Uprooting and Grounding: Memory and Sensory Practice of Migrant Gardeners through Urban Food Cultivation
(Original title: Uprooted and Grounded: Cultural Dimensions and Ambivalence in Urban Gardening and Wellbeing)

Dr Natalia Gerodetti & Sally Foster, Leeds Beckett University, UK
n.gerodetti@leedsbeckett.ac.uk, s.foster@leedsbeckett.ac.uk

Abstract:
There has been increasing interest (scholarly and otherwise) in how immersing oneself in outdoor environments has restorative effects and how green spaces and gardening in particular might contribute to people's wellbeing. Based on a sociological inquiry we want to go beyond the now established dimensions of wellbeing such as physical, mental and social wellbeing and explore a notion of cultural wellbeing. Health based research often considers food cultivation and gardening as salutogenic where links to health and wellbeing are made through various processes, from the experience of gardens or allotments as a physical, emotional and social environment, to the actual activity of gardening itself, and the consumption of its products. In this chapter we do not negate these but aim to explore notions of restoration and reconnection by considering questions of identity and memories from the past through gardening practices. In particular, we are examining how food cultivation practices connect those who have migrated with memories and sensory experiences from a different time and a different place which contributes to a notion of wellbeing.

We draw on interviews with gardeners from a variety of migrating backgrounds in the North of the UK, and the place that allotments, gardens and food production and consumption have in relation to their sense of self. Displacement incurs a separation from people, from land and from cultural practices. In this chapter we are interested how people use gardening practices beyond the food production aspects to explore how growing, being on the plot and sharing connects people's past and present through a notion that we call cultural wellbeing. We draw on the idea that cultural wellbeing is indicative of spaces and practices that enable and validate values, belief systems, habits (knowledge, systems of symbolic meaning) and memories connected to one's identity, sense of belonging and diasporic connections to other places. In doing so we explore narratives of first- and second-generation migrants, paying particular attention to ways in which the placemaking on the plot is woven into stories of migration, memories and cultural identity. We adopt a perspective that places well-being at the interstices of past and present, and where present ways of cultivating soil contributes links family practices, cultural memories and traditions. In that sense "growing foods from home" has deep meaning to participants' sense of self and identity and food practices (both growing and consuming) emerge as a key aspect of cultural wellbeing. This not only implies the need to broaden the concept of wellbeing but also the need to broaden the temporality of the notion of wellbeing as for migrant gardeners the past and the present are woven together through memories and contemporary practices.
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Chapter:
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Natalia Gerodetti & Sally Foster

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It just grounds you.

There has been increasing interest (scholarly and otherwise) in how immersing oneself in outdoor environments has restorative effects and how green spaces and gardening in particular might contribute to people's wellbeing. And with more than half of the world's population living in cities (World Bank, 2020), place making in urban environments and the role of green space is receiving increasing attention, not least for its potential as a social determinant of health and ideas about wellbeing. The dramatic restrictions experienced by many people with regards to their use of space because of COVID-19 have only increased such interest and add to an already growing framing of a variety of outdoor practices as a promotion tool for individual and public health (White and Jha, 2018; McGuire et al, 2022). As well as exploring people's experiences of parks and the countryside, there has been interest in the role of gardens, allotments and community gardens in relation to health and wellbeing and its therapeutic benefits (Bell et al, 2014; Soga et al. 2017; Bell et al, 2018).

Yet discourses in the public sphere that postulate that being outdoors contribute to one's wellbeing have become instructive and can be placed within discourses about wellbeing that justify and reproduce the neoliberal status quo whereby responsibility for health and welfare are placed on the shoulders of individuals. Not only do these narratives veil structural inequalities that limit one's capacity to thrive they also fail to take into account, and make sense, of the multifaceted and ambivalent experiences that people encounter in the everyday practices that constitute urban food cultivation. Thus this chapter is in the embodied, skilled and socially-embedded nature of contemporary food practices (as well as taking their materialities seriously) (Abramovic et al, 2019 ; Biglin, 2020) which also serve to provide a valuable antidote to current rhetoric and/or social policies that emphasise individual responsibility and consumer choice, conveniently ignoring the way those 'choices' are socially ordered, materially shaped and culturally normativised.

