

**Spatialised practices of care in community gardens: nuances between solidarity and insularity**

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Urban agriculture (UA) is usually addressed as a relevant initiative to promote food security, that also brings positive environmental and socio-economic impact to citizens. However, research also shows that UA can reinforce exclusionary dynamics in the urban environment. Following a critical agenda on the topic, this paper explored if community gardens can be considered spaces that enact practices of care among volunteers, and within the community where they are based. The discussion was based on what motivates participants' engagement in community gardens; and what opportunities these spaces offer for them to build solidarity connections in there, in relational dynamics among humans and non-humans.

This study is part of an ongoing qualitative PhD project in Human Geography, focusing on women's lived experiences in community gardens in Wellington, New Zealand. Data has been collected from 9 participants distributed among 3 different gardens. For this paper, I used material from participant observation held during 6 months in 2021, and from semi-structured interviews. Data has been coded and themed, and the findings have been analysed from a feminist approach, focusing on Affective and Emotions Geographies frameworks.

The results show that relations developed in community gardens spaces can affect the sense of self-worth of participants, their sense of belonging, and build supportive networks that impact on community resilience through collective care practices. Nevertheless, these spaces also reproduce social disparities based on race, gender and class, revealing structural limitations applied to the reach of who can be included in the affects circle from each garden.

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