



# Urban gardens and institutional fences: The case of communal gardens in Turin\*

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## Abstract

Urban gardens take on different forms and meanings, which vary depending on the socio-economic context where they located/used and how it evolves over time. This makes a garden comparable to a micro-social ecosystem, different from other gardens and ever changing. As with every social-ecosystem resulting from a territorialisation process, there is a certain degree of social inertia that makes it difficult for outsiders with new motivations and demanding new spaces to enter into the "garden ecosystem". Drawing on existing literature and fieldwork in two urban communal gardens in Turin, the paper is mainly concerned with the spatiotemporal dimension of urban gardening, with a special focus on governance aspects. In particular, the article offers insights about the involvement of the governance process in the dynamics of urban allotment gardens and looks at the impact of regulations. Despite being areas with a limited extension, the complex nature of the structural coupling of the relationship among gardeners and the assigned allotment, makes it clear that urban garden management is far from being unproblematic. The attempt to govern and manage the phenomenon by the local government and promoting associations often represents a real challenge in terms of adaptability and response to a phenomenon in constant evolution and fully inserted in the urban transition. This is a process characterized, on the one hand, by internal, conservative resistance and, on the other hand, by pressures asking for social change and innovation from the outside. In an era of urban agriculture renaissance, both aspects are relevant factors to keep in mind to face the rising demand from new people for cultivating urban spaces. These aspects have not been sufficiently considered in the governance practices or in the reflections of the scientific community.

## Introduction

Different studies converge in framing urban agriculture through some common and shared categories: a) the cultivated spaces (e.g. urban or peri-urban, legal or illegal); b) the kind of actors and the degree of participation (e.g. citizens, administrators, associations, professional

farmers); c) the realised activities and practices (e.g. recreational, productive, educational) (Nahmías & Le Caro, 2012). In the same way, these categories can be used to frame and distinguish urban gardens. Although they feature some fixed elements (e.g. arable areas, service

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elements, irrigation systems, fences) and similar back-grounds, they can assume forms, meanings and func-tions very different among them, often even far apart. Each garden has "its own distinctive character"(Crouch, 2016, p.31) coming from the contextual and relational aspects between gardeners and garden.

Despite this diversity, there is the risk of labelling these micro-systems too quickly and in a reductive way, triv-ializing their complex nature. A "communitarian garden" does not necessarily ensure socialization or social co-hesion. Nor, is "the cultivation of one's own backyard" always the expression of a selfish attitude of assignees who assume "private ownership" of collective spaces. It depends on the structural coupling (Luhmann, 1995), the contextual and relational aspects between actors and the garden structure.

To avoid the use of labels for urban gardens that are too general and fall into a rhetorical trap, it seems therefore interesting to assume the perspective of human and po-litical ecology (Classens, 2014) by looking at each urban garden as a system of interactions among the environ-mental and the socio-economic components, including the conditions which discipline the use and manage-ment of resources at the level of individual and collec-tive spaces and the exchange of material and immaterial flows with the surrounding environment.

This point of view, starting from the work of Pike (1954) and continuing with the work of Moore (2008), allows us to look at the urban garden not merely as a category or scale of analysis, but rather "as a category of practices". It implies that urban gardens have to be analysed also considering the evolution of the temporal and spatial dimensions (Tornaghi, 2014). It means to look at urban gardens as the result of a territorialisation process, where gardens are the social outcome of the symbolic, materi-al and organisational construction of a specific territory (Raffestin, 1980). The spatial and temporal scale of this territoriality has structured the relations among the gar-deners, the local community and the resource availabil-ity. From this perspective, gardens can be also seen as a social autopoietic microecosystem that maintains and reproduces itself based on its own elements (Luhmann, 1986; 1995). Moving from these assumptions, the urban garden as a dynamic ecosystem, reflects, suffers, and adapts itself to the transition state of the spatio-tempo-ral context where is located, within a framework of oper-ative closure (Seidl, 2016).

