations are the Assembly of Lille and Procomuns in Barcelona. On the other hand, the CoC is mostly focused on connecting ethical enterprises in the city that aim at creating livelihoods for the commoners. Although this concept is not fully developed yet, there are examples, like Xarxa d’Economia Solidària (XES) in Barcelona, that illustrate its potential to support activities on the economical level.

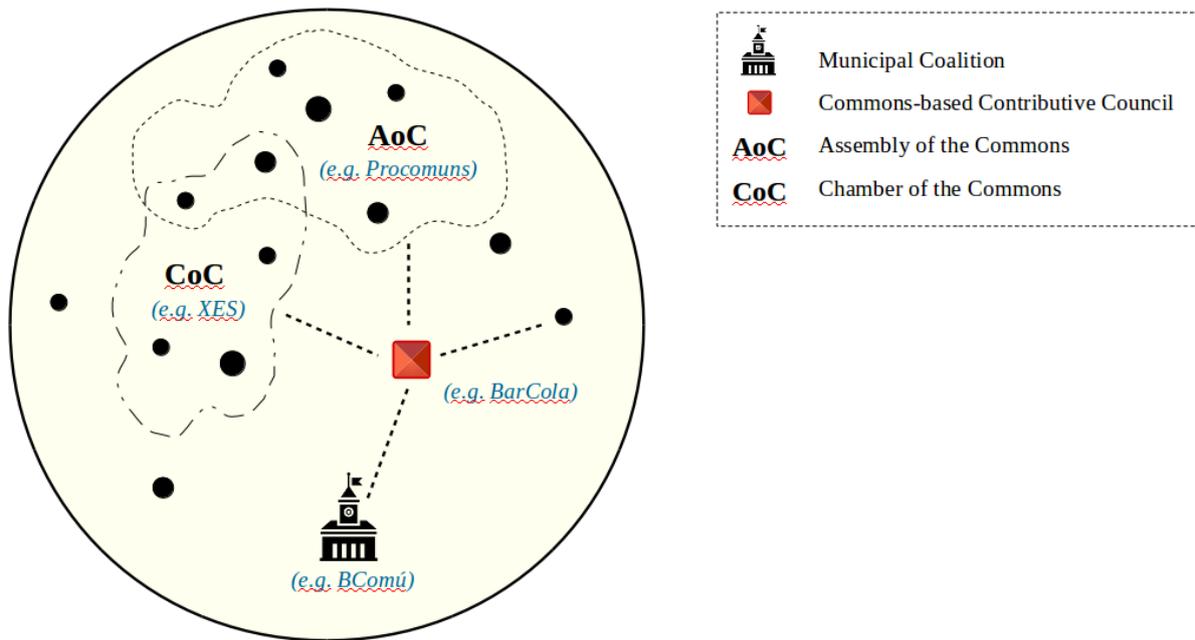


Figure 4: A commons-oriented synergetic convergence in the city level.

As a next step, it is vital to develop and sustain links between the grassroots initiatives and the municipal coalition of the city. Hence, the creation of an independent institution that would enhance the dialogue between city officials, representatives from the AoC and the CoC, and other entities is proposed. Such an institution could host regular meetings where policies around the commons are recommended and assessed. BarCola, Barcelona’s node on the Commons Collaborative Economy, could be considered as an example (see section 2.1.2). Last, the structure within municipalities should be adjusted to the needs of this ecosystem, mainly by creating dedicated departments that will engage in the aforementioned practices.

What is needed beyond this connection is to deepen translocal cooperation, to facilitate the exchange of knowledge on a larger scale and deal more effectively with the challenges faced in this process. The proliferation of the proposed model in more European cities could assist in creating networks between entities with similar interests and responsibilities (Figure 5).

There are three different layers of collaboration proposed. The first one regards the connection of the AoC (Layer 1). Through such a network, it would be possible to communicate the experiences of each AoC and, eventually, build a flourishing European political civil society movement for the commons. Likewise, there should be a respective network for the CoC (Layer 2). Its role would be to facilitate the promotion and sharing of experiences from the local level.

