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Framing urban gardening and agriculture: On space, scale and the public

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ABSTRACT

During the past ten years, both public policies and scientific research have tended to pay increasing attention to what they refer to as "urban gardening" and "urban agriculture". In this paper I argue that the term "urban" poorly reflects the diversity of spatial references that underpin such projects. I explore the framing process of two competing agriculture and gardening projects in Geneva, Switzerland. I first show that the social and spatial frames of the projects, i.e. the central definition of a public and of a spatiality are inextricably linked. In the second part, I argue that by ranking the spatial units that ground the spatial frames of the projects according to the specific public they are aimed at, the most powerful actor makes competitive use of scale frames. This paper thus argues for more attention to the socio-spatial framing of urban agriculture and urban gardening projects. It contributes to the debate on the politics of scale by exploring how a scalar hierarchy is performed through the strategic deployment of spatial criteria by social actors. The hierarchy appears to be contingent and context specific, with prevalent notions of locality and proximity.

Introduction

During the past ten years, both public policy and scientific research have tended to pay increasing attention to what is referred to as "urban gardening" and "urban agriculture". In most Western countries, a growing number of administrations are trying to develop a policy of "urban agriculture", comprised of all the practices related to the growing of food within and near cities, from inner city allotments and community gardens to periurban off-ground cultivation.

In this paper, I explore the way project leaders think about and frame the spatiality of their projects. Do they refer to the "urban" nature of their projects? How do they frame their spatial scope? I argue that the oft-unexamined use of the term "urban" poorly reflects the complexity of the representations and practices of many practitioners, as well as the power relationships that shape them. These gardening and agricultural practices may well be located in urban places, or have functional relations to them – be they through informal exchanges of things or within formalised market relations – yet the "urban" should not be regarded as a pre-existing spatial reference that all actors refer to.

All collective projects are discursively and materially framed by project holders. In the case of urban gardening, the spatial framing of projects may refer to other spatial objects than the city or more generally the "urban".[1] To simply designate these practices as urban therefore tends to oversimplify their spatial framing and the scope of their action, and to hide the process of negotiation inherent to the framing process of any project. The point is not to say that such projects are not urban but to point to the fact that their spatial framing can be surprisingly complex and subject to power relationships, and that the "urban" itself can be delineated differently among urban agriculture projects.

An important number of publications (see for instance Boulianne et al., 2010; Cérézuelle and Le Formal, 1990; Ferris et al., 2001; Holland, 2004) also emphasize the role of collective urban gardens as inclusive tools for community building, social integration and the re-creation of public spaces. However, community gardens do not exist outside of society. They are therefore embedded within the micro-politics of the city and their degree of inclusiveness/exclusiveness varies greatly from one project to another. I argue that it is important to know how the public of any urban agriculture or urban gardening project is framed, and how this refers to different scientific conceptions of what constitutes such a public. I wish to further foster dialogue between Francophone and Anglophone intellectual traditions regarding both urban gardening and agriculture, and notions of public and

[1] The author is well aware of the theoretical and conceptual debates (see for instance Abu-Lughod, 1991; Ascher, 1995; Chalas, 2000; Choay, 1994; Soja, 2000) regarding cities and the urban phenomenon. However the point of this paper is not to analyse such concepts and phenomena but to see if and how they are mobilised in practice.

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community. Building upon Kurtz's argument that the spatial organization of community gardens and especially their degree of enclosure reveals and influences concepts of community (Kurtz, 2001), I show that the spatial framing cannot be separated from the social framing of the projects, as both are thought of together.

To explore this, I focus on Beaulieu Park, a historical park in Geneva where two urban gardening experiments coexist: one is a community garden created and managed by a municipal department, the other an experimental urban farm managed by a grassroots urban agriculture organization subsidized by the same municipality. I explore how both of these organizations construct and negotiate their own sociospatial frames, within and beyond the spaces of the gardens themselves. By comparing their goals and logics and by shedding light on the way the latter is dependent on the managers of the former for funding, I discuss how their respective claims and practices are more-than-urban. Furthermore, each secures its own social and spatial frames through a politics of scale, conceived as the performance of a scalar hierarchy, with discursive as well as material consequences.

Framing urban gardening and agriculture

Finding one's way through multiple understandings of urban gardening and urban agriculture across languages

Comparing and analyzing the claims and objectives of urban gardening and urban agriculture projects requires being clear about the conceptual debates surrounding these expressions. Unsurprisingly, the terms urban agriculture and urban gardening are not used the same way in different languages. Since the case studied here takes place in French-speaking Switzerland, a discussion of terms is unavoidable. In the French-speaking scientific literature, urban gardening ("*jardinage urbain*") is most often referred to as urban agriculture ("*agriculture urbaine*"), but the latter is not limited to the former. For instance, Salomon-Cavin (2012) justifies the use of urban agriculture as a generic term by considering that both urban gardening and agriculture are acts of cultivation, refer to the same geographical imaginaries, and are sometimes linked to the same policies. In some cases, however, authors choose only to designate professional practices under this term, similar to the use of the term 'farming' in English. Niwa for instance defines urban agriculture as a: "professional activity located in the city that produces agricultural products and has as one consequence the presence of green spaces in the city"[2] (Niwa, 2009, p. 105). If most authors choose not to differentiate between amateur practices and commercial practices, most of them focus only on some specific practices: metropolitan professional agriculture (Donadieu and Fleury, 1995; Jarrige et al., 2006), intra-urban agriculture (Wegmuller and Duchemin, 2010) or agriurbanism (Vidal and Fleury, 2009) for instance. Some authors however choose to work on the close relationship between urban gardening and urban agriculture (Boukharaeva and Marloie, 2010; Grandchamp Florentino, 2012; Nahmias and Le Caro, 2012), but with differing delineations of the terms.