But what happens if urban gardens are entering into a new phase of symbolisation, where they are considered a catalyst of urban change and "a pretext for social ac-tion" (Duchemin et al., 2008) based on education, activ-

ism, networking, solidarity, and inclusion? In the case of already existing gardens, with a certain degree of in-ternal inertia and a consolidated creation of a personal and collective landscape at the physical and metaphori-cal level (Crouch, 2016, p31.), there is a good chance of conflicts arising, often implicitly, between the older and new urban gardening practices and representations. Is an urban garden and those who manage and cultivate it really in a position to answer and adapt to this chal-lenge, and if so, under what conditions? How, in the case of municipal gardens specifically, are institutions able to integrate the new requirements under inertial dynamics and practices?

This paper aims to investigate how this change in the role and meaning of communal urban gardens in the city area of Turin from the 1970s to nowadays has been acknowledged by those involved in the governance of this process and how they have been able to address the needs of the old and new citizens of the gardens. Com-pared to previous literature, this article positions itself in the domain of critical geography of urban gardening, adding a theoretical and empirical contribution regard-ing the urban garden dynamics resulting from push and pull factors associated with those who want the garden to evolve with new features and those who want to keep the status quo.

### Urban gardens as a dynamic territorialisation process

Urban gardens can be seen therefore as the outcome of a dynamic territorialisation process, where practices and behaviours resulting from different socio-econom-ic contingencies settle down and stratify in the inter-play between the physical space of the allotments and the organisation of relations and functions that come along with it. By assuming a spatio-temporal perspec-tive, one can say that in the garden, different functions and identities can coexist synchronously, overlap or shift, with all the consequences that a change in func-tionality assumes for the socio-biological community inside and outside the ecosystem (Guitart, Pickering, & Byrne, 2012), creating conflict and richness (Massey, 1994, p. 153). Within this process of territorialisation, the garden self-regulates itself by flow exchanges with the surrounding environment that determine the degree of opening and closing of its cycle. From a strict ecological perspective, urban gardens can be considered as closed system inside the modern city. In contrast, the latter is an open and incomplete system since it depends on large areas for energy, food, fiber, water and other materials, so much as to be called by the ecologist Odum (1983) "the parasite of the rural environment". However, if we



consider the garden as a social space, one can observe how its existence (Chan, DuBois, & Tidball, 2015) is also determined by the degree of openness that gardeners are able to achieve and exchanged with the outside according to the functioning of a social autopoietic system (Luhmann, 1995; Minger, 2002). In this sense, gardens are open systems, whose degree of openness can vary significantly from garden to garden.

In some cases, the creation of formal and informal networks of exchanges among the gardeners enhances the sense of belonging to the territory, which is reflected in an increased attention to the broader urban context (D'Abundo & Carden, 2008; Glover, Shinew, & Parry, 2005). Situations occur instead where gardeners form a cohesive but closed community to the outside environment and show some resistance to change and distrust towards the outside. Although in situations where there is a clear temporary limit on the use of the allotment, the act of taking care of the everyday living spaces "leads to a mental and physical appropriation and increases place attachment" (Ioannou et al., 2016)). The continuity of gardening activity increases the gardener's attachment to place (Tidball et al., 2014; Casey, 2001). Such contingent variables, along with how the process of gardening territorialisation has taken place, determine the internal inertia and the degree of openness of system operating rules.

It is therefore relevant to know and analyse the processes of symbolic, material and organizational construction of urban gardens, seen as social construction (i.e. the outcome of co-evolving dynamics among society-environment and territoriality), as a wider relational process between individuals, society and the internal and external environment (Raffestin, 1980).