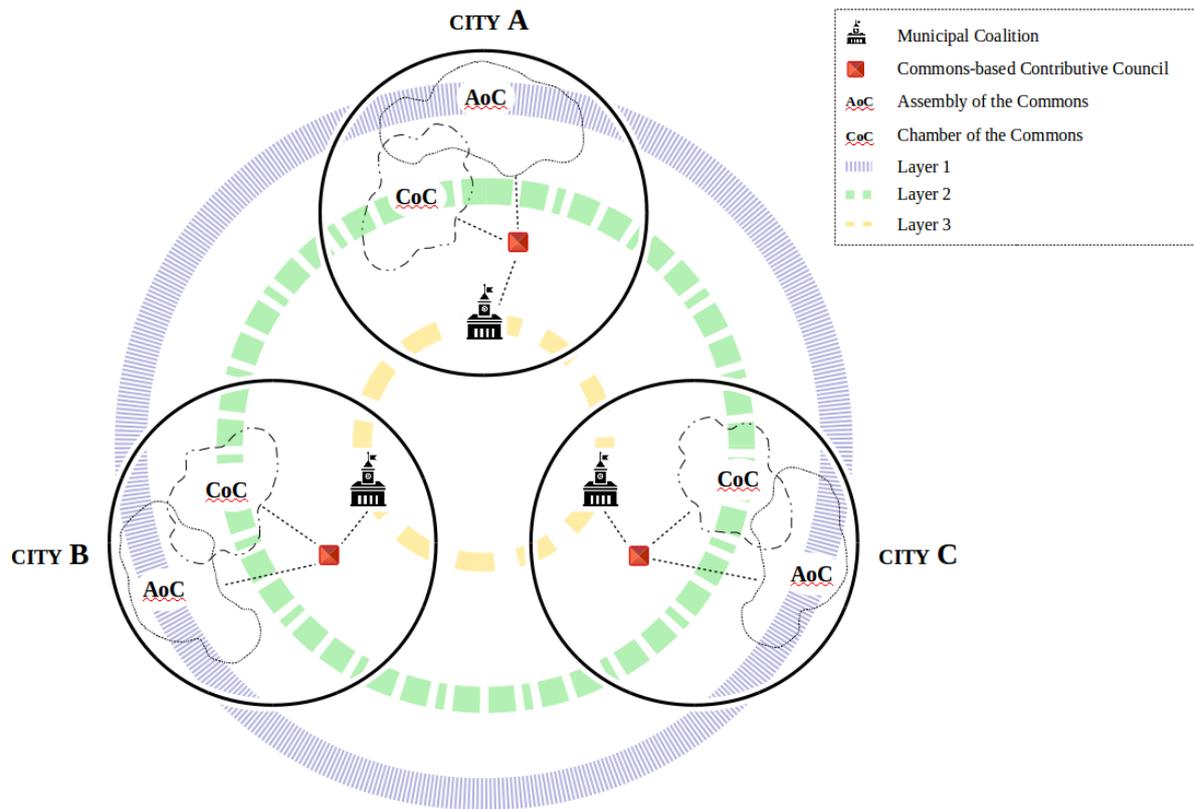


Figure 5: A commons-oriented synergetic convergence in the intercity level.

Last, municipal coalitions should establish an international committee to facilitate learning from other cities (Layer 3). Currently, there are efforts made by some coalitions, like BComú but the expansion of this network is key to achieving higher impact.

An important point regarding the replication of the described model is that, although European cities share some challenges, the context within which they develop varies from city to city. Best practices of co-creation that worked in one place can have negative effects in another. Thus, it would be more effective to focus on replicating the processes followed instead of the practices. In any case, sharing steps, solutions and mistakes could be beneficial.

To conclude, co-creating the city would require diverse stakeholders establishing ways to collaborate, beyond political machinations (Bollier, 2015). Ultimately, cities will need to conduct their own experiments to discover how to establish functioning collaboration within their specific contexts.

5. References

Ajuntament de Barcelona (2017a). The Impetus plan for the social and solidarity economy 2016-2019. SlideShare. Retrieved from:

https://www.slideshare.net/Barcelona_cat/the-impetus-plan-for-the-social-and-solidarity-economy-20162019.

