



Who is and who should be caring for urban food systems? A feminist ethics of care perspective on the case of Barcelona

Chiara Bergonzini^{a,*} , Marina Di Masso Tarditti^b 

^a Department of Sociology and Social Research, University of Milano-Bicocca, Piazza dell'Ateneo Nuovo, 1, 20126, Milan, Italy

^b Chair Agroecology and Food Systems, University of Vic-Central University of Catalonia, Spain

ARTICLE INFO

Keywords:

Gender equality
Feminist ethics of care
Urban food systems
Barcelona

ABSTRACT

This paper applies a feminist ethics of care perspective to the study of initiatives trying to transform urban food systems (FS), focusing on the city of Barcelona. Starting from interview results with diverse actors (public administrations, alternative food networks, researchers), it adopts an experimental orientation to detect what is already happening on the ground in terms of how care is practiced, and by whom, in urban food governance, and starts from there to wonder who is, and who should be, responsible to/for care in urban FS. The findings reveal a strong presence of women in both volunteering roles and paid/power positions, but a general lack of collective awareness of the space women occupy in this context and few examples of practical strategies to address gender inequalities. The paper also discusses the intersection of care and responsibility, how personal and collective ethics often enter into conflict and have to be negotiated, the role of urban areas and even neighborhoods in providing a space for negotiation, and in turn how such ethics can shape the practices of urban food initiatives. The case-study of Barcelona provides insights into the transformative potential of feminist care ethics in addressing gender and power dynamics in urban FS but also reveals persisting gendered roles and unbalanced division of responsibility around care and food.

1. Introduction

Studies on urban FS often engage with questions of power, roles, and multilevel and intersectoral collaboration between the actors working for their sustainable transformation (Blay-Palmer et al., 2018; Maticena, 2016; Moragues-Faus et al., 2022; Sonnino & Marsden, 2006), as well as matters of interests, objectives and values, in particular to define what aims urban food governance should serve and how (Blay-Palmer, 2010; Halliday, 2022; Moragues-Faus & Sonnino, 2019; Sonnino, 2016; Tribaldos & Kortetmäki, 2022). Agroecological and feminist perspectives have also underlined that many initiatives for urban food sustainability resonate with an ethics of care (Bedore, 2010; Blay-Palmer, 2010; Corubolo et al., 2024; Corubolo & Meroni, 2023; Facchini et al., 2023; Herrero & Binimelis, 2011; Jarosz, 2014; Krzywoszynska, 2019; Midgley, 2016; Toldo, 2017; Williams & Sharp, 2023). However, the profoundly gendered character of care practices (Puig de La Bellacasa, 2017; Thelen, 2015; Till, 2012; Tronto & Fisher, 1990) is rarely considered explicitly in the few studies focusing specifically on care ethics and practices in urban FS transformation, unlike other strands of

scholarship (e.g. care infrastructures for nutrition, Nisbett, 2023; or care and urban transformations, Morrow & Parker, 2020). The gendered character of food-related care stands out visibly in the division between the phases of the food chain that are considered productive, thus viewed as work, and those that are considered reproductive, thus remaining unpaid and unrecognized, but can be found in many other FS phases (Allen & Sachs, 2007; Álvarez Vispo & Begiristain Zubillaga, 2019; Bergonzini, 2024b; Counihan & Kaplan, 2004; Hawkes et al., 2024; Trevilla Espinal et al., 2021; Williams-Forson & Counihan, 2011; Zarembo et al., 2021). These phases include the governance (both in bottom-up and top-down forms) of the transformation of urban FS. Yet, attention to gender differences and dynamics both in urban food governance scholarship and practice, especially in the so-called Global North, seems scarce, although increasing (Bergonzini, 2024a; Bryan et al., 2023; Di Masso et al., 2022; Njuki et al., 2022).

This paper builds on the question raised by Williams and Sharp (2023) about who is responsible to/for care in urban FS. It approaches this question through the lens of performative politics of possibility (Gibson-Graham, 2006b, 2008; Williams, 2017b, 2020) that see urban

* Corresponding author.

E-mail addresses: c.bergonzini@campus.unimib.it (C. Bergonzini), marina.di@uvic.cat (M. Di Masso Tarditti).

(food) justice¹ as an ongoing process “practiced through small acts” (Williams, 2017b), and assumes an experimental orientation (Gibson-Graham & Roelvink, 2010), thus focusing on how people are attempting to respond to (food) system failures in the “here and now” (Williams, 2017b), in this case specifically at the urban level, and wondering what we can learn from what is already being done, rather than the more paralyzing question of “what is to be done” (Gibson-Graham, 2011). This stance was already applied by scholars willing to shine a light on the role of alternative economic spaces – with examples of case studies on alternative food economies (Beacham, 2018; Cloke et al., 2017; Gibson-Graham & Roelvink, 2010; Power & Williams, 2020; Williams, 2022) – through the semiotic tactic of “reading for difference”, with the aim of avoiding “capitalocentrism” and, instead, using on-the-ground examples to imagine possibilities of different socio-ecological relationships (Beacham, 2018; Gibson-Graham, 2006a). Adopting an experimental orientation is, for Gibson-Graham (2011, p. 4), “to approach the world with the question ‘What can we learn from things that are happening on the ground?’”. Instead, “reading for difference” is aimed at avoiding the reading of all social and economic forms in terms of their relation to capitalism (Beacham, 2018; Gibson-Graham, 2006a). Indeed, this could also be argued for AFN literature, which uses the adjective “alternative” precisely to underline the alternativeness of AFNs to the dominant, capitalist global FS. Here, we use it to specify the intent of reading through a *feminist* ethics of care lens, rather than a neoliberal ethics of care that is often the dominant framework for many food-related initiatives, such as food aid distribution (Cloke et al., 2017; Organo et al., 2013; Williams, 2022; Williams & Tait, 2023). In this context, a performative politics of possibility lens allows us to switch our focus from these dominant narratives and, as presented in the methodology section, from the dominant topic of our interviews, to detect an ongoing feminist ethics of care, being practiced in the here and now by many interviewees often without a specific intention and imperfectly (Williams, 2020), but nonetheless in a pervasive and transformative way.

To do so, we start by defining the concept of feminist ethics of care and how it relates to transformative urban food initiatives. Then, we focus on the case study of Barcelona’s FS, present the methodology and analyze the results, with the aim of understanding how care is practiced on the field and what impact it has on gender dynamics in the chosen context. Lastly, conclusions are drawn in terms of feminist ethics of care’s potential to shape urban FS, and further research suggestions are presented.

2. Urban food governance as a caring practice

We first state what we mean by “food governance”, and consequently “food governance actors/actions/initiatives”. The chosen definition is by Moragues-Faus (2020, p. 75): “all modes of [food system] governing encompassing activities carried out by different actors to guide, steer, control or manage the pursuance of public goods – such as food security and sustainability”. This definition allows us to include in the analysis not only public administration (PA) actors – in this case at the urban level or higher levels but whose actions influence urban areas –, that govern the sustainable urban FS transformation through codified ways like urban food policies (UFPs), but also researchers, and civil society initiatives expressed through various forms of alternative food networks (AFNs), whose actions are increasingly legitimized and recognized as pivotal (Brunori & Di Iacovo, 2014; Maye et al., 2022; Moragues-Faus et al., 2022; Polman & Bazzan, 2023; Sonnino, 2019; Zerbán & López-García, 2024). We thus strategically use “urban food governance actors/initiatives” as an umbrella term to put our focus on the movement of sustainable transformation of urban FS that various actors collectively

carry out through diverse “caring” actions, rather than on specific types of food-related initiatives.