In the English-speaking literature the delineation of the terms seems to be slightly different. Indeed, most scholarly contributions that use the term "urban agriculture" focus on initiatives in developing countries (see for instance Bryld, 2003; Demuro, 2012; Hampwaye et al., 2007; Salazar, 2012), while only a few seem to focus on Northern initiatives. When they do, they tend to present an exclusive definition of urban agriculture, understood as periurban or metropolitan[3] production, market-oriented agriculture (see for instance Stottlemyer, 2012). There are, however, some notable exceptions (McClintock, 2013 for instance has a more extensive definition of urban agriculture that comprises all forms of food growing in cities). Most of the works concerned with practices of inner-city food-growing refer to them as urban gardening, though they are sometimes exactly the same as those referred to as urban agriculture in French. Expressions do not have the same scope in these two languages. For instance, in English *stricto sensu* community gardens are focused on ideas of community-building, while the expression "urban garden" simply designates a garden with an urban location, yet both expressions tend to be used as synonyms in French, and are more generally referred to as "agriculture urbaine" (Boulianne, 2001; Wegmuller and Duchemin, 2010). It is important to insist on these different scientific cultures, because they are linked to the reality on the ground and the way people involved in these practices label themselves and frame their own praxis. Dialogues between scientific cultures are rendered even more difficult in the absence of clear definitions of urban gardening due to variety in purposes, forms and functioning of all the projects labeled as such (see Holland, 2004, p. 292). However, to put it simply, urban agriculture refers to practices of cultivation in urban spaces. Nevertheless, this does not give any indication of how practitioners do or do not make sense of the "urban", nor how they define it. Could some projects be urban in location but not defined as such by those involved?

It needs stating at this point that this paper does not aim to fix what the "urban" is or what it should mean related to agriculture and gardening, but to explore whether it is used as a spatial reference for agriculture and gardening projects. In this paper it should not be regarded as a category of analysis but a category of practice (Moore, 2008), or in Pike's terms (1954) not as an etic but an emic category. That is why I do not wish to state right away what "urban" means but to explore whether it is a category that makes sense in the practitioners' minds and how – and if not, what other spatial references are used and how.

Urban gardening as political practice

The practices of so-called urban gardening range from illegal gardening of vacant space, to gardening in individual allotments and in community gardens. The history of the American and European gardening movements can be traced back to the end of the 19th century, when allotment gardens were seen by the clergy and the dominant classes as a healthy occupation that could help improve workers' health but also, from a paternalistic point of view, lure them away from pubs and render them more productive (Dubost, 1997). In periods of crisis and war too, such gardens developed, offering self-sufficiency to modest families. These allotment gardens were held by associations, sometimes by municipalities, and were proactively secured by authorities. For instance the Allotment Act in the UK forced every municipality to give an allotment to anyone who asked. In the 1960s however, just as the number of allotments was starting to decrease, a new sort of urban garden began to develop in the USA, now called "community gardens". These were grassroots political projects aimed at fighting against land deprivation and land capitalism. Notwithstanding their use to some neighborhoods, in the 1990s there started to be political contestation by developers and politicians over these spaces on the basis that they should be treated like any other plot and thus become part of the real estate market. In New York this resulted in the destruction of dozens of community gardens (Schmelzkopf, 1995). These gardens never really became mainstream even 35 years after their creation: they are still contested and contestatory spaces. In Europe, the story is slightly different, for local authorities have only recently discovered community gardens and often see them as an efficient way to create community dynamics.

[2] *« activité professionnelle localisée dans la ville, qui produit des denrées agricoles et dont une des conséquences est la présence d'espaces végétalisés dans la ville ».*

[3] That is, various forms of agriculture practiced in metropolitan regions, not in inner cities, and aimed at local urban markets.

Being real places within society and space, these grassroots activist gardens are not exempt from power relations and issues within and beyond their own boundaries. Urban gardens have repeatedly been politically manipulated as various governments have instrumentalized gardens for political means. In Vichy France, for instance, in the 1940s Marshall Petain grounded his "*Travail, Famille, Patrie*" ("Labour, Family, Nation") motto in a back-to-the-land policy in which he stated that no land at all should stay uncultivated. He thus wanted to – literally – root his vision of the nation in cultivation practices (Pearson, 2012). One of his policies, then, was to encourage the development of allotment gardens through a series of laws (Consales, 2000). In the United States, during the two World Wars, establishing war gardens and victory gardens was considered a patriotic act. In periods of depression, gardening could be rendered mandatory, for instance through cuts to social security for people who did not participate, as the slogan "no garden, no relief" illustrates (Lawson, 2004; McKay, 2011, p. 160). These contestatory gardens thus also have their own politics, ranging from progressive to reactionary.

Urban gardens and their public

Urban gardening is often depicted as cure for social fragmentation, and an effective way of acting with and for a specific public. For instance, according to Boulianne (2001), urban gardens facilitate teamwork in a shared open space, which is supposed to facilitate integration within a community. Holland (2004) goes as far as saying that gardens can act as "agents of change", by helping people to get a grasp on collective, public issues and get organized. Indeed, according to Cérézuelle (2003) "One of the functions of a collective garden is to informally train people to take part in the public sphere, through the consolidation of the private sphere" (Cérézuelle, 2003, p. 76).[4] There is thus a belief that community gardens have the ability to change society by giving greater access to the public sphere to the disenfranchised. For instance, according to Staeheli and Mitchell (2008) community gardens in New York create an alternative vision of publicity where people who are usually unseen come to the forefront.

However, the social space created by a community garden is ambiguous. In their analysis of Canadian community gardens Bouvier-Daclon and Sénécal (2001) shed light on the differences between the aims of the project leaders and the aims of the actual gardeners. They show that even though the project leaders often have community building goals, the actual participants may not. As Pudup (2008) notes, the kind of public at which the projects are aimed is often referred to as "community" (Pudup, 2008, p. 1230). Yet she shows that in spite of this claim many discourses regarding community gardens tend to present the latter as a way to put individuals in charge of their own adjustments to economic restructuring and social dislocation through self-help technologies (Pudup, 2008, p. 1228) in a context of "roll-out neoliberalism". According to Pudup, the endeavor of many such projects is thus to achieve individual, and not collective, transformation through collective gardening (Pudup, 2008, p. 1230). In other words, the community argument has a purely rhetorical effect. In her study of allotment gardens in Stockholm, Becker (2000) is also skeptical about the community achievement of gardens, yet in a different manner. She shows that in spite of a collective imaginary of cross-community harmony in these gardens, there are actually only few cross-cultural encounters. Swedish people tend to spend more time with Swedish people, and racial power relationships do not stop at the garden gate.