We adopted this theoretical framework to look at how, over time, the different roles and meanings attributed to urban gardens in the context of the metropolitan area of Turin have been managed in the process of urban garden governance. Here we are in a context where institutions face, on the one side, a strong push and demand for innovation from the citizens who would like to have a garden with new features and, on the other side, a force of the same intensity, but opposite direction, trying to maintain the status quo from those that have owned an urban garden for many years. Insights from the paper arise from the analysis of the experience of urban gardens in the context of the city of Turin and its suburbs since the early 1970s and, more specifically, from the analysis of two case studies: the regulated urban gardens della Bela Rosin in the Mirafiori district of Turin and the communal urban gardens in Grugliasco, a municipality in the first belt of Turin.

The analysis of the context was performed by the reconstruction of the official records and interviews with witnesses and participants to the evolution of the phenomenon. The analysis of the case studies, beyond the participation of some persons who work directly in the management and governance of these two experiences, has involved more than 61 gardeners that, in the period from June to September 2014, were interviewed with a semi-structured questionnaire. The questionnaire was focused on collecting information about the relationship between the gardener and his or her assigned plot (e.g. years of cultivation, frequency, functions, cultivation practices) and the relationship of each single gardener with the gardeners' community (e.g. kind of exchange, participation in representative bodies, presence of conflicts). The gardeners were interviewed within the space of their assigned garden, usually while working in the plot. The sample of respondents contained men and women, people of different age groups, as well as old and new gardeners.

### **Urban gardens in Turin: yesterday and today**

Over time, urban agriculture in Turin has taken on many faces and changed in extent and function following the evolution of the city and, above all, the needs of its inhabitants. In Turin, urban gardens originated in the late 1600s as a means to guarantee the city a sufficient agricultural production for the needs of the population. The first allotment gardens date back to the period of the First World War. Coping with food supply difficulties was the main function of "war gardens". With the intention of controlling the prices of the main agricultural commodities during the Second World War, the extent of agriculture in the city increased further. The practice of leasing communal land to private people for agricultural uses became widespread in all the urban areas. Most of the urban and suburban Turin allotment gardens still present today have their origins in the late 1980s.

In the 1970s, small areas of spontaneous occupation started to develop near water courses. This phenomenon was concomitant to the population increase and was the result of the wave of migration that characterized the city in the years of the economic miracle. Between the years 1950 and 1960, the overall net migration into the city was 433,000 inhabitants. In 1975, Turin reached its maximum population of 1,203,000 inhabitants (Mela, 2011). Among these immigrants, those from rural settings, and among them, those from Southern Italy, predominated (Bagnasco, 1986). For the immigrant metalworker, the garden held a productive function of income support, a form of occupation for the time outside the assembly line, and "an antidote to escape from the binary factory-apartment", which allowed a return to



the land, to one's origins. From the perspective of Turin, the spontaneous gardens, commonly referred to as "the gardens of the poor", are the manifesto of the situation of marginalized immigrants. The phenomenon grew without being defined or any attempt at regulation by the City of Turin and the surrounding municipalities of this first belt (including Collegno, Grugliasco, Venaria, and Nichelino) until the 1980s,

In the 1970s, it has been estimated that the phenomenon, just within in the area of Turin, came to include 2,000,000 unregulated plots<sup>2</sup>. The first act of discipline regarding allocation and management of urban gardens came in 1986 with the Municipal Regulation n. 164 (approved by resolution of the City Council on July 23, 1986 - mecc. 86 00125/46 - executive from 21 August, 1986).

This measure was followed by the adoption of more specific measures by the different districts of the City of Turin and regulations from the peri-urban municipalities, always with the aim of controlling the illegal side of the phenomenon by setting up a system for the allocation of gardens to applicant citizens. This attitude from the institutions was almost unchanged for the duration of the 1990s and early 2000s. Only after 2010, with the manifestation of the effects of the economic crisis apparent and a new demand from citizens for green spaces, quality of life and food, the Civic Administration saw urban and peri-urban horticulture as a means to:

- enhance the value of areas that were taken away due to degradation and the marginalization and give them the status of "areas for agricultural use," to combat the encroachment of urban sprawl, to protect the environment, and to improve the quality of urban places;
- support the sociality and citizen participation and its possibility to aggregate, promoting social cohesion and the social presidium;
- teach and disseminate cultivation techniques;
- support organic food production and traditional local varieties;
- promote educational activities for youth or those who wish to approach this type of activity (prevention and environmental education);
- promote supportive health care with processes of physical and psychological therapy.