The case of Barcelona is in this sense particularly relevant, as its FS counts on a strong participation of bottom-up AFNs. The city has a long tradition of citizen self-organization of consumption which traces back to the late-nineteenth century workers’ consumer cooperatives (Miró, 2018), through late-twentieth century with the creation of the first organic food cooperatives, to the early 2000s explosion of self-managed organic consumption groups (Espelt et al., 2017). Together with other typologies of AFNs like urban gardens (Camps-Calvet et al., 2016) and farmers markets (Yacamán Ochoa et al., 2019), organic consumption groups draw a vibrant ecosystem of bottom-up food provisioning initiatives. Thus, when by the so-called “new municipalism” social movements gained access in 2015 to several municipalities in large Spanish cities, in the case of Barcelona their participatory approach to co-production processes in policymaking found a rich and receptive food civil society interlocution.² Furthermore, such co-production processes in the city were often developed within the promotion of Social and Solidarity Economy (SSE) (Social Economy, Local Development, and Food Policy are integrated under the responsibility of the same Commissioner), a connection further developed in the measures included in the Barcelona Food Policy Promotion Strategy 2016–2019, the first local food policy instrument developed in the city. As a result, the AFNs landscape was enriched with initiatives promoted within the SSE paradigm.

Secondly, we must define the concept of care that we adopt, which Williams and Sharp, quoting Midgley (2016) and Tronto and Fisher (1990), define as “a species activity that includes everything that we do to maintain, continue, and repair our “world” so that we can live in it as well as possible. That world includes our bodies, ourselves, and our environment (...)”. Moreover, they define a “feminist ethics of care”: “not just the act of care-giving or caring labor; it is rather more a politics and a transformative ethic that can be drawn upon to question who or what is doing the work of care” (Williams and Sharp, 2023, p. 79).

Such conception of care seems adequate for various reasons. Firstly, a broad definition of care allows us to include all the range of activities that interviewees perform (see Table 1). Although their practices are very different, our aim here is to focus on the underlying ethics of care

Table 1

List of interviews divided by type (research, PA, AFN), gender of the interviewee and code used throughout the text.^a

| Code | Type | Gender |
|-------|-------------------------------|--------|
| INT01 | Research | F |
| INT02 | PA (metropolitan level) | F |
| INT03 | AFN (consumers group) | M |
| INT04 | AFN (consumers group) | F |
| INT05 | AFN (urban agriculture) | F |
| INT06 | AFN (food waste collection) | F |
| INT07 | PA (urban level) | F |
| INT08 | AFN (community kitchen) | F |
| INT09 | AFN (agroecology cooperative) | F |
| INT10 | AFN (farmers market) | M |
| INT11 | AFN (food waste collection) | F |
| INT12 | Research | F |
| INT13 | AFN (agroecology cooperative) | F |
| INT14 | PA (urban level) | M |

^a All interviewees are located in the municipality of Barcelona, with one exception of an AFN whose official seat is in a bordering municipality, but works also in Barcelona, and was included because of its relevance in the local context. Source: authors.

¹ See Bergonzini (2024a, pp. 2–3) on food justice and gender differences in FS.

² See Vara-Sánchez et al. (2021) on co-production processes of urban food policies in Spain.

that, we believe, they all share. Secondly, care practices are profoundly gendered (Beacham, 2018; Facchini et al., 2023; Hawkes et al., 2024; Puig de La Bellacasa, 2017; Thelen, 2015) and the burden of carrying them out has historically and culturally weighed disproportionately on women (DeVault, 1994; Gilligan, 1993; Hayden, 1981; Lupton, 1996). A feminist ethics of care invites to question and highlight these power dynamics and how responsibilities are distributed (Williams, 2020; Williams & Sharp, 2023). Additionally, we believe the vision of interdependence that stands at its basis is particularly relevant in addressing *urban* FS issues. One main reason why cities were long overlooked as relevant actors in the global quest for more sustainable FS is the “disembedding” between urban food consumption, its local context and food production sites, which are often perceived as separate (Borrelli et al., 2017; Stierand, 2012). A feminist ethics of care explicitly engages with distant others (human and non-human) and supports the ability of individuals to “care at a distance” (Cox, 2010, p. 1).

Also, scholars have underlined how ecology and feminism denounce the same social structures of domination. Tornaghi and Dehaene (2020) list three ways feminist debates have unpacked the role of food in contemporary capitalist mechanisms related both to care work and ecology: i. the devaluation of women's care work and farmer's agro-ecological practices, ii. the social acceptability of food commodification, iii. the externalization of ecological costs of extractive, exploitative, polluting, degrading, agro-industrial practices. Such relation between feminism and ecology is made even more explicit in ecofeminism, itself a concept both studied and practiced by academics and activists, that – through various branches and approaches that is not within our scope to address here³ – aims at facing issues related to environmental degradation and inequality in patriarchal societies in an integrated way. At times, ecofeminism was also mentioned by interviewees during our research. In this paper, we try to “read for difference” and adopt an experimental orientation (Gibson-Graham, 2006a) to interviews to relevant actors of Barcelona's FS transformation to understand what is already happening in this sense, be it intentional – in the case of some interviewees who are aware and explicitly performing feminist care ethics – or simply recognizable in the on-the-ground initiatives of actors who, however, do not explicitly frame their actions within such perspective. We also wonder whether such actions and attitudes are concretely shaping and supporting the questioning of power dynamics within the urban FS of Barcelona, especially along the lines of gender. We begin from wondering what *is* being done, to learn from it and, only secondarily, open up questions and suggestions on what *should* be done, and by whom (Gibson-Graham, 2011; Gibson-Graham & Roelvink, 2010).

3. Results from the field: caring for Barcelona's food system

3.1. Methodology

In spring 2024, 21 interviews were carried out, as part of a broader research project, with representatives of AFNs, PAs and researchers acting with different roles on the transformation of Barcelona's FS. While questions about gender dynamics and attention to gender in the city's UFP were asked, the topic of care was not intentionally considered. However, thanks in part to the semi-structured nature of interviews that left space for interviewees to add elements (Bichi, 2011), responding to the previously mentioned experimental orientation, care was spontaneously raised multiple times during interviews, revealing its pervasiveness, thus prompting the analysis in this paper. The 21 semi-structured interviews included 8 PA representatives (2 men, 6 women), 3 experts/researchers (1 man, 2 women) and 10 representatives of AFNs (2 men, 8 women). Of these 21, 14 mentioned the topic of

care, thus becoming the object of analysis of this paper (see Table 1 for details, the 7 interviews that never mentioned care were excluded). It is important to state that interviews were not intentionally targeted at any gender; rather, most times the first contact happened through generic email addresses or social media accounts of PAs, AFNs and universities or research centers that were considered relevant, without knowing in advance the name or gender of who was going to reply. Other times, contacts were received by interviewees themselves, through a “snowball” strategy (Oñederra-Aramendi et al., 2023). The questions focused on two main topics: the relationship between PA and bottom-up initiatives on urban food sustainability, and gender dynamics within the interviewees' activities.