Furthermore, Kurtz (2001) calls for more consideration of the variations among community gardens regarding the way they serve as arenas for community-building. She argues that not all community gardens are open, inclusive projects. This should not be taken for granted, but rather researched, as there are different degrees of inclusiveness and exclusiveness. She shows how the framing of a public and the level of spatial openness of the garden are linked. The definition of community that project leaders refer to during the creation of the garden matters to how open – or not – the resulting garden is to different kinds of publics. The relation between the two is not directly causal, but the spatial organization and degree of enclosure of the garden influence the variety of people who participate. A closed, fenced garden does not necessarily mean an exclusionary garden, but it surely will host a smaller public.[5] Gardens are hence more or less inclusionary; all of them do not act as community catalysts. For Holland (2004), the integration of urban gardens into local communities depends on the width of both their membership and their accessibility. The degree of inclusiveness thus depends on both the spatial and social framing of the project.

Lastly, as Firth et al. (2011) note: "it is not always clear whether community gardens are run for the community, by the community or that they just happen to be located in certain communities" (Firth et al., 2011, p. 557). What is meant by "community" is thus unclear and can lead to misunderstandings. The variations in the interpretation of the term "community" and the multiple ways of conceiving of a public show that there is a need for people researching community gardening to be clearer on what they mean by public and community. Additionally, it is worth restating that the meanings and representations of the term "community" vary greatly between linguistic traditions and across countries. Since the case study developed in this paper takes place in francophone Switzerland, opening a dialogue between Francophone and Anglophone understandings of public and community may be useful. In French politics in particular, the term "communauté" has been negatively associated with the fragmentation of society and the risk of "communitarianism" where each cultural group lives on its own and endangers national harmony. However, many Francophone philosophers use the term more subtly. In the rest of this section, I thus attempt to compare the definitions of public and community of Anglophone and Francophone thinkers.[6]

As Staeheli and Mitchell (2007) emphasize, the definitions of public space, the public and publicity are contingent, not fixed. However, Staeheli et al. (2009) attempt to give a definition of the public as: "a sociopolitical collective that is constructed through dialogue and action that engages strangers or people not directly known to the actor" (2009, p. 634). There are three key expressions here. The first is the collective, which means that there are people organizing; the second is dialogue and action, which emphasizes the relational aspect; the third is the stranger, which reminds us that a public is made up of people who are not the same. For the French sociologist Chanial (1992) the construction of a public requires both visibility and commonality: people render themselves visible and put their experiences in common. However, what differentiates a public from a community for some authors is the degree and nature of this very commonality. According to French philosopher Tassin (1991) a space is public when it is not common[7]; it keeps people in a mutual exteriority (Tassin, 1991, p. 33). He considers that, contrarily to common space, public space is

[4] *« Une des fonctions du jardin collectif est d'initier d'une manière informelle à la sphère publique, par la consolidation de la sphère privée ».*

[5] Even though a direct link between form and function is necessarily tenuous, Kurtz's article offers an interesting departure point for an analysis of the social geography of gardens, and invites researchers to pay increasing attention to the issue of sociospatial framing.

[6] I provide the readers with the precision when the cited scholars are francophone, not to emphasize their particularity but to point to the fact that the differences may be due the french discomfort with the term community that I just mentioned.

[7] "Commonality" in Tassin's thought is not to be understood in the "commons" sense, rather as self-renunciation and, in its paroxystic form, communion; whereas for Tassin "publicity" entails plurality and mutual non-ownership.

pluricentric rather than egocentric and is not based on the idea of an eventual communion. For him, a community is homogeneous whereas a public is heterogeneous. Still, according to Staeheli (2008), community is full of and constituted by contradictions, and various perspectives on community and citizenship are always in competition. She identifies two main visions of community. The first one is community as commonality, as shared experiences, which seems to parallel Chanial's definition of the public (1992). The second one is community as unity, as sameness, and this points more to Tassin's vision of community (1991). For Staeheli (2008) when community leads to the construction of sameness it is exclusionary. Yet, as she shows through the example of a community garden, sometimes exclusion is seen as necessary to foster citizenship. For instance, the exclusion of rich white people from a community garden is a case of exclusion of the powerful in order to enable the poor develop their garden without "assistance". The "others", here the rich, are thus excluded, but only to enable those who are usually designated as the others to enter the public sphere.

After this quick review of the literature on community and the public identifying how the public of any urban garden is framed appears crucial, as is understanding how community is defined when community building is the goal.

From spatial frames to politics of scales

I mentioned Holland's argument (2004) that the degree of inclusiveness of a garden depends on both the spatial and the social framing of the project. In other words, each project is conceived for a specific public and refers to a specific space of action. However, in both Francophone and Anglophone literature on community gardens, the spatial reference and scope of the projects often seem to be taken for granted. For instance, in the same paper Holland (2004) seems to take for granted that the "community" is always locally defined when she writes that if participants in a community garden come from outside the locality they are subsequently from outside the community. As I started to mention earlier, Kurtz is one of the rare scholars to have analysed the spatial references of such projects in terms of their degree of enclosure (Kurtz, 2001) and of scalar narratives (Smith and Kurtz, 2003).

The questions that thus still have to be worked through are how are urban gardening and agriculture projects spatially framed, by whom and through which process, and with what consequences regarding their public? Indeed, as Cox (1998) puts it, "agents are participants in a much more spatially extensive set of exchange relations than those contained within the bounds of a particular place" (1998, p. 4). Gardening in a specific garden does not necessarily only make sense as gardening *within* the garden: the meaning and objective of the practice may be contained within other spaces. It is thus important to understand both the social and the spatial framing of the projects and to shed light on the fact that gardens are not isolated from the micro-politics of the city; indeed their existence is made possible through relations with other political actors. I now turn to the politics of scale as an analytical tool that helps to understand the framing and scaling politics of urban gardening and agriculture projects.

The concept of scale received a lot of attention during the late 1990s and the 2000s. It is now frequently understood as a construction, which means that scales only exist through the social practices that create them (Herod and Wright, 2002). Through scalar strategies scale is a means of inclusion, exclusion and legitimation for social actors (Kurtz, 2002), while through scalar narratives scales are a way of framing conceptions of reality and suggesting the best strategies to address them (Whitehead, 2003). Scale has however received a lot of criticism because it is often used unreflexively. According to Brenner (2001) the notion of scale too often replaces other notions that are sometimes more appropriate, as not all sociospatial phenomena are fundamentally characterized by their scalar structuration. He thus calls for a more restrictive use of the term in order to avoid a scalar trap where everything is scalar. Others even consider that scale should be abandoned (Marston et al., 2005). Moore (2008) proposes as a solution that scale be abandoned as a category of analysis, where it is a way of analysing reality, and that authors focus more on how actors use and construct scales. This does not however clarify how to define scale and the extent to which it is different from other sociospatial processes. What is noteworthy is that scale is one possible classificatory practice (Moore, 2008) that works through the "simultaneous horizontal bounding and vertical or hierarchical ordering" (p. 214) of spatial units. In other words, a relative hierarchization is performed – where the "larger" scale is not necessarily on top of the hierarchy, depending on the framing of reality. This ordering of reality results in the construction of scales as relational spatial references. Scalar framing is thus a particular kind of spatial framing.