The sociological inquiry here deploys now established dimensions of wellbeing such as physical, mental and social wellbeing but is also critical of them. Health based research often postulates food cultivation and gardening as salutogenic where links to health and wellbeing are shown to occur through various processes, from the experience of gardens or allotments as a physical, emotional and social environment, to the actual activity of gardening itself, and the consumption of its products. Whilst the analysis does not negate these, what also transpires it that the very environments which are deemed to be restorative may also produce neutral or negative effects rendering the simple 'gardening is good for you' slogan more problematic. The emotions produced in the context of urban food cultivation are thus more complex and characterized by considerable ambivalence, rather than merely positive effects. This becomes particularly pertinent when there are suggestions that gardening

should be part of a socially prescribed form of wellbeing which leads to measurable levels of health and happiness (Atkinson, 2020) without considering the impact on existing places and forms of outdoor activities (McGuire et al., 2020).

The approach to wellbeing here is informed by seeking to explore what food cultivation means to gardeners with migration heritage and why growing certain foods might hold particular importance. As such we follow the challenges to reductive, quantifiable ideas of wellbeing which have emerged in the move away from individualist formations of wellbeing and we share with others (Gergen, 2009; McCormack and Salmenniemi, 2016; White, 2017; Atkinson, 2020) a scepticism to the dominant understanding of individual wellbeing which builds on a particular understanding of the self as an autonomous, intentional and mainly independent individual. Instead we want to foreground relational aspects of identity, belonging – and therefore ultimately wellbeing – which are capable of paying attention to the ways in which everybody is embedded in networks, cultures and traditions that have a past, a present and a future.

Deploying an ontology based on relationality, this concept offers a mode of analysis for how individuals are constituted by their social, material, spatial and spiritual relationships in their everyday practices. Although we draw on conventional dimensions of wellbeing that are used elsewhere such as physical and mental health aspects as well as social connectedness as they might be expressed in the idea of social wellbeing, we also deploy the notion of cultural wellbeing to denote the importance given by people to the ways in which cultivation contributes to family and cultural memories and traditions, and to participants' narratives of sensory aspects about food cultivation which contribute to the former. We thus want to mobilise a notion of cultural wellbeing which is indicative of spaces and practices that enable and validate values, belief systems, habits (knowledge, systems of symbolic meaning) and memories connected to one's identity, sense of belonging and diasporic connections to other places. It has been argued that food practices have a 'visceral' nature and are part of alimentary assemblages (Probyn, 2000) in which 'food links up with ideas, memories, sounds, visions, beliefs, past experiences, moods and worries' (Hayes-Conroy in Cook et al., 2011: 113). Food and memory are strongly connected (Sutton, 2001) and derives power from its synaesthetic properties, that is, its ability to evoke memory via sensory registers. These aspects have often been considered in terms of food consumption but less so through food cultivation which we aim to do here.

Drawing on 16 semi-structured interviews and a focus group carried out with gardeners with a migrant heritage in a northern UK region in two different years (pre-pandemic) the narratives reveal how the aspiration to live well is socio-culturally and individually mediated and how the experiences of urban food cultivation are joyous as well as disappointing[1]. By emphasising a continuum of emotions and ambivalence the chapter argues against that idea that food cultivation and gardening are automatically salutogenic as some of the SWB research appears to be emphasising. For this chapter we revisited our interview transcripts to ask some new and additional questions around cultural practices, memory and visceral

[1] Using auto sharing as a mode for secondary analysis of data previously generated (Heaton, 2019) this chapter draws on a project on migrant gardeners' identities and allotment practices which, in two successive rounds, expanded the research frame more explicitly to ask questions about benefits, motivations, health and wellbeing through gardening practices.

dimensions which are explored in more detail in the following through the themes of 'memories and tradition', 'relationality and sharing', and 'heritage and cultural practice'.

Memories and traditions

Although all gardening practices can be argued to be part of imagining and temporal connections, our migrant participants reveal that their specific practices importantly contribute to their individual and collective wellbeing by reaffirming connections to their places of origins and embodied and affective-sensory memories attached to those. Motivations to grow the particular array of vegetables link some migrants very strongly to diasporic communities of which they are part, as well as integrate them into local growing cultures and traditions. For all the participants, growing food, and processing it, was linked to familial or collective traditions:

> *It's important as a tradition and I keep carrying it on. A tradition. And that's what we used to do … In the West Indies we never, never short of food. We grow - we own. (Paul)*

> *It was wanting to grow things really that … we grow at home – we ate at home. Things we don't find in the supermarkets here … The main thing really is our type of vegetables we use back home. Our greens … [food habits] are centred around our greens. We have them with every meal daily [nyevhe, chomolia, nyemba]. (Philip)*

When respondents referred to memories of childhood and family practices, these were not always memories of crops and methods of cultivation but a general attitude to life and work and therefore a set of beliefs and values that has considerable cultural specificity:

> *Back home it's a case of self-sufficiency because if you don't you have nothing to eat. But here you find if you're not growing well you can go to the shops … So now, what motivates me is that desire to work, to get up and just do something. Because I grew up doing that. (Farai)*

Other respondents described how the allotment or garden landscape was designed and maintained to facilitate spatial and sensory memories, thereby establishing a sense of wellness and happiness:

> *Every single part [of the allotment] give you different pleasure. But I wouldn't say that each one has an equal amount of pleasure, every single one give you different satisfaction. But the herb area, the herb areas … that reminds me of the Greek countryside [gets very animated] and there is nothing growing, everything is yellow and then as you go further up, in the altitude, there you have the little things, like thyme or chamomile growing behind a stone and you touch it and the smell!! The scent they give you is fantastic! I go round and touch it and they go woof! Remind me of a different place. … The whole thing, the allotment is an experience of sight, colours, sense and taste because you taste … I don't know I cannot resist to take a leaf and chew it a little and see what it is like before I even cook it. (Dimitri)*

Dimitri's account about Greek herbs in the landscape indicates how the sensory experience

connects him to both place and memories of the past. In his narrative it is clear how much present happiness and wellbeing can be linked to a connection with the past. These sensory experiences are not confined to the garden and the cultivation of crops, but are also part of the cooking and eating of the produce:

> *I think it is important. Because it's just about memories. You know, that it does, you know, like especially if you're eating something that you produced yourself, and it just takes you back to your childhood. It's just sort of, a bit of sentimentality and it's quite nice really, yeah, it's just kind of - it's quite nice having memories and then you somehow recreate them through what you are eating. […] The smells from when you are kind of making jelly or whatever and it's all dripping through and it has a particular smell. And, so yeah, it just evokes nice memories really, yeah. (Ingrid)*

It is not surprising that so many commented on memories and traditions when talking about growing food and processing it. Gardens are containers of memory (Mazumdar & Mazumdar, 2012) as is food itself (Sutton, 2001) and this theme emerges strongly in studies of migrant gardeners and food production. However, gardeners also highlighted in sorrowful ways what could *not* be grown (usually due to different climates) thereby also indicating limitations on attempts to make affective connections with the past through growing the same foods.

Relationality and sharing

Memory also strongly influences present aspirations and hopes, and therefore relational practices within and outside the household and family. It has been suggested (Sen, 2016) that immigrant world-making is marked by the simultaneous remembering the past and looking back whilst adapting to and negotiating the present. Inter-generational connectedness and family history can thus be materially established through present day gardening practices:

> *My motivation to take a plot was …coming back from my family. My grandfather used to have a massive garden and I remember it and I just loved it, and his passion was in there. So it was a link with him, and then he passed away and then I was here. I had young children, I thought it would be a good idea to pass it on to them as well. (Mylene)*

Yet whilst in Mylene's case one of her two children became very immersed in the allotment and the sensory possibilities that it afforded for others the passing on of family and cultural traditions was more fraught:

> *[the children] didn't develop that much interest, or habit, and I cannot sort of ask them now and then to come when they're not interested. Whereas, you see in Zimbabwe the way I grew up […] growing crops, spring vegetables is a must for every family. […] my kids, you know, they spent much of their time.... they did not go through the same kind of work system that I have, working on the land so much, they consider working on the land something that makes them dirty! (Farai)*

Thus, in the same way as food traditions and memories can be set up and/or maintained through material gardening practices they are also at risk of being discontinued or rejected by a younger generation who sees them as looking back, feels no connection and/or has other

ways at their disposal of accessing food. With continuing urbanization, and food systems which do not value self-sufficiency, what might be lost here, however, are not only familial and cultural traditions but also knowledge and skills.

It has been argued that understandings of wellbeing differ depending on whether individualist or collectivist cultures are being considered (White and Jha, 2018). Thus, the notion of relationality might be more orientated towards family practices (perhaps involving friends and neighbours) than whether migrant gardeners have a strong sense of being part of a diasporic community (Gerodetti and Foster, 2016). Thus, some participants strongly related their gardening and sharing practices to social ties with the diasporic communities to which they felt they belong. This was evident in the narratives about what they did with their produce and what they grew and why.