During the interviews, the topic of care was never explicitly raised, but it was mentioned spontaneously by 14 interviewees, with different levels of depth but always regarding gender dynamics within their activities. These 14 interviews and their perspective on the gendered nature of care in relation to urban food sustainability are the object of analysis in the following paragraph.

Also, it must be repeated that our interviews were not aimed at analyzing specifically the (feminist or not) ethics of care of interviewees, but rather this perspective emerged as potentially relevant after fieldwork was concluded and an underlying care discourse emerged as pervasive in the majority of cases. For this reason, during interviews we did not follow-up deeply and analytically on what interviewees meant by concepts like care, feminism or ecofeminism, thus when we say that they use such concepts, it is meant in their most generic, popular understanding. After detecting the pervasiveness of these concepts, we decided to “read for difference” (Gibson-Graham, 2006a) in the results that we had collected, to trace alternative ways of understanding the practices of interviewees (Cloke et al., 2017). We believe further research that intentionally investigates which ethics are espoused, and in turn how they translate into practice, would be valuable. At the same time, we recognize that an academic/theoretical understanding of all the nuances and possible interpretations of concepts like care ethics or ecofeminism is not necessarily required, nor espoused, by practiced activism (Estévez-Saá & Lorenzo-Modia, 2018).

One first consideration is that the total of initial interviews (21) had a 23,8% of male participants, and this percentage is similar if we only consider the 14 selected interviews that mentioned care (21,4% of males), thus in this specific context, we observe no difference based on gender on the tendency to mention/notice care-related topics.

4. Results

4.1. Care is female

Interviewees were firstly asked whether they had noticed any type of difference related to gender both internally to their organization and in the pool of beneficiaries of their activities. The most common answer was that there were visibly more women, either in the organization itself as volunteers or employed workers (int06, int07, int11, int13 – employed workers are a minority) and among beneficiaries (int02, int06, int08, int13, int14). No interviewee, on the contrary, assessed a prevalence of men, with those not noticing a prevalence of women simply declaring a more or less balanced representation of both women and men. Interviewees who answered that their activities were participated mostly by women were asked the follow-up question of whether they had ever wondered, or even tried to investigate, the reason for this disparity. Int02, int06, int07, int11, int13 all stated explicitly that this is probably because their activities are somehow a type of care work. Int08 passed the question to one (male) participant to a cooking activity, who entered the room as the question was being asked. He did not mention care work explicitly, but said the prevalence of women was because “all [elderly] women cook, all women can cook, and not all men know how to cook”, thus implicitly referring to traditional gender roles regarding reproductive work related to household nutrition, which is ultimately

³ See for example Estévez-Saá and Lorenzo-Modia (2018), Herrero (2013), and Puleo (2013).

care work. A similar explanation was assumed by int04, who said the AFN she belongs to has balanced men and women participants, but the internal care commission they founded only had women or non-binary members.⁴ Lastly, an interesting example on this point is int05, a feminist urban garden that is only open to people whose gender is not cisgender male. For this reason, the absence of men is intentional, contrary to previous examples. The interviewee explained that their initiative is firstly a feminist space, and secondly a space to care for the earth (and *learn* how to care for the earth), which they consider a feminist practice. This might be interpreted as an ecofeminist understanding of their practices, and indeed the interviewee used both “feminism” and “ecofeminism” to describe the values of their activities. This AFN, then, seems to be acting upon inverse priorities compared to the others: the intention to care for the earth comes first, and this led them to starting an activity that also contributes to their city's FS transformation, which is only a derived result and not their initial intention.

These examples speak of care from two different perspectives (Cox, 2010). On the one hand, care is seen as an attitude, a value that people – in this case mostly women – wish to perform by taking part in (mostly volunteering) activities that, through various practices, aim at transforming urban FS. For example, both int02 and int14, who manage PA projects (meaning that a PA organizes and funds them, but citizens actively participate in various forms) related to food, noticed that projects with a stronger community focus usually gather more women participants, while projects that are more profit-oriented (e.g. aimed at income support) attract more men. On the other hand, care is also seen as a burden, as a responsibility that falls on women due to their gender, like for interviewees who recognized a prevalence of women among the beneficiaries of their activities. These include food redistribution initiatives, community kitchens, canteens, and consumers groups. Int02, who led a food security project in a neighborhood with a large migrant community with disadvantaged socioeconomic status, explained that while they had not initially considered the gender implications of their project, it was “immediately evident on the ground” that mostly women were going to collect food, probably because of traditional gender roles that place on women the responsibility to provide for household nutrition. Int14 also said that sometimes, household food security projects intentionally target women, who are an “entry point” for contact with families on the topic of food. While surely other societal factors play a role, too, in defining such gendered roles (and indeed women are overrepresented in volunteering activities in many fields, not just food, Einolf, 2011), we believe the intertwining of food and care in this context shows an interesting dynamic, with caring activities related to food reproducing a similar gender representation both in the public sphere (through collective caring for urban FS) and in the domestic sphere.

Care was also raised as a topic related to burdens and responsibilities by int03, int04, int11 and int12, who stated that caring duties for family and close ones sometimes hinder women from participating in time-consuming AFN activities. Int11 said they try to avoid this by organizing events at convenient times and by providing, when possible, a

⁴ We take this occasion to discuss the concept of “gender” considered in this paper. While we recognize and support a non-binary vision of gender, the interviews did not ask participants to define what they mean by “gender”, nor did they explicitly ask to refer to genders that are different from cisgender woman or man. For this reason, each participant replied based on their own understanding of gender but also based on their practical experience. Indeed, some interviewees said that while they do recognize that gender is non-binary, the information they had about gender identities within their activities was limited, so they could not provide specific information about it and could only broadly notice gender dynamics based on a more traditional binary understanding of gender, for many reasons mostly related to binary normativity (Rosati et al., 2024).

childcare service. This is an interesting example of how the willingness to perform a type of care for the community and the environment (*right* to care, see Conesa Carpintero, 2022; Marrades-Puig, 2024; Rocha, 2022; Smith, 2012) enters into conflict with the responsibility to carry out more domestic and private types of care (*obligation* to care, mirroring neoliberal care ethics), resonating with Williams and Sharp's (2023) statement about the need to negotiate care due to conflict between personal and collective ethics.

4.2. Care is feminist

Although the topic of feminism was never raised explicitly by the interviewer (as wasn't that of care), a few interviewees spontaneously stated that feminism is part of their organization's principles (int05, int09, int13), and that performing activities that have to do with caring for communities, the environment, the earth and soil is their way of operationalizing it, thus showing an awareness of the connection between their ethics of care and feminism. However, what emerges from interviews more broadly is that this connection is not always explicitly recognized, although it seems to be practiced on the ground. On the other hand, even when a feminist ethics is claimed, the practices are not always comprehensively aligned with such ethics. This misalignment between ethics and practices might be explained by previously mentioned needs for negotiation related to material limitations (Williams & Tait, 2023), rather than as a proof that such ethics are not really shaping interviewees' actions, in line with the “in the meantime” concept developed by Cloke et al. (2017) and Williams's (2017a) description of feminist caring practices as often messy and ongoing.