This constructivist and inherently political approach to scale helps to understand how people draw on relationships at different scales to press for advantage (Smith and Kurtz, 2003). They thus struggle through scale. The most interesting focus, however, may be on the way actors negotiate the scale of their activities in ways that allow them to exercise power (Herod and Wright, 2002). Here actors not only struggle through scale, as though scales were pre-existing, but over scale. Scale *per se* is turned into a political issue. An illustration of the difference between struggle through and over scale is to be found in Whitehead (2003). In his historical study of the scaling process of neighbourhood in Walsall, UK, he differentiates between the struggle through scale, where a particular scale is invoked through scalar narratives as a way of explaining things or suggesting the best strategies (2003, p. 285), and the struggle over scale, which is the ability to command and control other political scales, which requires to translate a struggle into other scales (2003, p. 295) in order to sustain the scale of reference. This means changing the political reference of an action and trying to get other actors involved, at other scales.

Smith and Kurtz (2003) have given an example of how community gardens can be embedded in politics of scale. They have shown how, in order to survive, New York Community gardens have had to enter into a struggle over their scales of praxis. Community gardens in New York had to organize against Mayor Giuliani's policy of reaffectation of these lands for real estate programs. In order to achieve this, they developed scalar narratives that enabled the gardens to transcend their own boundaries and to appear to be framed at municipal and then national scales. They thus successively widened their space of engagement. In this example the already existing community gardens were threatened and had to rely upon wider scalar narratives to influence metropolitan authorities. The process is thus of upscaling or scale jumping.

I now turn to my case study, where the politics of scale between urban gardening stakeholders is one of – at least partial – downscaling. What I wish to do in the final section is to draw upon both of Kurtz's papers (Kurtz, 2001; Smith and Kurtz, 2003) and take the reflection further: I wish to go beyond the notion that the spatial organization of garden projects influences or reveals the project holders' vision of community, and explore instead how the spatial anchoring and reach of gardens are closely tied to a specific concept of public and community that is negotiated between actors through a politics of scale.

Case study and methodology

Urban gardening and urban agriculture in Geneva

Geneva's urban gardening movement is historically rooted and is culturally valued by many, as the important number of allotment

gardens in the State of Geneva[8] illustrates. For instance the town of Vernier, the second largest town with 34 000 inhabitants, has about 800 allotments (Droz, 2011), or as many as the whole city of Marseille, France, that has over 1 million inhabitants (Consales, 2000). Urban agriculture isn't completely new to the city either. The "*Plaine de Plainpalais*"[9] for instance, in the middle of the city of Geneva, was used as an agricultural field during the Second World War, as the Swiss *Plan Wahlen* encouraged city-dwellers to use any open space to cultivate food so that the country could be self-sufficient and not have to rely on any country engaged in the war, literally grounding its neutral political stance. Urban agriculture thus is not alien to Genevans; the hybridization between rural and urban space has roots in recent local history.

Today, municipal as well as state policy makers wish to develop coherent urban gardening policies. Allotments for instance are regarded as a wasteful use of space with an average size of 170–400 square meters (Fédération Genevoise des Jardins Familiaux, 2013) and are presented as not sufficiently environmentally-friendly, usually located on the outskirts of the city, requiring private transport. The current state policy is thus to create community gardens at the foot of apartment buildings so that people can enjoy gardening where they live. The plots are smaller and the rules stricter, since there cannot be any construction or shed, no turf grass, no trees, and no use of chemicals. The state and city officers are also rediscovering the value of urban agriculture. Geneva is developing a self-sufficiency program through the creation of special zones hosting greenhouses growing tomatoes. Two urban farms have also been created in the last decade. The Collectif Beaulieu, that is discussed here, is one of them.

Beaulieu Park, displaying urban agriculture and urban gardening

Beaulieu Park (*Parc Beaulieu*) is a former French formal garden established in the 18th Century, purchased by the city of Geneva in 1939 (see Fig. 1).

It is located in a central area that is commonly described by both inhabitants and policy-makers as working-class, populated by immigrants and low-income populations, and yet progressively gentrified. It used to be a subversive area with an important number of squats. Today the southern part is undergoing gentrification while the northern section is still inhabited by low-income populations.

The park has hosted a community garden since 2007. It was created and is managed by the local Unit of Community Action (UCA, *Unité d'Action Communautaire*) of the neighborhood, a recently created neighborhood-based municipal unit aimed at developing community projects that can be useful to anyone in the neighborhood. The UCA's principle is to "evaluate resources and potentials of the field, in order to carry out participatory actions by the inhabitants for their neighborhood".[10] There are four UCAs in Geneva, each concerned with a specific area, named neighborhood. Each area is then subdivided into districts. The UCAs are part of the Social Department (*Service Social*), itself part of the wider Department of Social Cohesion and Solidarity (*Département de la Cohésion Sociale et de la Solidarité*). The community garden is made up of 20 allotments of 6 m^2 each where people cultivate vegetables, fruits, and herbs. It is not fenced and neither are the allotments. Each gardener agrees to take care of his or her allotment for two years. Then the allotment is passed to another person, so as to enable everyone to garden.

[8] Switzerland being a confederation of independent – if very small! – states, the name State of Geneva refers here to what is called in French the *Canton*, distinct from and larger than the City of Geneva.

[9] The *Plaine de Plainpalais* is a wide, grassy square used as a fairground.