Urban gardens, as one of the possible forms of urban agriculture, took on a radical new significance with the urban green management measures included in the Territorial Plan for Provincial Coordination Plan (P.T.C.P.)<sup>3</sup>, as evidenced by the project TOCC<sup>4</sup>, Turin City To Be Cultivated, proposed by the municipality in 2012. TOCC not only represents an ambitious plan of analysis, census-taking, upgrading and managing urban and peri-urban green areas, but it also aims to change the method with which these spaces are managed.

The challenge is to strengthen the relationship between the city and the gardeners by contracting out, through a series of public announcements, entire agricultural areas/greens and to assign their management to collective bodies (associations, citizens' committees, cooperatives) in order to create a link between people and the institutions following a bottom-up approach.

Urban and peri-urban agriculture and horticulture can become a valuable support for the solution of food and ecological problems, which can also contribute, particularly in the metropolitan area of Turin, to reduce the cost of managing urban green areas and to introduce alternative forms of management. The new regulation for the management of urban gardens in 2013<sup>5</sup> was included as a part of the larger project TOCC. It is the same for the various communal gardens in Turin: the district now has the possibility to better specify the content of the rules. The main innovations compared to the previous resolution of 1986 include the possibility for citizens to use regulated gardens in a different way (e.g. as collective and family gardens) and the use of green areas (up to 2500 m<sup>2</sup>) by associations and cooperatives to implement horticultural and educational activities.

Close to the institutional "pro-garden" movement in the context of the city of Turin and its outskirts, there was the development of several informal gardens. Not only was the demand rising for lease of communal gardens by new categories of people, but a number of spontaneous experiences of individual and collective management associations flourished, as undivided areas were given in concession to private management by committees of citizens. There is a growing interest in how to make a garden, so districts and associations have organized courses

<sup>2</sup> Resolution of the City Council of the City of Turin on March 25, 2013. Cultivation is for private consumption and cannot be sold or related to any commercial activity.

<sup>3</sup> This document calls for the promotion of peri-urban areas, as the contact area between the rural and urban world, through actions for the protection and development of agriculture, not only devoted to food production, but also as a mean for the overall improvement of the urban quality and soil conservation.

<sup>4</sup> Resolution of the City Council of the City of Turin on March 5, 2012, [http://www.comune.torino.it/consiglio/documenti1/atti/testi/2012\\_00758.pdf](http://www.comune.torino.it/consiglio/documenti1/atti/testi/2012_00758.pdf)

<sup>5</sup> Rules for the allocation and management of Urban Gardens, approved by resolution of the City Council on March 25, 2013 (mech. 2013 00113/002), executive from April 8, 2013.





Figure 1: Map showing the location of the two case studies

in gardening, be it gardening on the ground, roof or balcony. Where there are already urban gardens, additional and optional services are provided, such as educational activities, library rooms, and areas for aggregation.

The purposes and functions are distinct from those that characterized the colonization of gardens 60-70 years. Today, the gardener is a young person in the age group of 20-40 years (young families, students), who looks for a means of socialization in the work of cultivating and approaches the garden as the intermediary for a healthier life. One can say that gardens in Turin are actually in a phase of transition that can be defined in relation to the 1970-80s as "the second and moreover the third generation gardens". This leads to the question of how the co-existence and integration between these two gardening models are evolving?