One interesting example is int13, who explains that, while they have, as a cooperative, an “ecofeminist” perspective, participants in some of their activities do not necessarily share this vision. One activity is a “political cuisine” workshop focused on food waste reduction and on the questioning of the food industry, especially the meat industry and its way of representing consumption of “animal bodies”.⁵ However, participants are mostly elderly women, and they participate, according to int13, because this is the only available activity that fosters sociability and community gathering in the neighborhood, although they do not always agree with some political stances. This is another example of care negotiation due to conflicts between personal and collective ethics (Williams & Sharp, 2023). Int04 says she and many members of her AFN self-define as feminist – they “name it indirectly continuously, about caring for the earth and for each other” – and she thinks the activities and values of her consumers' group could be recognized as feminist. However, she also thinks that in order to include feminism explicitly in the AFN's directories and protocols, an “important internal process” to build and assume a shared feminist view should happen first. Int05 is the only example of collective awareness of the fact that the practices performed within her AFN are feminist, but this is an exception, since they are a subgroup of a feminist collective that decided to create and care for an urban garden in their building.

In general, what emerges from the interviews are either examples of AFNs that include feminism in their values, but it is not necessarily shared explicitly by/with all the participants, or examples of AFNs whose members self-define as feminist and act in accordance to feminist values, but in which the collective recognition of the AFN as explicitly feminist is still lacking, and rather remains implicit in individuals' sensitivities. All the cases, though, connect their feminist values (be them collectively recognized or individually perceived) to the attitude of caring for communities (e.g. int01 explains how local markets can become a space of caring for neighborhood inhabitants) and more-than-human others. Such caring attitude – that strongly resonates with the feminist ethics of care presented by Williams and Sharp (2023) by recognizing interdependence and collectivity – was often expressed also

⁵ On antispeciesism and feminism, see Timeto (2024).

by interviewees who never raised the topic of feminism, as seen in the previous paragraph.

4.3. Care is responsibility – collective and/or individual?

The topic of care was also often raised in relation to responsibility, both towards the household (int02, int09, int10) and the environment/earth/soil (int03, int05, int11). For example, int10 states that, beyond their main activity of farmers' markets, they also have education and international cooperation projects during which they discuss the importance of sharing responsibility for household care work, which is the place where "(gender) equality starts". Int02 and int09 notice that their initiatives still see a prevalence of women taking the responsibility for household food provisioning and education. Int03 and int05 focus on the opportunity their activities give to participants to learn about, and take responsibility for, the care and work needed to grow food. Lastly, int11 – whose AFN collects wasted food – says their activities aim at raising awareness about the responsibility over food waste, but they want to focus their discourses on collective responsibilities, especially those of the private sector and institutions, rather than individual responsibilities that tend to "blame" consumers and producers. While int11 does not explicitly connect this aim to a gendered analysis, it could be argued that individual responsibilities over unsustainable food practices at the household level are often blamed on women (Martin & Lippert, 2012; Staeheli, 2003), but even outside of a strictly gender perspective, a similar vision aligns with the broader aim of unpacking power relations – not only along the lines of gender at proximity scales, but rather considering distant others – that a feminist ethics of care pursues.

All these statements underline how care is not only a positive attitude towards the collective good, but also a burden. Most importantly, though, they all expose various types of power dynamics playing important roles in defining who is *responsible to/for care*, tracing back to the question that inspired this paper (Williams & Sharp, 2023). These dynamics include gender differences and roles, but also differences of power and influence. Another relevant problem is raised by int09, who notices how not only women are often burdened with the responsibility to carry out care work for households, but they are also the ones expected to educate others on the need to share this responsibility. She says that elaborating the feminist discourse can indeed help in spreading more awareness about co-responsibility, but this task must not become the "third workload" women bear after productive and reproductive work (Paganini et al., 2024).

Once again, the private/individual level enters into conflict with the collective one. A feminist ethics of care seems essential to frame such conflicts and the way they are negotiated, rather than a neoliberal ethics of care that, instead, confines care to a personal responsibility (Muehlebach, 2012; Williams, 2020). From this point of view, the interviewees responses all resonate more with the feminist perspective, although as we have been discussing, most of them are either unaware of it, or individually aware but not making it explicit, with only a minority of cases specifically presenting feminism (or ecofeminism) as one of the organization's principles.

Lastly, it is relevant to underline that int03, int05, int09, int10 and int11 all referred to education and the need to *learn* to care and/or to share responsibility. Indeed, the interviewed initiatives can be seen as on-the-ground examples of what Gibson-Graham and Roelvink (2010, p. 325), interpreting Latour (2004), define as the ethical practice of "learning to be affected [...], that involves developing an awareness of, and in the process being transformed by, co-existence". This is well expressed by int03, who states that being part of an agroecological consumers group means "learning that sometimes you have to go some months without tomatoes", but also by int05, who says that by growing their own vegetables, people learn "how much care is needed to grow a tomato" and, through this learning process, they re-gain awareness about nature and its cycles.

5. Discussion

Going back to the question that inspired this paper – who is responsible to/for care in urban FS? –, we can follow two different paths for interpretations building on the answers of interviewees. One refers to who is currently on the ground taking this responsibility and performing it, while the other appoints who *should* be responsible for it and recalls the various references to power and gender imbalances.

Again, using experimental orientation as a tool to operationalize the lens of performative politics of possibility (Gibson-Graham, 2006b, 2008; Gibson-Graham & Roelvink, 2010; Williams, 2017a, 2020), we start by analyzing what is happening on the ground and using it to imagine different possible socio-ecological relations. Indeed, interviews draw a picture showing that responsibility to/for Barcelona's FS is mostly performed by women, especially in various volunteering roles in AFNs or participating in PA-led projects, but also in paid positions of employees or managers for AFNs or PAs. This implies a double-layered type of power imbalance. On the one hand, traditional gender roles seem to be reiterated in the perception that both "caring" and "food" are more feminine than masculine matters. On the other hand, the prevalence of volunteering positions shows that not only women are carrying most of the responsibility to transform the urban FS, but also that they mostly do so investing their time and skills for free to address failures that are ultimately the system's, on top of already dedicating more free time and effort to domestic types of care work. Also, in cases of PA projects, the relevant PA leads and manages the project, but community participation is still mostly voluntary (int02). While it could be argued that the prevalence of women, and the underlying ethics of care that were detected, might be positive as it could steer the governance processes and actions aimed at transforming the urban FS towards more gender-attentive initiatives, this does not seem to be the case, in the present moment at least. Notably, most interviewees said they do not have specific strategies to ensure gender equality in their initiatives. Indeed, as noticed by int09, the presence of women is not sufficient to state that some space or process is gender equal, or to expect it to become more equal (Datzberger & Le Mat, 2018; Noddings, 2001). Rather, what is needed is intentionality (Álvarez Vispo & Begiristain Zubillaga, 2019; Moragues-Faus, 2017) – which appears to be present in a minority of cases – as well as collective awareness on the part of women of how much "space" they occupy in this context, which according to int07 is currently lacking. Furthermore, it might also be argued that considering these processes as gender equal due to the large female representation aligns with a binary vision of gender, which gender and queer studies have long overcome. Indeed, further research that goes beyond such binary conception and problematizes more the concept of "gender" is desirable (Binnie & Klesse, 2025; Parker et al., 2019).