[10] *« partir de l'observation des ressources et potentialités du terrain, concrétiser des actions participatives de la population vis-à-vis de son quartier ».*

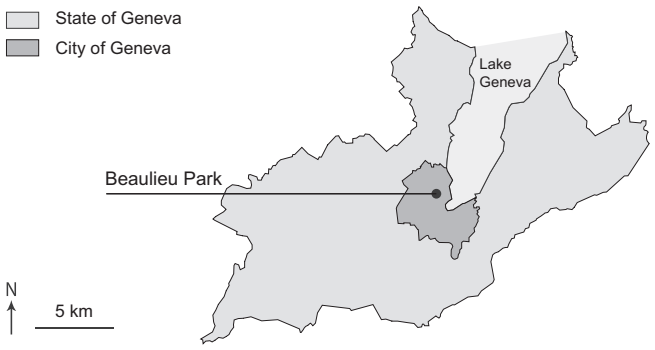

Fig. 1. Localization of the park. Régis Dabrinville, 2014.

This community garden was created just behind a horticultural center used by the Green Spaces Department (*Service des Espaces Verts*). When the latter moved away in 2009 and the greenhouses and hotbeds were left empty, a grassroots movement emerged called "*Les Artichauts*" (the Artichokes), which would quickly turn into the "*Collectif Beaulieu*" by drawing in other associations. The *Artichauts*' idea was to reuse the existing greenhouses and beds for an urban agriculture project with two aims: the production of organic plants for local agriculture, and the development of a garden where people could come and pick vegetables themselves (see Fig. 2).

The two projects are linked. First, the link is monetary, for the UCA is a municipal department and the *Collectif Beaulieu* is subsidized by the municipality. Second, the Department of Social Cohesion and Solidarity through the UCA, the Green Spaces Department and the *Collectif Beaulieu* are working together on a project for this place, the "Beaulieu project", whose goal is to redefine the usage of the horticultural center and create more synergies between the urban gardening and urban agriculture facets. Thus the two organizations have to work together. One organization is municipal, the other one is associative and is in a position of inferiority since its funding depends on its cooperation with the municipal departments. Beaulieu is thus at the intersection between urban gardening and urban agriculture as well as municipal and associative action. It is inserted within two rationales, two different spatial framings, and two different references to community and public, that all have to get along in order to sustain the shared Beaulieu project.

This case study is part of a wider study on the politics and practices of urban gardening in Geneva, based on six case studies in the State of Geneva. For this specific case study I conducted six interviews with representatives from the local UCA, the municipal Social Department, the municipal Agenda 21 Department, the municipal Green Spaces Department, and the *Collectif Beaulieu*. They all represent a range of actors involved in the activities of the park, and each had things to say about the goals of the projects and the relations between the actors. I additionally did a systematic study of newspaper articles, websites, flyers, PowerPoint presentations and so on, all concerned with the Beaulieu case, and undertook participatory observation for more than a year with an association member of the *Collectif,* whose members I also interviewed. All interviews were held in French, as were all the documents in the corpus. The translations are mine.

Negotiating frames in Beaulieu Park

The Beaulieu case study focuses on the relationship between two organizations – the Social Department embodied in the UCA and the *Collectif Beaulieu* – that both want to achieve sociopolitical aims through food growing in the city. Their respective vision of what needs to be achieved, and how, is nevertheless very different.

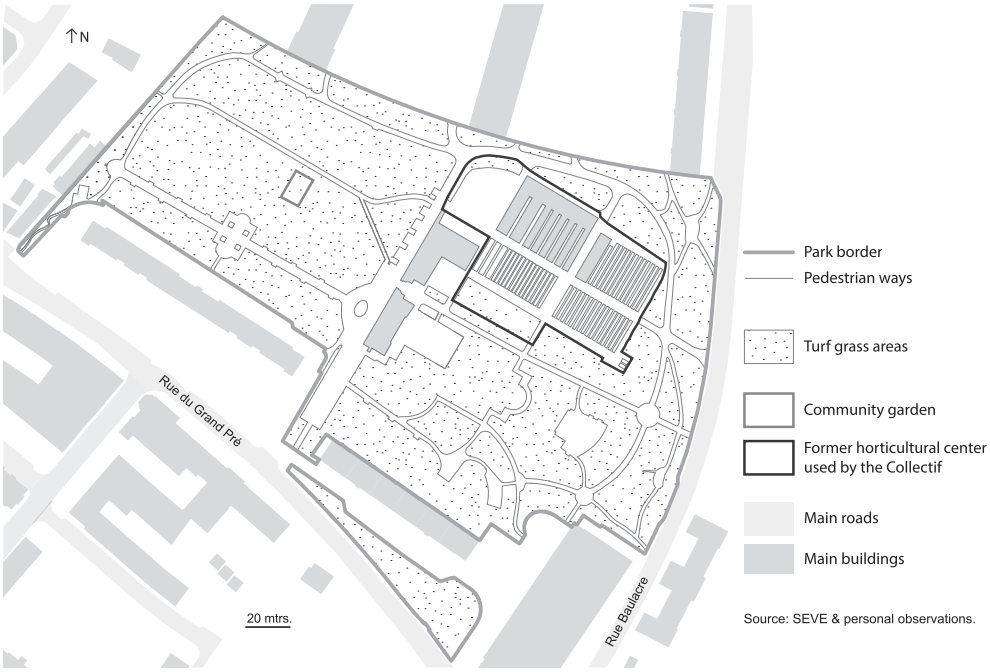

Fig. 2. Map of the park. Marion Ernwein, 2014.

The socio-spatial framing of their respective projects is particularly different. I start here by analysing this framing, in particular their political aims and the kind of public they want to reach. I discuss how the framing of a public is inextricably linked to the spatial framing of the project. In a second part I analyse how, due to the power relations between the two actors and the necessity for the *Collectif* to sustain its project, the argument between them ends up revolving around scalar narratives, where the spatial units referred to by the actors in their projects are given a place in a hierarchy of values. This ordering of scales is discursively produced but also has material consequences, as the *Collectif* adapts its scalar narratives and its material practices to the requirements of the UCA.

The UCA: developing place-based community through gardening

Any action the UCA undertakes has to be framed at a neighbourhood level. The representatives of the UCA have thus developed a narrative on the neighbourhood explaining why this is the right scale for their actions, with scale understood here both as an administrative level and as the scope for their action. Consequently, the public designated to participate in the Beaulieu community garden is framed at the scale of the neighbourhood.

> "Some departments have to be careful that the project gets well integrated in the neighbourhood dynamics, that people don't pull the cover back towards them"[11]
>
> [Interview with Agenda 21 Department representative, 2012.]