### The cases study

To have more insights about the dialectic between "traditional" and new gardening practices and the role of institutional dynamics within the framework of urban allotment gardens managed by public authorities, two case studies have been selected: the gardens of the district Mirafiori Sud in Turin and the communal gardens of Grugliasco. The two cases are quite close from a spatial point of view (10 km apart), both in the southwest of the Turin metropolitan area (Figure 1). From the adminis-

trative point of view, they belong to two different municipalities with different urban gardening regulation settings.

### *The regulated gardens of the district Mirafiori Sud in Turin*

The regulated gardens of Strada Castello di Mirafiori belong to the area of jurisdiction and management by District 10 of the city of Turin. The entire zone, near the river Sangone, was transformed into gardens in the early industrial development of the area of Mirafiori, becoming part of a historical process and social/economic result of the great migrations from the South of Italy during the 1960s. In 2004-2005, the reclamation of this area was promoted as part of a larger project to upgrade the urban and environmental area between the stream Sangone and the Mirafiori South district. The area was the birthplace of the first regulated gardens in 2007.

After the reclamation work, 102 regulated parcels were established from the pre-existing 230 illegal plots. Every garden has an area of 100 m<sup>2</sup>, an internal structure for the maintenance of the tools for cultivation and a water supply, according to the rules of District 10. Since 2010, this area became part of "Miraorti", a process of research, action and participatory planning in support of the urban government, aimed at the creation of the Agricultural Park of Sangone.



A number of animating initiatives have been promoted with the aim of raising awareness among gardeners about sustainable practices and encouraging them to take care of common areas open to the district through aggregated management, such as the realization of collective composters, recreational events and convivial activities with schools, creation of purchasing groups for plants and fertilizers, and physical improvement of the fences and common areas through the planting of 200 linear meters of mixed hedges. The direct knowledge of issues related to the technical management and governance of the gardens led to the creation of a committee of gardeners and pushed Miraorti to propose changes to the regulations for the management of gardens in District 10. In May of 2012, the district approved a new regulation, improving several anomalies that did not allow proper use of the area. The process has also resulted in proposed changes to the 1986 regulations of the gardens of Turin, which were accepted into the new regulation of 2013. These changes favoured the inclusion of measures in the regulation that increase the functional and social mixité in the single plots and in the garden. The idea was that urban gardens should not only be used by retired workers, but should be open to citizens of the district with different uses to meet the different needs and express fully the multi-functionality of the garden.

### ***The communal gardens of Grugliasco***

In 1984, the Municipality of Grugliasco decided to tackle the problem of illegal occupation of land for agricultural purposes (mainly concentrated in the area of Gerbido) by setting up a special area dedicated to the creation of gardens to be given in temporary concession to its citizens. These citizens, who initially were the same people who occupied the illegal gardens, were given "official" parcels in exchange for leaving their previous locations which they had inhabited as a result of "looking for the countryside that in the city clearly does not exist". The area, first located in Via Leonardo da Vinci and then moved to Strada del Gerbido, was made up of 347 parcels of 63 m<sup>2</sup> (9m x 7m) each.

Today, the management of such areas is ruled by resolution n.20 of the city council, made on March 19, 2012. Each plot is provided with an external enclosure, running water and a shed for tools. The area is equipped with a structure, the "house of gardeners", useful for common assemblies, common management and recreational activities among gardeners and families.

Each assignment has a duration of five years, which is renewable one time. Each gardener is responsible for his or her lot and all the related operation and maintenance activities. The gardener can cultivate his or her plot only with the cooperation of the family (made up of

only those people living together). Only more recently has the primary orientation of the garden shifted from a space to improve the welfare and socialization for elderly pensioners, to a space that has been opened to younger people. The regulation issued by the City Council in 2014 encouraged this in order to "stimulate a collective consciousness in developing a new image of Grugliasco, able to recover a positive relationship with the environment and to engage citizens in the construction of a modern city, less alienating, more humane." As a result, 80% of the lots were designated for pensioners, while 20% were for other categories of citizens.