On the contrary, urban food governance actors seem generally aware that their initiatives essentially represent acts of collective care. While some go as far as recognizing and reclaiming the feminist character of their practices, most only refer to care towards the community (often in the form of the neighborhood) and the environment (in the form of the earth, the soil, or animals). The strong majority of AFN representatives compared to PA representatives in interviews does not allow for a direct comparison to draw conclusions on which level of governance, among the two considered, is performing or at least recognizing this attitude of care more. Indeed, regarding the specific interviewees' projects, a substantial difference is not detected. It must also be remembered that PA interviewees, when referring to specific projects, spoke about very localized, community-based projects that are PA-led but operationalized in collaboration with communities in a bottom-up way (int02), or at most they spoke about the general gender representation among PA roles related to urban food sustainability in Barcelona (int07, int14). No mention to broader projects or plans that involve the whole area of competence of PAs were raised, except for the UFP, which has a gender equality goal but no practical strategy to implement it (int14)

(Bergonzini & Donati, 2025).

Even when not explicitly recognized as feminist, most practices still resonate with the presented feminist ethics of care, since they aim at collectively addressing failures of the FS and recognizing interdependencies, as well as ecodependencies, so it might even be appropriate to talk about an *ecofeminist* ethics of care, although we leave such further analysis to future research. Also, many AFN-related interviewees see their practices as an opportunity not only to act materially on the failures of the system, but also to question them, and let participants learn how to question them. Lastly, it is important to underline the dimension of privilege related to being able to practice this type of care, which could be summarized in the conflict between *right* and *obligation* to care (Marrades-Puig, 2024; Rocha, 2022). As some interviewees noted, some people (most often women) are not able to participate in AFN initiatives because they must perform other tasks related to care. However, this discourse must be broadened to an intersectional reflection about class, education, migrant background and generally access to this type of initiatives (Di Masso Tarditti et al., 2021). Int04, int05, int06, int07, int08, int13 and int14 all mentioned that participating in their activities is often a privilege for people (mostly women) who have enough free time, flexibility, or simply social capital to be able to find these initiatives and feel like they can contribute, like they “belong” to that space (int14), while a prevalence of women with a migrant background and disadvantaged socioeconomic situation was found, for example, in the pool of beneficiaries of food distribution by int02 in one of the projects she supervised. Participating as actors or beneficiaries implies different levels of power and, although some initiatives interestingly create a dynamic where actors are also beneficiaries and vice-versa (int06), such dynamics must be questioned and unpacked.

This leads to the second interpretation path: who *should* take responsibility to/for care in urban FS? While a performative politics of possibility lens invites us to analyze what is already happening in the here and now, a feminist ethics of care also invites us to question relationships of need, responsibility, privilege and politics. As int11 explained, it is important to care for the FS while not falling into the trap of individualizing responsibilities, but rather keeping in mind that the private sector and institutions have a role in these system failures and should, therefore, take responsibility for them. What emerges from interviews, though, is that when power is questioned (which is not always the case), it is mostly questioned along the lines of private citizens/households versus companies and PAs, much less along the lines of gender. Again, collective ethics seem to conflict with domestic/private ethics, with gender dynamics being confined to a domestic/private space. These two lines, however, intersect. We see this for example in the fact that most of the care work examined here is voluntary, and most of it is carried out by women. The interviews included three PA representatives, who however presented their experience in specific projects related to urban food sustainability, rather than broader roadmaps or legislations/policies to address power inequalities at the roots. While the commendable presence, in Barcelona, of multiple policies trying to address FS failures at various scales, which include specific targets to address power and gender inequalities (Bergonzini, 2024a; Salvador, 2024) – thus arguably taking responsibility to care for transforming urban FS –, a recent study shows that a strategy for gender equality in the FS is so far lacking (Bergonzini & Donati, 2025).

6. Conclusions

Our paper seems to confirm what Williams and Sharp (2023, p. 81) suggested, namely that a feminist ethics of care has “the potential to shape urban food governance”, and indeed it already does, at least in a few specific contexts in the city of Barcelona. Indeed, while not recognized or intentionally performed by all interviewees, through the application of a performative politics of possibility we detected pervasive ethics among their actions, that recognize interdependence among

human and more-than-human elements of the FS, and try to “maintain, continue, and repair” it (Tronto & Fisher, 1990, p. 40). We argue that this is shaping the types of activities that interviewees practice and how, in contrast to the neoliberal care ethics that still inform many food initiatives (Clope et al., 2017). We also argue that understanding interdependencies and “caring at a distance” (Cox, 2010, p. 1) is specifically transformative for *urban* FS, to address their “dis-embeddedness” and re-connect them to rural and global flows and relations, in turn boosting cities’ recognized role as a promising scale to address FS issues (Moragues-Faus et al., 2024).

However, this does not mean that the urban food governance of Barcelona is overall informed by and performed according to a feminist ethics of care. Certainly, examples of AFNs exist which are actively and explicitly applying a feminist ethics of care, but the prevalence of women in various positions (sometimes even of power) is not translating into specific strategies to address gender and power dynamics within the urban FS. The mere presence of women does not grant gender equality or a feminist attitude; rather, what is needed is intentionality in addressing gender and power dynamics, which so far seems to be mostly lacking. Also, to be truly transformative such an ethic should become spread at a system level, rather than be dependent on individuals or groups, so as not to become a “third workload” weighing on some groups and not others. This vision can be summarized through the concept of “democratization of care”, that Ezquerria and Mansilla (2018) define as “recognizing care as a central part of a city’s socioeconomic life, promoting co-responsibility of all social actors in granting the right to dignified and quality care, and working to reduce social inequalities that characterize both care giving and care receiving” (p. 9, authors’ translation from Catalan).

Indeed, the emerging picture is that of a promising urban area in terms of both the transformative potential of grassroots and PA-led initiatives and the presence of individuals who have varying levels of sensitivity towards gender and power dynamics. However, it seems that few actors are explicitly aware of the connections between the care ethics they perform and the gender dynamics of their urban FS. From this first investigation, some elements that appear to be hindering the opportunity for actors’ to make such connection are: time constraints, (lack of) education/awareness regarding the interconnections between various systems of power and the FS, cultural/gender norms that still portray food as a more feminine topic and therefore make it look “normal” for more women to be involved in it. Interestingly, many interviewees who stated that their activities are mostly participated by women said that, before being explicitly asked about it during the interview, they had not previously thought of it nor wondered why (e.g., int03, int08).

Tracing back to the triggering questions, regarding what is already happening on the ground and what we can learn from it (Gibson-Graham, 2011; Gibson-Graham & Roelvink, 2010), we see an ecosystem of initiatives – and individuals within these initiatives – animating the urban food governance landscape of Barcelona and demonstrating that not only an awareness about gender and power dynamics in FS exists, but also that some first steps are being taken to address them. Some examples are measures to favor participation to their activities for people who have family-related caring duties (int11), AFNs creating care commissions (int03), or int05, int09 and int13 who explicitly state that their actions to care for the earth and recognize ecodependencies are (eco)feminist. However, if we connect this to the other starting question regarding who *is* and who *should* be taking such responsibility (Williams & Sharp, 2023), we still detect a strong disparity. The questioning and addressing of such dynamics are mostly being performed by women, and mostly within contexts of unpaid volunteering and activism positions. This is not becoming a widespread, mainstream type of approach to the transformation of the urban FS, and therefore represents an additional responsibility that women take on for the collectivity that sometimes enters into conflict with their individual responsibilities. This creates a situation where many women are leading and operationalizing

the transformation of Barcelona's FS, but a collective awareness of the space they occupy in this context is not yet developed, and therefore there is also no structured organization, nor explicit intention to address gender differences as a collective effort. Rather, such effort remains quite strongly dependent on individual, or at most single organizations', sensitivities. One takeout, then, regards the importance of intentionality and collective sharing of a vision in terms of transformation potential, over the still important but less impactful individual ethics. Also, the potential of urban space as a space of exchanges – and even conflicts/negotiations – is underlined, with some AFNs recognizing the relevance not only of their city but their specific neighborhood, too, in constructing and negotiating their ethics (Dürr et al., 2020).