The insertion into neighbourhood dynamics is essential, as the UCA has to make sure that projects benefit the whole neighbourhood, not only the project holders. This idea can be found in advertisements, within which the community garden is presented as nurturing a collective and participative dynamics by occupying a public space actively and ecologically, and encouraging healthy, outdoor activity. These references to participation, collectivity and public space convey the feeling that the UCA wants to develop a shared process to revitalize the neighbourhood. The neighbourhood is thought of as the daily lived space of a certain public – the inhabitants. A certain kind of public – the community – is thus associated with a certain spatial formation – the neighbourhood. Indeed, as we can see, for the UCA:

> "This place (the Beaulieu project) needs to be a neighbourhood space for citizens of the neighbourhood, especially from the upper side, Beaulieu, Vermont, Grand Pré, Vidollet, who do not have neighbourhood equipment"[12]
>
> [Interview with UCA representative, 2012.]

> "We have to make the most of this place but make sure that it is used by the inhabitants of the neighbourhood. It is close to the Grottes, so people tend to think the neighbourhood is the Grottes [...] what is more interesting to us is if it is used by the people from Vermont, by the people who live in Chandieu, which are dilapidated places"[13]
>
> [Interview with Social Department representative, 2012.]

The action of the UCA has to be undertaken at the scale of the neighbourhood, but most importantly this has to be specifically for the people who live in this area. As a consequence, participants in the community gardens are required to live in the neighbourhood. The fact that the UCA does not frame its public as the whole population of the city, but as a specific, spatially defined, segment of the whole population, gives a clue on the founding principle of community for the UCA: spatial belonging. They define community not through sameness but through locality (see Staeheli, 2008), what Firth et al. would call place-based community (Firth et al., 2011, p. 557). Indeed, the notion of spatial belonging is often put forward as a benefit of community gardening:

[11] *« Y a des services où ils doivent regarder que, voilà, le projet effectivement il s'intègre bien dans la dynamique de quartier, qu'y ait pas, qu'ils tient pas trop la couverture à eux ».*

[12] *« Ce lieu doit être avant tout un lieu de quartier pour les citoyens du quartier, surtout du haut du quartier, Beaulieu, Vermont, Grand Pré, Vidollet, qui n'ont pas d'infrastructure de quartier ».*

[13] *« Il faut en profiter pour le valoriser, mais le valoriser, que ce soit utilisé par les gens du quartier. C'est vrai qu'y a une très forte proximité avec les Grottes, on a tout de suite tendance à dire les gens du quartier c'est les grottes [...] finalement ce qui nous intéresse nous c'est que ce soit aussi quelque chose pour les gens de Vermont, pour les gens qui habitent vers Chandieu, qui sont des endroits un peu dépenaillés ».*

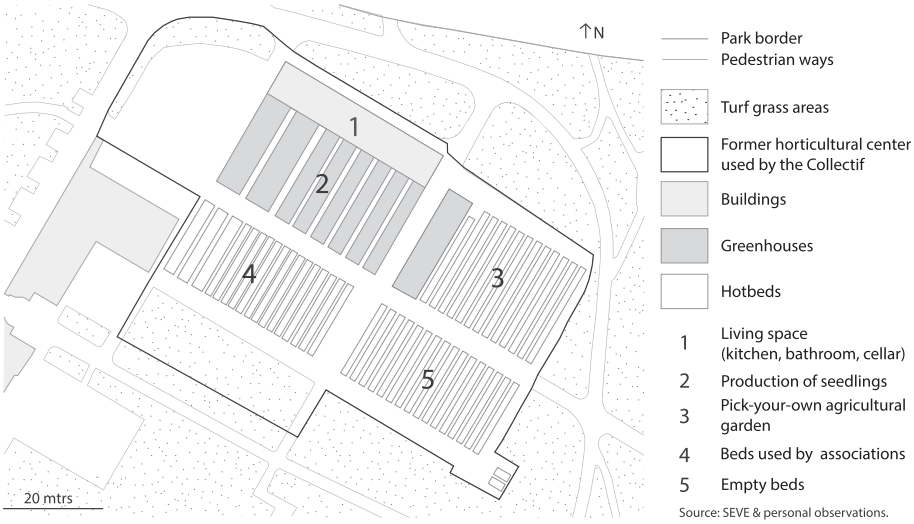

Fig. 3. The *Collectif's* space. Marion Ernwein, 2014.

"Gardening is an end and means at the same time. It is a belonging tool for citizens"[14]

[Interview with UCA representative, 2012.]

It is noteworthy that the neighbourhood – and thus the expected lived space – is defined and bounded by the UCA, not by the inhabitants themselves. The administrative praxis is expected to make sense for the inhabitants who, as the citations above suggest, may choose to identify with smaller units, like the "Grottes", "Chandieu" or "Vermont". This also confirms that their idea of community is more founded on spatial proximity and belonging than on cultural identification and resemblance.

The Collectif Beaulieu: a political community?

In contrast, the *Collectif Beaulieu* has three main goals. Their first endeavour is to develop an agricultural project based on the production of plants for community-supported agriculture (CSA) in the wider metropolitan region. In order to achieve so, the *Artichauts*, the main association in the *Collectif Beaulieu* in terms of membership, money and scope uses the tools and machines from the former horticultural centre. They also work with an organic seed provider and an association that works for the preservation of the genetic diversity of traditional Swiss breeds of plants and animals. Both are national organizations. The *Collectif* is a member of the via Campesina, a worldwide peasant organization. The collective is thus embedded within different spatialities – from the metropolitan area to the world – and takes part in numerous networks. There is a second dimension to their project: more didactic and political (their own term), and that relates to self-sufficiency since they wish to "make people aware of the production and distribution of food in the world" (Interview with a *Collectif* representative, 2012). To achieve this, the *Collectif* has developed a pick-your-own agricultural garden aimed at citizens (see Fig. 3). During the summer, individuals can come and pick zucchini, tomatoes, eggplants, salads, maize and so on. At first, the *Artichauts* wanted to add a participatory dimension through the participation of citizens in the growing process, but for the moment people mainly participate in the picking. The public can come from anywhere; there is no requirement for people to come from the neighbourhood. Lastly, the *Collectif Beaulieu* welcomes anybody who has an innovative gardening project, wherever they come from. In Firth et al.'s (2011) terms, the *Collectif* develops a community of interest, rather than a place-based community:

Name	Activity	Joined the collectif
Artichauts	Seedlings	2009
Semences de Pays	Local seed bank	2010
Le Bocal	Herbal tea	2010
Pré en Bulle	Animations	2010
Abeilles citadines	Bee hives	2011
AOC	Experimental garden, guerrilla gardening, brewery	2012
Indigo	Tinctorial plants	2013
Galinettes Urbaines	Poultry farming	2013

Being open to any kind of project, the *Collectif* presents itself as inclusive. Its members are also proud to say that people come from the whole neighbourhood and that the public is diverse in its social composition. The social diversity of the neighbourhood is, in their words, present in their project.