The Regulation also made membership to the Association a necessary condition to receive allocation of a plot. In addition to the association as a management body, there is a municipal management committee made up of six members, including two councillors, the commissioner of reference, an official of the municipal sector, a representative of the gardeners, and a representative of the municipal police. The functions of the commission mainly concern the management of the list for the allocation of the new or empty gardens and everything related to the management of technical, administrative and relationship issues with the gardeners (including disputes). There is also the assembly of grantees and a board of directors (elected by the gardeners themselves) with the task of promoting issues and proposals for better management of the gardens and reporting any irregularities to the committee of management. Since March 2014, the management of all the gardens and the relationships with and among the beneficiaries has been outsourced to the Company Le Serre, who made a special information desk for users following the implementation of the resolution of the City Council. In 2015, thanks to the completion of the expansion, 120 additional lots were created, of which 10 are reserved for the unemployed under the current regulation.

### **Insights from the analysis of the case studies**

The analysis of two case studies shows how the relative public administrations are trying to adapt and adjust the system of management and governance of urban gardens, facing a reality (internally, but especially externally) that has changed radically over time. In particular, the latest evolution of the cultural framework that has characterized the issues of environment and agriculture in the context of Turin, has made it necessary to change the regulatory framework at the municipal and the metropolitan city level to actively involve groups of the population that, until now, could not access urban gardens and are now, with ever more insistence, demanding to do so. In this evolution, the two municipalities have adopted a different approach: one more oriented to-



wards adapting the garden regulations to the changes (as in the case of Mirafiori), and the other much more oriented to partially adjusting the present regulatory structure by patching it up with some new elements (as in the case of Grugliasco). Comparatively, the experience of the gardens of Bela Rosin at Mirafiori, as well as the larger program for regulated gardens in Turin, show a greater degree of openness towards the new demands that are emerging around the garden. The regulation allows citizens of any age to apply for a garden, either alone or in cooperation, and establish a percentage of gardens in each district with functions other than production exclusively (e.g. educational, pedagogical, and therapeutic functions). The regulation, stated as follows, also maintains a degree of openness to a partial adaptation with respect to future developments:

"This Regulation is subject to changes which may be adopted subsequently by the Civic Administration on the basis of experience gained during the period of initial application, and according to standards and suggestions. Any innovations must be fully accepted by beneficiaries."

In addition, the renewal of the allotment is not an automatic renewal, but it also permitted. In Grugliasco, changes have been included in the regulation and practices in a more limited way, providing fewer freedoms for the gardeners and minor multifunctional use of the gardens. New plots have been created, access has been allowed to persons at least 45 years old and with certain income criteria, and the years of renewal have been reduced.

As far as the novelty introduced in the regulatory framework for both case studies, the physical and social structure of the gardens of Turin and its first belt still reflect the arrangement inherited from the 1980s, with a substantial maintenance of the status quo (Table 1).

What has changed is that, in the meantime, most of metalworkers have retired. Although they cultivated their gardens with other motivations, they developed great feelings of attachment over their 30 years of cultivation. As an 80-year-old gardener said:

"It is the garden of my family. I know every single

**Table 1:** Synthesis of the main features of the two communal gardens (elaborated from the analysis of the regulatory framework and the data collected through the 61 questionnaires)

	Mirafiori Sud	Grugliasco
Model of governance	Adaptive	Adjustment
Year of granting legalisation status	2006	1984
Management institution	Municipality of Turin, District 10	Municipality of Grugliasco
Land property	Public	Public
Assigned allotment	102 plots, each of 100 m <sup>2</sup>	347 plots, each of 63 m <sup>2</sup>
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	29 (94%)	25 (83%)
Female	2 (6%)	5 (17%)
<b>Age</b>		
20 – 34	-	-
35 – 54	-	7%
55 – 74	61%	55%
75 - >75	39%	38%
<b>Job</b>		
Public employee	19%	17%
Private employee	7%	7%
Self-employed	16%	11%
Metalworker	45%	55%
<b>Provenience</b>		
South Italy	67%	70%
North Italy	32%	28%
Other	1%	2%



stone in my plot and now that I am becoming older, my son comes to help me. Several days I am tired and I am not able to cultivate, but I come here anyway."

