

Mattia Granata, Fabio Lavista, *Coop Lombardia. L'impresa e la responsabilità ereditaria*, Milano, Coop Lombardia-Centro per la cultura d'impresa, 2004
review by Luca Mocarrelli

This book by Mattia Granata and Fabio Lavista, published on the occasion of the 20th anniversary of Coop Lombardia, is of remarkable interest. First of all, because the authors have accomplished a significant task with the available sources (in particular, the register of the commercial houses, but also the register of firms as well as the archives held by cooperatives). Secondly, they have been able to draw up very detailed files about more than 120 cooperatives in Lombardy; and to accurately reconstruct the steps that led to the creation of Coop Lombardia.

This work is highly relevant given the peculiar nature of cooperatives in Italy. These are economic entities solidly established in the market, but who also have social aims that have been built up over time and therefore, can only be fully understood in the long term. The entrepreneurial continuity in the history of cooperatives in Lombardy is clearly illustrated in the book, through an analytical reconstruction of the several mergers and incorporations that eventually brought about the founding of Coop Lombardia.

At the center of the book, the authors have placed a synoptic table that offers the reader the spectrum of widely varied local entrepreneurial and social initiatives which, in time, gradually joined Coop Lombardia. Indeed, it is thanks to the multiple and varied contribution of skills and experience, that Coop Lombardia can operate in the today's market and still remain faithful to the fertile ideal of cooperation.

Moreover, Granata and Lavista have explained the logic and strategies behind this entrepreneurial process because they didn't just utilize paper sources – in itself very important as a means to retrieve the memory of several experiences - but also have given voice to several key players in the world of the cooperatives through a series of well-balanced interviews. *Coop Lombardia. L'impresa e la responsabilità ereditaria* emphasizes the efforts to link market and solidarity, while at the same time, developing an adequate business strategy. The notable development of Coop Lombardia in the last ten years shows that the choices have proven to be the right ones.