A politics of scale

As I have mentioned before, the UCA and the *Collectif Beaulieu* are linked by monetary relations and through their partnership in the Beaulieu project. The relationship is not equal, as the *Collectif Beaulieu* needs money from the city, whereas the UCA represents the city and has some power over the future of the site. Power and resources are not shared equally. In Cox's terms (Cox, 1998), the UCA and the neighbourhood associated with it constitute the *Collectif*'s space of dependence. Indeed, the *Collectif* has to get along with them to get their subsidies and maintain the right to use the site. As we have seen, the projects led by the UCA and by the *Collectif* do not have the same objectives, the same spatial reach nor the same public. However, they are not opponents, as the UCA does not plan to end the *Collectif*'s activities but has the power to negotiate with them.

[14] *« Le jardinage est une fin et un outil en même temps, pour nous. C'est un outil d'appartenance pour les citoyens ».*

"I would say that the particular role of the *Artichauts* in here is essential in a way. [...] Whatever the negotiation going on, I would say that in the end there will be a place for, if not for the *Artichauts*, then for something like the *Artichauts*"[15]

[Interview with Social department representative, 2012.]

This citation illustrates that the UCA and the *Artichauts* are somehow inescapable partners. Nonetheless, if the *Artichaut*'s line is too far from the UCA's, as a last option the latter may try to find other more amenable actors. Both are thus willing to work together but they have to negotiate their collaboration on an unequal basis.

The UCA representatives, and more largely the Social department, even though they are not opposed to the *Collectif*'s actions, are suspicious of the appropriation of the site by associations, as the latter do not have the same obligations in terms of social inclusiveness as do public institutions, that have to make sure their projects are open to a wide public as a public service. In order to make sure their vision of the Beaulieu project is sustained, the representatives of the UCA draw upon the argument that the *Collectif Beaulieu*'s actions are not directed towards the local population. They draw on discursive scalar strategies based on locality to criticize the *Collectif*'s actions. By doing so, the UCA performs a hierarchization of spatial units that are given values according to the way they benefit the local population:

"These seedlings, it is really not for the people from the neighbourhood, it is a semi-industrial agricultural production; it is a niche project"[16]

[Interview with UCA representative, 2012.]

This narrative of the non-local is a powerful argument to threaten the *Collectif* to stop the collaboration. The accusation that social actors are not acting "local" enough can also be found in numerous other contexts, for, as Jonas (1994) puts it "domineering organizations attempt to control the dominated by confining the latter and their activities to a manageable scale" (Jonas, 1994, p. 258). Indeed, an organization whose discourses and participation in networks go from the metropolitan area to the world as is the case with the *Collectif* is in a way less manageable than one that entirely focused on the neighbourhood. This case thus illustrates how a social actor reinforces its power by producing scalar hierarchies and designating a certain scale as the most legitimate.[17]

Their second argument is that the public of the *Collectif* is too exclusive because their project is too specialised:

"If we focus too much on a theme, what happens? It has been proven before, we do not act without proofs, what happens is only already-aware people participate, people who have a certain sociocultural level, who try to act according to their ideals as much as they can. But the whole Court of Miracles[18] is very far"[19]

[Interview with UCA representative, 2012.]

It is feared that such a specific project will only attract people already interested in this theme. The way it is presented here, the *Collectif*'s narrow focus will exclude the poor and excluded further, and all those who have less cultural capital. The vocabulary used can be strong, as shown by the next quote:

"We insisted that people from the upper side of the neighbourhood, that is to say not the political partners, not the elites from the Grottes, but rather free citizens, ordinary citizens, and institutions of course, some other organizations also asked to participate, reintegration classes, the St. Gervais school for difficult teenagers"[20]

[Interview with UCA representative, 2012.]

The contrasting of terms such as "ordinary citizens" or "free citizens" to the "political partners" and "the elites" conveys the idea that the *Collectif*'s project is only open to politicized individuals. By contrast, the UCA presents itself as the guarantor that any project in the neighbourhood is inclusionary. They draw on the "club" argument to say that there is an inherent clique-y dimension to the *Collectif*:

"We are somehow the guarantors that this kind of place and this kind of service is not appropriated by a small club of people who know each other. We have to regularly reassess the situation, and ask whether we really act for the inhabitants"[21]

[Interview with Social department representative, 2012.]

By saying that the *Collectif Beaulieu* does not act for the citizens of the neighbourhood, but either for external actors or only for a "club", the UCA strategically attempts to designate it as an outsider to the neighbourhood. The municipality believes in the power of gardening to enhance community, but does not want to be associated with the *Collectif*'s claims and actions that go well beyond the borders of the neighbourhood:

"Citizen-gardeners, that was an objective of the municipality for this site. But not this rallying around the via Campesina"[22]

[Interview with UCA representative, 2012.]

In response to these criticisms and in order to ensure its future, the *Collectif* has progressively started to redefine its scalar narrative. It was initially made up of three main associations, and then set up a partnership with a local youth organization named *Pré en Bulle,* that also wanted to use the space of the former horticultural centre for its activities. By working closely with a neighbourhood-based youth organization, the *Collectif* started to build a local network with social actors in the neighbourhood and started to appear as a major neighbourhood actor too.

Secondly, it developed a "School at the farm" program. Pupils from neighbouring schools can come and spend an afternoon at the farm, where activities related to agriculture are organized. This way, it addresses a diversified, non-specialized public, which offers a response to the UCA's criticism.