This is even more evident in Grugliasco. Here, assignments of plots to pensioners were preserved and guaranteed. Changes have been made regarding the degree of possible renewal by beneficiaries and the duration of assignments, but at the same time, there remain a number of exceptions that preserve the status quo. For example, although assignees of the plots formally change, the allotments are often passed down through a family, so the substance remains the same.

We observed that in this case, the group of the gardeners has created a solid but closed community. The feeling of care for the place emerges from the garden management practices: all the plots are allocated, the maintenance is good, and the common spaces are used. The level of socialization is strong, but exclusive and limited to older gardeners (in the sense of ownership and length of the assignment) and there are barriers to entry against the new grantees. As a relatively new 50-year-old female gardener declared during the survey: "It's been a while since I got a parcel, but I do not feel at home". There is not a declared conflict, but it is avoided by treating the new gardeners as an isolated minority.

This aspect is also reflected by the representativeness of the Committee of the gardeners. The compulsory participation in the association of gardeners in order to avoid paying a greater amount for the assignment is perceived more as a top-down imposition and not as an attempt to create a bottom-up participation of gardeners. In Grugliasco, moreover, given the lower level of decentralization than in Turin, where the districts manage the service, the theme of cronyism is felt to a much greater extent. The gardeners make up a significant pool of votes that, in a municipality with 38,000 inhabitants, can move the balance of power. It is definitely easier to make political promises to gardeners still holding on to their parcels, than to those who are requesting to obtain one for the first time.

In Mirafiori, the autonomy of the association of gardeners and the feeling of community and common space, however, are still fragile. The management of the common areas is still problematic with regard to the degradation of the areas used as landfills, unused common areas, lack of maintenance, use of inappropriate materials in the gardens, low sensitivity to ecological sustainability in gardens, lack of functions and actions of control leading to irregularities in the conduct, and abandoned plots where no steps were taken to allocate new assignments, despite the long waiting list.

## Conclusions

The two case studies demonstrate that despite the existence of regulations that promote a new concept of urban gardening, the process of transition is not straightforward. The management of this transition poses a number of difficulties and clashes (more or less expressed) with the gardens' insiders. The boundary between the pursuit of the common good through the use of a public space and the use of a parcel as a private good, especially for those gardeners who inhabit the garden with a strong sense of ownership and embeddedness (they still belong to the generation of the first spontaneous settlers), is thin and over the years it thins more. The two case studies show the attempts of applying different solutions, one more oriented towards a process of adaptive governance, though still incomplete, as in the case of Mirafiori, and the other more oriented to an adjustment strategy, as evidenced by the case of Grugliasco.

In terms of innovation, this highlights a trade-off between the level of change allowed and the maintenance of a sense of community. It does not allow assessments to be made about what form of response is preferable, but makes clear the need to further investigate the functions attributed to an urban garden, its community of reference and how it may evolve over time, favouring new processes of inclusion and generating new forms of exclusion.

In an era of urban agriculture resurgence, the acknowledgment of institutional fences in pre-existing gardening situations is definitely a factor that will require greater attention. The spatial and temporal scale of how territoriality has structured the relations among the gardeners, the local community and the resource availability matters and should be properly recognized alongside the socio-environmental, exclusionary dynamics which are embedded into urban gardens (Tornaghi, 2014) and within urban gardens models (old and new). Physical and mental space for new urban gardening practices is difficult to come by, even in cities with a strong reputation for their green and food policies.

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## Conflict of Interests

The authors hereby declare that there are no conflicts of interests.





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