> *In fact, most of what I'm growing right now here in the garden, they're all beyond my need because I've also got that small part in front of my house and that's in fact more than enough. So there is a lot of the Zimbabwean community around who we go to church with and who don't have an allotment or who don't even have a garden to grow. So I take them [Rugare[2]] to the church then make a few bundle where they can buy a bundle for a pound and then give that back to the church. (Farai)*

Ending up with surplus vegetables is a common feature for non-commercial growers but intentionally growing more had a particular resonance for those gardeners for whom the culturally significant vegetables were either not easily available or which were sold at high prices. "I give away more than half of what I grow. Honest - more than half" (Paul). There are gradations of motivations discernible with regards to whether people framed their growing as "enough and give away surplus" or whether they intentionally grew more to supply members beyond their household. Yet food cultivation also includes sharing practices beyond the produce itself and includes various practices of receiving and giving, such as seeds, plants and advice, along with labour, not only on the site itself, but also off-site. Pottinger (2018:. 108) calls this 'generous exchange', which she describes as 'a practice and discourse that draws together and renders legible a range of interwoven practical concerns, enthusiasms, and material and interpersonal relationships'.

> *The more you pick, the more they grow … so that is why we give all this to friends ... and everyone's so happy ...* (Pamina)
>
> *… and it's very generous, it's very kind of giving, like a giving community.* (Minh)
>
> *You get advice, you give advice – it's like that all the time. (Dmitri)*
>
> *I find growing vegetables - besides from having enough for myself - I'm also giving a hand. Additionally, though I didn't expect to find that when I first started growing: I'm doing something to delight our community, the church. It probably gives me extra, extra motivation! (Farai)*

[2] *Rugare* is translated as *"comfortable living"* due to its ability to provide year round greens, which is itself an indicator of wellbeing.

Thus, food cultivation enables and fosters social connectedness beyond the plot but also, as various research on social wellbeing has shown, on allotment sites themselves. Nevertheless, the social encounters on semi-public spaces of allotments are not by necessity convivial and some gardeners have reported harassment from people off-site as well as difficult dynamics or inter-personal relationships on-site. Security, and vandalism are issues that some of our participants had to grapple with and Maulik commented on the theft of his plums for the second time, and thought he might invest in a camera "*that adjust to day and night"* to combat the problem. A lesser problem, although an issue nonetheless for someone wanting to work their plot, can be the (time) distractions resulting from the social encounters on the way to the plot:

> *You open the gate and then there's usually someone there that starts talking and then you move a little bit on and then there's somebody else and by the time I get to my allotment there's two hours gone! (Dmitri)*

Dmitri's attempt to implement his gardening philosophy, which is to spend half an hour each day working on the plot, is thwarted here in his narration of the social distractions. Whilst it could be argued that this contributes to his social wellbeing through the conviviality experienced, his narration expresses a degree of frustration, and thus ambivalence, that the allotment can bestow. As semi-public spaces, allotments are also sites where people with different views and ways of doing things come together and this can create strain through the politics of the site and the need for constant mediation and negotiation:

> *We seem to have calmed the situation anyway. With me being on the committee … it takes a bit of time to sort out. (Jan)*

Furthermore, allotment spaces, depending on the nature of their governance and place in the community, might not always be welcoming to those that are read as different. In fact, one site, when contacted about displaying the information sheet to recruit migrant gardeners, declared decidedly that 'we don't have any of these here!' This highlights the potential access barriers faced by ethnic minorities and especially those who are read as different. Whilst none or our participants reported having been refugees or asylum seekers Biglin (2021) reports on the exclusionary practices encountered by this particular group of migrants. Rishbeth et al's (2019: 132) study of how asylum seekers and refugees experience urban greenspace also concludes that 'tensions between different user groups come to the fore as the use and appropriation of parks and greenspace by some can appear to exclude others, often reflecting embedded hierarchies informed by race, class and gender'. Thus, experiences of sharing of space, seeds, produce, and/or time can be governed by pre-existing social divisions and produce a whole range of emotions and – possibly – an ambivalent sense of wellbeing in response.

Heritage and cultural practices

Significantly, participants talked about the importance of sharing "foods from home"; a practice which maintains connectedness and belonging (to places, nations or communities that people identify with), and thus contributes to both social and cultural wellbeing. Whilst

sharing is widespread as outlined above, Abtin makes explicit reference to the significance of food in his cultural heritage here:

> *Food is one of the things you can be connected with the peoples … when you offer your food to somebody that means you respect her or him. And this is part of our culture.*

For people with a cultural heritage beyond the UK places of growing and their abilities to connect to visceral aspects are significant to a sense of self. Accessing knowledge and links to the past through the idea of memory is, of course, as much a practice as the forgetting of unpleasant links and memories of the past. In that sense, the memories evoked here by our diverse migrant gardeners are necessarily selective and cultivated (sic!).