While our research did not target the topic of feminist ethics of care from the beginning, we find it extremely relevant to highlight how strongly it arose, in various forms, during fieldwork. We believe the spontaneous way interviewees raised the issue shows its pervasiveness. Surely, further investigations are welcome to address it more intentionally from the start in a more structured way, and hopefully to add some complexity by explicitly engaging with a non-binary view of gender. Moreover, similar research in other contexts, where grassroots food initiatives have a different history of participation and are informed by different ethics, would be extremely enriching. Lastly, we have chosen to apply a feminist ethics of care framework due to the spontaneous references to care that emerged during fieldwork, but we believe other frameworks of urban theory, such as the right to the city, or social reproduction theory, could be applied to similar contexts to unveil even more gender and power dynamics related to care and urban food systems.

CRedit authorship contribution statement

Chiara Bergonzini: Writing – review & editing, Writing – original draft, Supervision, Methodology, Investigation, Formal analysis, Data curation, Conceptualization. **Marina Di Masso Tarditti:** Writing – review & editing, Writing – original draft, Validation, Methodology, Investigation, Conceptualization.

Declaration of competing interest

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

Data availability

The data that has been used is confidential.

References

- Allen, P., & Sachs, C. (2007). Women and food chains: The gendered politics of food. *The International Journal of Sociology of Agriculture and Food*. <https://doi.org/10.48416/IJSAF.V15I1.424> (1-23 pages).
- Álvarez Vispo, I., & Begiristain Zubillaga, M. (2019). Feminismo para los sistemas alimentarios y la agroecología. *Revista Iberoamericana de Economía Solidaria e Innovación Socioecológica*, 2, 125–146. <https://doi.org/10.33776/riesie.v2i0.3658>
- Beacham, J. (2018). Organising food differently: Towards a more-than-human ethics of care for the Anthropocene. *Organization*, 25(4), 533–549. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1350508418777893>
- Bedore, M. (2010). Just urban food systems: A new direction for food access and urban social justice. *Geography Compass*, 4(9), 1418–1432. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1749-8198.2010.00383.x>
- Bergonzini, C. (2024a). Just food transition: For a gender mainstreaming approach in urban food policies. A review of 20 cities. *Cities*, 148, Article 104876. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cities.2024.104876>
- Bergonzini, C. (2024b). The food-gender-cities nexus: A research agenda. *Food, Culture & Society*, 28, 1–17. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15528014.2024.2319422>
- Bergonzini, C., & Donati, F. (2025). Gender mainstreaming in urban food policies: Governance processes and policy designs from three Spanish cities. *European Policy Analysis*, Early View. <https://doi.org/10.1002/epa2.70016>
- Bichi, R. (2011). *La conduzione delle interviste nella ricerca sociale*. Carrocci.
- Binnie, J., & Klesse, C. (2025). Food practices, queer social reproduction and the geographies of LGBTQ+ activism. *Political Geography*, 117, Article 103273. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.polgeo.2025.103273>
- Blay-Palmer, A. (2010). Imagining sustainable food systems: Theory and practice. Routledge & CRC Press.
- Blay-Palmer, A., Santini, G., Dubbeling, M., Renting, H., Taguchi, M., & Giordano, T. (2018). Validating the city region food system approach: Enacting inclusive, transformational city region food systems. *Sustainability*, 10(5), Article 5. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su10051680>
- Borrelli, N., Daconto, L., Brunetti, F., & Raffaella, S. (2017). Food system e processi di re-embedding. Un'analisi spaziale degli alternative food networks nella città metropolitana di Milano. In , Vol. 15. (S)radicamenti (pp. 419–425).
- Brunori, G., & Di Iacovo, F. (2014). *Alternative food networks as drivers of a food transition: The role of cities*. Routledge.
- Bryan, E., Alvi, M., Huyer, S., & Ringler, C. (2023). Addressing gender inequalities and strengthening women's agency to create more climate-resilient and sustainable food systems. In *CGIAR GENDER impact platform, working paper #013*.
- Camps-Calvet, M., Langemeyer, J., Calvet-Mir, L., & Gómez-Baggethun, E. (2016). Ecosystem services provided by urban gardens in Barcelona, Spain: Insights for policy and planning. *Environmental Science & Policy*, 62, 14–23. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.envsci.2016.01.007>
- Cloke, P., May, J., & Williams, A. (2017). The geographies of food banks in the meantime. *Progress in Human Geography*, 41(6), 703–726. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0309132516655881>
- Conesa Carpiñero, E. (2022). *Care, time and gender in new managerial science and academia. From accelerated rhythms to caring temporalities*. Universitat Oberta de Catalunya.
- Corubolo, M., De Sainz Molestina, D., Meroni, A., & Viganego Ballesteros, L. (2024, June 23). *Urban and peri-urban food systems: Exploring proximity and care in alternative food networks*. Boston: DRS2024. <https://doi.org/10.21606/drs.2024.887>
- Corubolo, M., & Meroni, A. (2023). Food as a form of care: Designing social innovative processes and practices. In K. Vaes, & J. Verlinden (Eds.), *Connectivity and creativity in times of conflict*. Academia Press. <https://doi.org/10.26530/9789401496476-113>.
- Counihan, C. M., & Kaplan, S. L. (2004). Food and gender. Taylor & Francis.
- Cox, R. (2010). Some problems and possibilities of caring. *Ethics, Place & Environment*, 13(2), 113–130. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13668791003778800>
- Datzberger, S., & Le Mat, M. L. J. (2018). Just add women and stir?: Education, gender and peacebuilding in Uganda. *International Journal of Educational Development*, 59, 61–69. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijedudev.2017.09.006>
- DeVault, M. L. (1994). *Feeding the family: The social organization of caring as gendered work*. University of Chicago Press.
- Di Masso, M., Lopez-García, D., Clemente-Longás, J., & García-García, V. (2022). Taking food out the private sphere? Addressing gender relations in urban food policy. *Agroecology and Sustainable Food Systems*, 46(1), 108–132.
- Di Masso Tarditti, M., Ezquerro Samper, S., & Rivera-Ferre, M. G. (2021). Mujeres en la Economía Social y Solidaria: ¿alternativas socioeconómicas para todas? *CIRIEC-España, Revista de Economía Pública, Social y Cooperativa*, 102, 123. <https://doi.org/10.7203/CIRIEC-E.102.17557>
- Dürr, E., Ege, M., Moser, J., Neumann, C. K., & Winder, G. M. (2020). Urban ethics: Towards a research agenda on cities, ethics and normativity. *City, Culture and Society*, 20, Article 100313. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ccs.2019.100313>
- Einolf, C. J. (2011). Gender differences in the correlates of volunteering and charitable giving. *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly*, 40(6), 1092–1112. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0899764010385949>
- Espelt, R., Peña López, I., & Vega, N. (2017). Plataformas digitales: Grupos y cooperativas de consumo versus. La Colmena que dice sí, el caso de Barcelona. *Redes.com: revista de estudios para el desarrollo social de la Comunicación*, 15, 144–174.
- Estévez-Saá, M., & Lorenzo-Modia, M. J. (2018). The ethics and aesthetics of eco-caring: Contemporary debates on ecofeminism(s). *Women's Studies*, 47(2), 123–146. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00497878.2018.1425509>
- Ezquerro, S., & Mansilla, E. (2018). *Economía de les cures i política municipal: Cap a una democratització de la cura a la ciutat de Barcelona*. Ajuntament de Barcelona. https://www.barcelona.cat/ciutatcuidadora/sites/default/files/economia_i_politica_13.pdf.
- Facchini, F., López-García, D., Villamayor-Tomas, S., & Corbera, E. (2023). Intersectional coalitions towards a just agroecology: Weaving mutual aid and agroecology in Barcelona and Seville. *Agriculture and Human Values*. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10460-023-10529-0>
- Gibson-Graham, J. K. (2006a). *A postcapitalist politics (NED-new edition)*. University of Minnesota Press.
- Gibson-Graham, J. K. (2006b). *The end of capitalism (as we knew it): A feminist critique of political economy* (1st University of Minnesota Press ed.). University of Minnesota Press, 2006.
- Gibson-Graham, J. K. (2008). Diverse economies: Performative practices for 'other worlds. *Progress in Human Geography*, 32(5), 613–632. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0309132508090821>
- Gibson-Graham, J. K. (2011). A feminist project of belonging for the Anthropocene. *Gender, Place and Culture*, 18(1), 1–21. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0966369X.2011.535295>
- Gibson-Graham, J. K., & Roelvink, G. (2010). An economic ethics for the Anthropocene. *Antipode*, 41(s1), 320–346. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-8330.2009.00728.x>
- Gilligan, C. (1993). *In a different voice: Psychological theory and women's development*. Harvard University Press. <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctvjk2wr9>
- Halliday, J. (2022). Urban food systems: The case for municipal action. A research agenda for food systems.