Lastly, in its last 2012 and 2013 planning documents, it further emphasizes the neighbourhood dimensions of its activities. For instance in its 2012 project the *Collectif* mentions that "inhabitants,

[15] *« Et c'est vrai que petit à petit moi je dirais le rôle très particulier des Artichauts là-dedans… ouais je dirais est d'une certaine façon incontournable. […] quel que soit l'objet de la négociation qui est en cours là-dedans, je dirais que à la fin y aura une place pour, si c'est pas les artichauts, c'est quelque chose comme les artichauts ».*

[16] *« Ces trucs des plantons, c'est vraiment pas pour les gens du quartier, c'est une production indus', enfin agricole, semi-industrielle, mais c'est un projet de niche ».*

[17] See Mitchell (1998) for another instance of authorities attempting to designate a social movement as outsider in order to keep their hands on it. As we shall see below, the specificity of the Beaulieu case is the attempt by the *Collectif* to downscale its discourse and practices as a response.

[18] The expression « Court of Miracles » is a historical reference to Paris's slum districts during the Old Order.

[19] *« Si on va trop dans le thématique, après que se passe-t-il? On l'a déjà plusieurs fois prouvé, hein, on n'agit pas sans preuves, c'est qu'on se retrouve avec un public d'initiés, de personnes, qui, voilà, ont toutes un certain niveau socioculturel, et qui pratiquent leurs idéaux, du mieux qu'il peuvent mais toute la cour des miracles, elle est loin ».*

[20] *« On a un peu insisté pour que ce soient des gens du haut du quartier, donc pas les associés politisés, par les élites des grottes, en clair, mais plutôt les citoyens libres, les citoyens ordinaires, et les institutions, bien sûr, on a u aussi d'autres institutions qui ont fait la demande, des classes de réinsertion, l'école de St Gervais, qui est une école pour adolescents en difficulté ».*

[21] *« On est d'une certaine façon les garants que ce type d'espace et de prestation n'est pas réservé à un petit club de gens qui se connaissent entre eux, et vraiment au service de la population, et qu'on sache se remettre périodiquement en question, c'est le prix à payer, se dire est-ce qu'on est vraiment au service des habitants ? ».*

[22] *« Les citoyen-planteurs, déjà c'était dans les visées de la municipalité, bien sûr, cette thématique-là, sur le site, mais pas autant cette thématique ralliement de la via Campesina, voyez ? ».*

associations and institutions of the Grottes, Cropettes, Vidollet and Grand-Pré hope that the right impulsions will be given so that this unique place [...] stays alive"[23] (Collectif Beaulieu, 2012, p.1).

Economically speaking, however, the *Collectif*'s main income comes from CSA projects buying its plants. It is thus not possible for the *Collectif* to relocate the whole of its activities to the neighbourhood, nor to completely change its discourse. It has subsequently not abandoned any of its previous activities or discourses but rather recast them. It still produces plants for CSA but also turns more and more to the neighbourhood. Yet the *Collectif* mentions that its project welcomes "all publics", so that everybody feels welcome, including people from outside the neighbourhood. In response to the imbalanced relationship where the *Collectif Beaulieu* found itself being criticized because it did not address the neighbourhood issues and the local public, it had to adapt, all the while not losing the basic motivation for its actions. The project was rendered more complex in terms of its sociospatial references, as its metropolitan spatial inscription was joined by a neighbourhood one.

In October 2013, the situation changed again, as the UCA's community garden was moved into available beds in the former horticultural centre and thereby joined the space occupied by the *Collectif Beaulieu*. The community garden, however, is not yet constituted as an association. Consequently, it should be the UCA that represents the community garden in the *Collectif*'s board. It is interesting to wonder whether this merging is a new way for the UCA to maintain power over this associative movement. However, up to May 2014, the UCA has not taken part in any of the board's activities.

Conclusion

This paper has sought to bring together two subfields of contemporary human geography that rarely communicate (with the notable exception of Smith and Kurtz, 2003): urban gardening and community studies on the one hand, and the corpus of scale frames and scalar politics on the other hand. By bridging these two fields this paper contributes to both of them:

1. First, through the case study presented, I have given an example of surprisingly complex spatial framings of urban gardening and agriculture projects. Indeed, although both of the projects analysed are situated in a central urban park in a densely urbanised region, each project refers to very different spaces as a scope for action: the UCA refers mostly to the neighbourhood space, whereas the *Collectif* is embedded in different spatialities, from the metropolitan region to the world. The first concluding point is thus that beyond issues of localisation or functional relations, (urban) gardening and agriculture projects are framed with reference to specific spaces that may be more precisely defined by project holders than simply "urban" space. Other spatial references such as the neighbourhood or the metropolitan region may appear more meaningful to some actors; such spatial references should not be ignored when we try to make sense of these projects and of urban agriculture more generally.
2. Secondly, through a detailed analysis of the micropolitics of two urban gardening and agriculture projects, this paper has sought to make a contribution to the corpus of the politics of scale. First, following Moore (2008) I argued that scale framing is a specific kind of spatial framing that works through the identification of bounded spatial units and their relational classification. The turn from space to scale is nothing but a reorganisation of the spatial frame according to a relative hierarchy. Drawing on this idea, I have then shown how this hierarchy of spatial units is performed by the UCA. The hierarchy performed here is relative and relational: the criterion used to position spatial units within the hierarchy is the degree to which they address the right public, defined *a priori* by the UCA as the neighbourhood inhabitants. Notions of locality and proximity appear prevalent. This scalar narrative is not without material consequences as the *Collectif* adapts by attempting to rescale both its narrative and its practice. Here the weaker actor in terms of network and monetary resources strategically downscales both its narrative and its practices in order to secure its existence. This contrasts with Smith and Kurtz's analysis of the politics of scale of community gardens in New York, where, they note, community gardeners draw in networks at metropolitan, regional and national scale, looking for support against Mayor Giuliani's real estate policy (Smith and Kurtz, 2003). In the case developed here, it is the logics of locality and proximity that are the most powerful, and urban cultivators adapt their discourses and practices by turning the neighbourhood into their spatial reference and the spatial reach of their actions, and by joining networks of associative actors in the neighbourhood.
3. Lastly, I have shown how power relationships can interfere not only between authorities and project holders, but also between different kinds of urban agriculture projects. Indeed, in the local actors' point of view, all sorts of urban agriculture are not worth the same. In a context where space is rare and valuable, different declinations of urban agriculture can become concurrent. Exploring which sorts of projects tend to be favoured by whom and why may shed light on how "adequate" urban agriculture is framed and how specific models take over and spread.

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[23] *« les habitants, les associations et les institutions des quartiers Grottes, Cropettes, Vidollet et Grand-Pré espèrent que les impulsions adéquates seront données afin que ce lieu unique [...] reste vivant ».*

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