- Ajuntament de Barcelona (2017b). Barcelona: Collaborative policies for the collaborative Economy. SlideShare. Retrieved from: https://www.slideshare.net/Barcelona_cat/bcn-digital-barcelona-collaborative-policies-for-the-collaborative-economy.
- Ambrosi, A. (2015). The commons have come to town. Remix the commons. Retrieved from: <http://www.remixthecommons.org/en/2015/06/les-communs-entrent-a-lhotel-de-ville-1/>.
- Araya, D. (2015). Interview: Michel Bauwens on peer-to-peer economics and its role in reshaping our world. Futurism. Retrieved from: <https://futurism.com/interview-michel-bauwens-on-peer-to-peer-economics-and-its-role-in-reshaping-our-world/>.
- Baird, K.S. (2014). Let's win back Barcelona!. OpenDemocracy. Retrieved from: <https://www.opendemocracy.net/can-europe-make-it/kate-shea-baird/let%27s-win-back-barcelona>.
- Baird, K.S. (2015). Beyond Ada Colau: The common people of Barcelona en Comú. OpenDemocracy. Retrieved from: <https://www.opendemocracy.net/can-europe-make-it/kate-shea-baird/beyond-ada-colau-common-people-of-barcelona-en-com%C3%BA>.
- Bausells, M. (2016). Superblocks to the rescue: Barcelona's plan to give streets back to residents. The Guardian. Retrieved from: <https://www.theguardian.com/cities/2016/may/17/superblocks-rescue-barcelona-spain-plan-give-streets-back-residents>.
- Bauwens, M. (2013). Proposed next steps for the emerging p2p and commons networks. P2P Foundation. Retrieved from: <https://blog.p2pfoundation.net/proposed-next-steps-for-the-emerging-p2p-and-commons-networks/2013/04/02>.
- Bauwens, M. (2015a). Interviewed: Professor Christian Iaione on the city as commons. Shareable. Retrieved from: <http://www.shareable.net/blog/interviewed-professor-christian-iaione-on-the-city-as-commons>.
- Bauwens, M. (2015b). Assembly of the commons. P2P Foundation. Retrieved from: http://wiki.p2pfoundation.net/Assembly_of_the_Commons.
- Bauwens, M. (2016). Why the p2p and commons movement must act trans-locally and trans-nationally. P2P Foundation. Retrieved from: <https://blog.p2pfoundation.net/p2p-commons-movement-must-act-trans-locally-trans-nationally/2016/06/16>.
- Bauwens, M., Kostakis, V., Troncoso, S., & Utratel, A.M. (2017). Commons transition and p2p: A primer. Transnational Institute. Retrieved from: <https://www.tni.org/en/publication/commons-transition-and-p2p>.

- BComú Global (2016). Barcelona votes for public control of water. Medium. Retrieved from: <https://medium.com/@BComuGlobal/barcelona-votes-for-public-control-of-water-a458ad9cdbc4>.
- Bergren-Miller, A. (2015). Commons-based coalition wins big in Barcelona election. Shareable. Retrieved from: <http://www.shareable.net/blog/commons-based-coalition-wins-big-in-barcelona-election>.
- Bergren-Miller, A. (2017). Barcelona crowdsourced its sharing economy policies: Can other cities do the same?. Shareable. Retrieved from: <http://www.shareable.net/blog/barcelona-crowdsourced-its-sharing-economy-policies-can-other-cities-do-the-same>.
- Bollier, D. (2011). The commons, short and sweet. Retrieved from: <http://bollier.org/commons-short-and-sweet>.
- Bollier, D. (2015). Bologna: A laboratory for urban commoning. Retrieved from: <http://bollier.org/blog/bologna-laboratory-urban-commoning>.
- Bollier, D. (2016). Barcelona's brave struggle to advance the commons. P2P Foundation. Retrieved from: <https://blog.p2pfoundation.net/barcelonas-brave-struggle-to-advance-the-commons/2016/11/29>.
- D'Antonio, S. (2015). How a regulation turned Bologna's civic pride into action. Citiscope. Retrieved from: <http://citiscope.org/story/2015/how-regulation-turned-bolognas-civic-pride-action>.
- Dereva, M. (2016). The emergence of assemblies of the commons. In Ramos, J. (ed.), The city as a commons: A policy reader. Commons Transition Coalition. Retrieved from: https://www.academia.edu/27143172/The_City_as_Commons_a_Policy_Reader.
- El Periódico (2016). Barcelona cierra el proceso participativo del PAM con 9.000 propuestas. El Periódico. Retrieved from: <http://www.elperiodico.com/es/noticias/barcelona/barcelona-cierra-proceso-participativo-del-pam-con-9000-propuestas-5041286>.
- Flatpack Democracy (2014). About Peter Macfadyen & Independents for Frome (IfF). Retrieved from: <http://www.flatpackdemocracy.co.uk/about/>.
- Foster, S., & Iaione, C. (2016). The city as a commons. Yale Law & Policy Review, 34(2).
- Frome Times (2015). Welcome to the people's republic of Frome: Independents take full house at election. Retrieved from: <http://www.frometimes.co.uk/2015/05/19/8558/>.
- Glaeser, E. (2011). Triumph of the city: How our greatest invention makes us richer, smarter, greener, healthier, and happier. New York, NY: Penguin.
- Gorenflo, N. (2015). Bologna celebrates one year of a bold experiment in urban commoning. Shareable. Retrieved from: <http://www.shareable.net/blog/bologna-celebrates-one-year-of-a-bold-experiment-in-urban-commoning>.