- Hawkes, C., Gallagher-Squires, C., Spires, M., Hawkins, N., Neve, K., Brock, J., ... Coleman, P. (2024). The full picture of people's realities must be considered to deliver better diets for all. *Nature Food*, 1–7. <https://doi.org/10.1038/s43016-024-01064-0>
- Hayden, D. (1981). *The grand domestic revolution*. MIT Press.
- Herrero, A., & Binimelis, R. (2011). *Dones i medi ambient: Visions i aliances cap a una ètica de la cura* (?; *Articles Feministes*). Institut de Ciències Polítiques i Socials, Universitat de Barcelona.
- Herrero, Y. (2013). Miradas ecofeministas para transitar a un mundo justo y sostenible. *Revista de Economía Crítica*, 16, Article 16.
- Jarosz, L. (2014). Considering sovereignty, care ethics and policy in food politics. *Dialogues in Human Geography*, 4(2), 229–232. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2043820614537162>
- Krzywoszyńska, A. (2019). Caring for soil life in the Anthropocene: The role of attentiveness in more-than-human ethics. *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, 44(4), 661–675. <https://doi.org/10.1111/tran.12293>
- Latour, B. (2004). How to talk about the body? The normative dimension of science studies. *Body & Society*, 10(2–3), 205–229. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1357034X04042943>
- Lupton, D. (1996). Food, the body and the self. *Journal of Rural Studies*, 14. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0743-0167\(97\)00065-X](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0743-0167(97)00065-X)
- Marrades-Puig, A. (2024). The right to care: A proposal from feminist perspectives for a constitutional reform in Spain. *International Journal of Care and Caring*, 8(1), 206–212. <https://doi.org/10.1332/23978821Y2023D000000016>
- Martin, M. A., & Lippert, A. (2012). Feeding her children, but risking her health: The intersection of gender, household food insecurity and obesity. *Social Science & Medicine* (1982), 74(11), 1754–1764. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.socscimed.2011.11.013>
- Matacena, R. (2016). Linking alternative food networks and urban food policy: A step forward in the transition towards a sustainable and equitable food system? *International Review of Social Research*, 6. <https://doi.org/10.1515/irsr-2016-0007>
- Maye, D., Swagemakers, P., Wiskerke, J. S., Moschitz, H., Kirwan, J., & Jahrl, I. (2022). Transformative potential from the ground up: Sustainable innovation journeys, soft change and alignment of interests in urban food initiatives. *European Urban and Regional Studies*, 29(2), 222–237. <https://doi.org/10.1177/09697764211028887>
- Midgley, J. (2016). Perspectives on responsibility in practice as revealed through food provisioning offers for rough sleepers. *Critical Social Policy*, 36(4), 610–629. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0261018316640242>
- Miró, I. (2018). *Ciutats cooperatives. Esbossos d'una altra economia urbana*. Editorial Icaria.
- Moragues-Faus, A. (2017). Emancipatory or neoliberal food politics? Exploring the “politics of collectivity” of buying groups in the search for egalitarian food democracies. *Antipode*, 49(2), 455–476. <https://doi.org/10.1111/anti.12274>
- Moragues-Faus, A. (2020). Towards a critical governance framework: Unveiling the political and justice dimensions of urban food partnerships. *The Geographical Journal*, 186(1), 73–86. <https://doi.org/10.1111/geoj.12325>
- Moragues-Faus, A., Clark, J. K., Battersby, J., & Davies, A. (2022). *Routledge handbook of urban food governance* (1st ed.). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003055907>
- Moragues-Faus, A., Clark, J. K., Battersby, J., & Davies, A. R. (2024). The potential of urban food governance to transform lives, cities, and the planet. *Global Food Security*, 40, Article 100751. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.gfs.2024.100751>
- Moragues-Faus, A., & Sonnino, R. (2019). Re-assembling sustainable food cities: An exploration of translocal governance and its multiple agencies. *Urban Studies*, 56(4), 778–794. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0042098018763038>
- Morrow, O., & Parker, B. (2020). Care, commoning and collectivity: From grand domestic revolution to urban transformation. *Urban Geography*, 41(4), 607–624. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02723638.2020.1785258>
- Muehlebach, A. K. (2012). *The moral neoliberal: Welfare and citizenship in Italy*. The University of Chicago Press.
- Nisbett, N. (2023). Malnutrition as more-than-food: Understanding failings in the broader infrastructures of nurture. *Children's Geographies*, 21(5), 883–897. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14733285.2022.2153328>
- Njuk, J., Eissler, S., Malapit, H., Meinen-Dick, R., Bryan, E., & Quisumbing, A. (2022). A review of evidence on gender equality, women's empowerment, and food systems. *Global Food Security*, 33, Article 100622. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.gfs.2022.100622>
- Noddings, N. (2001). The care tradition: Beyond “add women and stir”. *Theory Into Practice*, 40(1), 29–34.
- Onederra-Aramendi, A., Begiristain-Zubillaga, M., & Cuellar-Padilla, M. (2023). Characterisation of food governance for alternative and sustainable food systems: A systematic review. *Agricultural and Food Economics*, 11(1), 18. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s40100-023-00258-7>
- Organo, V., Head, L., & Waitt, G. (2013). Who does the work in sustainable households? A time and gender analysis in New South Wales, Australia. *Gender, Place and Culture*, 20(5), 559–577. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0966369X.2012.716401>
- Paganini, N., Khan, Z., Shivutse, V., Buthelezi, N., Bassermann, L., Sikobi, T., & Onura, W. (2024). *Why urban food-system transformation requires a feminist approach*. Parker, B., Brady, J., & Power, E. (2019). Feminist food studies: International perspectives (Women's Press).
- Polman, D., & Bazzan, G. (2023). Governance tools for urban food system policy innovations in the Milano Urban Food Policy Pact. *European Urban and Regional Studies*, 30(4), 362–378. <https://doi.org/10.1177/09697764231165203>
- Power, E. R., & Williams, M. J. (2020). Cities of care: A platform for urban geographical care research. *Geography Compass*, 14(1), Article e12474. <https://doi.org/10.1111/gec3.12474>