- Graeber, D. (2015). *The utopia of rules: On technology, stupidity, and the secret joys of bureaucracy*. New York, NY: Melville House.
- Hardt, M. (2011). Reclaim the common in communism. *The Guardian*. Retrieved from: <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2011/feb/03/communism-capitalism-socialism-property>.
- Harris, J. (2015). How Flatpack Democracy beat the old parties in the people's republic of Frome. *The Guardian*. Retrieved from: <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2015/may/22/flatpack-democracy-peoples-republic-of-frome>.
- Hicks, D. (2016). A climate change companion: For family, school and community. Retrieved from: <http://www.teaching4abetterworld.co.uk/books/download24.pdf>.
- Iaione, C., Foster, S., & Bauwens, M. (2017, forthcoming). Towards a co-city: From the urban commons to the city as a commons.
- Iff (2017a). The next four years. Retrieved from: <http://iffrome.org.uk/>.
- Iff (2017b). Launch of the Frome Development Community Interest Company (FDCIC). Retrieved from: <http://iffrome.org.uk/2011to2014/2011/10/19/launch-of-the-frome-development-community-interest-company-fdcic/>.
- LabGov (2014). Bologna regulation on public collaboration for urban commons. Retrieved from: <http://www.labgov.it/2014/10/31/bologna-regulation-on-public-collaboration/>.
- Leach, S. (2015). Peter Macfadyen, Flatpack Democracy: A DIY guide to creating independent politics, *Local Government Studies*, 41(4), 650-652.
- Macfadyen, P. (2015). *Flatpack Democracy: A DIY guide to creating independent politics*. Bath: Eco-logic books.
- Marsh, L., & Onof, C. (2008). Stigmergic epistemology, stigmergic cognition. *Cognitive Systems Research*, 9, 136.
- Niaros, V., Kostakis, V., & Drechsler, W. (2017). Making (in) the smart city: The emergence of makerspaces. *Telematics and Informatics*, xx(xx), xx-xx. (in press).
- O'Sullivan, F. (2017). Barcelona's car-taming "Superblocks" meet resistance. *CityLab*. Retrieved from: <https://www.citylab.com/transportation/2017/01/barcelonas-car-taming-superblocks-meet-resistance/513911/>.
- Ramos, J. (2016). The city as a commons: A policy reader. Commons Transition Coalition. Retrieved from: https://www.academia.edu/27143172/The_City_as_Commons_a_Policy_Reader.
- Reading, N. (2012). What a democratic revolution in the Somerset town of Frome could teach our political class. *Independent*. Retrieved from: <http://www.independent.co.uk/voices/comment/what-a-democratic-revolution-in-the-somerset-town-of-frome-could-teach-our-political-class-8312163.html>.

- ROAR Collective (2015). Grassroots movements sweep into Barcelona town hall. ROAR Magazine. Retrieved from: <https://roarmag.org/essays/barcelona-comu-election-victory/>.
- Russell, B., & Reyes, O. (2017). Eight lessons from Barcelona en Comú on how to take back control. OpenDemocracy. Retrieved from: <https://www.opendemocracy.net/can-europe-make-it/oscar-reyes-bertie-russell/eight-lessons-from-barcelona-en-com-on-how-to-take-bac>.
- Sagrans, E. (2015). 6 lessons for the U.S. from Spain's democratic revolution. In these times. Retrieved from: <http://inthesetimes.com/article/18001/6-lessons-for-the-u.s.-from-spains-democratic-revolution>.
- Sassen, S. (2015). Who owns our cities and why this urban takeover should concern us all. The Guardian. Retrieved from: <https://www.theguardian.com/cities/2015/nov/24/who-owns-our-cities-and-why-this-urban-takeover-should-concern-us-all>.
- Smith, A., Fressoli, M., Abrol, D., Arond, E., & Ely, A. (2017). Grassroots innovation movements. Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge.
- Spigarolo, F. (2017). Building "cities for people": Barcelona superilles. LabGov. Retrieved from: <http://www.labgov.it/2017/02/10/building-cities-for-people-barcellona-superilles/>
- Stavrides, S. (2016). Common space: The city as commons. London: Zed Books.
- Tebbens, W. (2016). Local policies for the smart city and knowledge society: Towards a more sustainable, social and democratic model. Free Knowledge Institute. Retrieved from: <http://freeknowledge.eu/article/smart-city-barcelona-commons-report>.
- United Nations (2014). World urbanization prospects: The 2014 revision. Retrieved from: <http://esa.un.org/unpd/wup/highlights/wup2014-highlights.pdf>.
- Vize, R. (2012). Proof that local people powegs done. The Guardian. Retrieved from: <https://www.theguardian.com/local-government-network/2012/aug/03/richard-vize-local-government-independents-for-frome>.
- Walljasper, J. (2016). The city as a commons: From Flint to Italy. CommonDreams. Retrieved from: <https://www.commondreams.org/views/2016/02/13/city-commons-flint-italy>.
- Williams, R. (2015). Somerset share shop offers a new kind of enterprise. The Guardian. Retrieved from: <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2015/may/13/frome-share-shop-social-enterprise>.