- Puig de La Bellacasa, M. (2017). *Matters of care: Speculative ethics in more than human worlds*. University of Minnesota press.
- Puleo, T. J. (2013). Parasitizing landscape for UNESCO World Heritage. *Geoforum*, 45, 337–345. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.geoforum.2012.11.024>
- Rocha, M. (2022). Looking at the right to care through the lens of gender. In *JusGov research paper*, 2022–09.
- Rosati, F., Lorusso, M. M., Pistella, J., Anzani, A., Di Giannantonio, B., Mirabella, M., & Baiocco, R. (2024). Nonbinary people living in a binary world: Minority stress in public and gendered places. *International Journal of Transgender Health*, 26(2), 360–377. <https://doi.org/10.1080/26895269.2024.2338152>
- Salvador, A. J. (2024). Defining a peri-urban agrarian space as a socio-spatial and environmental unit. Lessons from Barcelona's local food system. In F. Calabró, L. Madureira, F. C. Morabito, & M. J. Piñeira Mantiñán (Eds.), *Networks, markets & people* (Vol. 1187, pp. 72–83). Springer Nature Switzerland. doi:https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-74704-5_8.
- Smith, O. (2012). How far from a “right to care”? Reconciling care work and labour market work in Ireland. *Irish Jurist*, 47, 143–167.
- Sonnino, R. (2016). The new geography of food security: Exploring the potential of urban food strategies: The new geography of food security. *The Geographical Journal*, 182 (2), 190–200. <https://doi.org/10.1111/geoj.12129>
- Sonnino, R. (2019). The cultural dynamics of urban food governance. *City, Culture and Society*, 16, 12–17. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ccs.2017.11.001>
- Sonnino, R., & Marsden, T. (2006). Beyond the divide: Rethinking relationships between alternative and conventional food networks in Europe. *Journal of Economic Geography*, 6(2), 181–199. <https://doi.org/10.1093/jeg/ibi006>
- Staelen, L. A. (2003). Women and the work of community. *Environment and Planning A: Economy and Space*, 35(5), 815–831. <https://doi.org/10.1068/a35134>
- Stierand, P. (2012). Food policy councils: Recovering the local level in food policy. In A. Viljoen, & J. S. C. Wiskerke (Eds.), *Sustainable food planning: Evolving theory and practice* (pp. 67–78). Wageningen Academic Publishers. https://doi.org/10.3920/978-90-8686-187-3_5.
- Thelen, T. (2015). Care as social organization: Creating, maintaining and dissolving significant relations. *Anthropological Theory*, 15(4), 497–515. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1463499615600893>
- Till, K. E. (2012). Wounded cities: Memory-work and a place-based ethics of care. *Political Geography*, 31(1), 3–14. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.polgeo.2011.10.008>
- Timeto, F. (2024). *Animali si diventa. Femminismi e liberazione animale*. Tamu.
- Toldo, A. (2017). Etica della cura, geografia e cibo: Pratiche di recupero e redistribuzione alimentare a Torino. *Rivista Geografica Italiana - Open Access*, 124(3), 245–262.
- Tornaghi, C., & Dehaene, M. (2020). The prefigurative power of urban political agroecology: Rethinking the urbanisms of agroecological transitions for food system transformation. *Agroecology and Sustainable Food Systems*, 44(5), 594–610. <https://doi.org/10.1080/21683565.2019.1680593>
- Trevilla Espinal, D. L., Soto Pinto, M. L., Morales, H., & Estrada-Lugo, E. I. J. (2021). Feminist agroecology: Analyzing power relationships in food systems. *Agroecology and Sustainable Food Systems*, 45(7), 1029–1049. <https://doi.org/10.1080/21683565.2021.1888842>
- Tribaldos, T., & Kortetmäki, T. (2022). Just transition principles and criteria for food systems and beyond. *Environmental Innovation and Societal Transitions*, 43, 244–256. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.eist.2022.04.005>
- Tronto, J. C., & Fisher, B. (1990). *Toward a feminist theory of caring*. In E. Abel, & M. Nelson (Eds.), *Circles of care* (pp. 36–54). SUNY Press.
- Vara-Sánchez, I., Gallar-Hernández, D., García-García, L., Morán Alonso, N., & Moragues-Faus, A. (2021). The co-production of urban food policies: Exploring the emergence of new governance spaces in three Spanish cities. *Food Policy, Urban Food Policies for a Sustainable and Just Future*, 103, Article 102120. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.foodpol.2021.102120>
- Williams, M. J. (2017a). Care-full justice in the city. *Antipode*, 49(3), 821–839. <https://doi.org/10.1111/anti.12279>
- Williams, M. J. (2017b). Searching for actually existing justice in the city. *Urban Studies*, 54(10), 2217–2231. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0042098016647336>
- Williams, M. J. (2020). The possibility of care-full cities. *Cities*, 98, Article 102591. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cities.2019.102591>
- Williams, M. J. (2022). Care-full food justice. *Geoforum*, 137, 42–51. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.geoforum.2022.10.008>
- Williams, M. J., & Sharp, E. L. (2023). Feminist ethics of care in urban food governance. In A. Moragues-Faus, J. K. Clark, J. Battersby, & A. Davies (Eds.), *Routledge handbook of urban food governance* (pp. 78–91). Routledge, Taylor and Francis Group. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003055907-8>.
- Williams, M. J., & Tait, L. (2023). Diverse infrastructures of care: Community food provisioning in Sydney. *Social & Cultural Geography*, 24(8), 1362–1382. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14649365.2022.2056630>
- Williams-Forsen, P. A., & Counihan, C. (Eds.). (2011). *Taking food public: Redefining foodways in a changing world*. Routledge.
- Yacamán Ochoa, C., Matarán, A., Mata Olmo, R., López, J., & Fuentes-Guerra, R. (2019). The potential role of short food supply chains in strengthening periurban agriculture in Spain: The cases of Madrid and Barcelona. *Sustainability*, 11(7), 2080. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su11072080>
- Zaremba, H., Elias, M., Rietveld, A., & Bergamini, N. (2021). Toward a feminist agroecology. *Sustainability*, 13(20), Article 11244. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su132011244>
- Zerbian, T., & López-García, D. (2024). Navigating agroecological urbanism: Examining linkages and interdependencies within alternative food networks. *Frontiers in Sustainable Food Systems*, 8. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fsufs.2024.1375128>