> *The more I talk to you, the more I realise how it connects me with France. It's terrible I didn't realise that before … And it's like a platform that will lead me to memories, family, things I'm planning ahead, and a link with England as well ... Countryside, the soil, touching it, having a contact with the soil is massively important to us. It just grounds you initially …* (Mylene)

> *Thai friends come, they come down, they say 'Ah, I feel like at home!' They see stuff from your hometown, and you feel like you've been home*. (Pamina)

Gardening sites are therefore a place to both disconnect (from the tropes of everyday life) and connect (with memory and community):

> *It's a peaceful place. It's a place where you just disconnect from everything, and for me it's a – that's why I am doing it, because it's a relation with my country. There is something there that makes me doing it …* (Mylene)

> *When I grew up - about five, six years old - I always with the farm, with the pets, chickens, the trees….So that make me feel very nice. That's why, everywhere I'm going, I try to grow.[…] I am a person, I can't stay at home; make me a little bit upset or depressed. But you go outside for an hour, you go to the park, watching, doing something make you happy. […] The weather is bad, the problem is with the weather. What a point, with this weather what can you do? (Abtin)*

Such cultural and familial connections, and memories that growing food affords, not only feed into social wellbeing but also indicate the importance of cultural identity for wellbeing. Pearsall *et al* (2017: 491) comment that 'cultural heritage is important to immigrant gardeners because they can express their cultural identity, their relationship to the environment, and their preferences through gardening practices'. Mazumdar and Mazumdar (2014: 258) further suggest that gardens 'enable immigrants to engage with, personalize, and experience their new environment in deeply meaningful ways'.

The above quote also hints at a rehabilitative or restorative effect of gardening which might equally be interpreted through the lens of emotional and mental wellbeing. Yet even when participants do not make explicit references to their ethnicity, community or heritage their experiences of every practices remain shaped by their particular subjectivities, through work

patterns that are highly characterise by precarious and flexible work such as in the case of Philip below:

> *Like I work a shift pattern myself. I start at 7am and finish at 3pm and when I come back home, if it's a good day, I come out here and you find really working here – it helps me relax. It does, it does. The stress and all that. Yeah, work is stressful, but you find it really helps remove stress. (Philip)*

> *It's the pleasure of doing it, doing something different from what you work for ... For me it's enjoyment, relaxing, doing something different to what you're doing all day, or working day. And even now that we're retired, we're doing something different to what we're doing at home, see different people. (Dmitri)*

> *You're away from the wife and kids or not, but all the stresses, yeah. You're away from it, and you just contemplate. (Maulik)*

The idea of gardens and plots as places to relieve stress and achieve balance in life was a common theme. Plot holders in particular emphasised the opportunity to create a space of difference, in contrast to everyday life and its demands and exigencies – a place where work-life balance can be pursued and which provides a 'contrasting sense of duty' (Jensen and Sørensen, 2020: 1).

Being on the plot is, however, not merely about am embodied practice in the present and the sensory connection to past and memory have already been mentioned. It is worth noting here that whilst sometimes participants' narratives were inflected with a sense of nostalgia they did not talk about either negative memories, such as hardships in the past, reasons for migration, journeys, loss or other emotionally difficult aspects. For the most part cultivating practices allowed positive connections to the past (though arguably, for Mylene, being a participant for the original research was in itself memory work rendering conscious what might have been an unconscious connection with her homeland).

> *It make you feel really happy to be honest with you. It strange, people think strange when you see something that come from your own country, even go walk in garden centre, see something "oh we got that at home". Just make you feel more bright, just happy you know. Feel like home I think. (Pamina)*

Here, the sense of joy from memories evoked is balanced against the perception of how this is received by others in the present place. Sen (2016) calls this the Janus-faced world of immigrants who are forced to navigate tensions between past and present, near and far, local and global and who are simultaneously looking back while adapting to the present. Rather than invoking a strong oppositional framing, Blunt's (2003) pluri-temporal way of conceptualising the orientation towards past as well as towards the present and future in terms of "productive nostalgia" is an invocation of memories as beyond mere loss, mourning and a foreclosed possibility of return. Importantly, Blunt conceives of productive nostalgia as embodied and enacted in practice rather than merely in narration or imagination; an idea that Biglin (2020) also found her study on refugee gardeners who represented their nostalgia

for countries of origin in embodied ways, through the physical acts of gardening or the invocation of smalls.

One of the principal downfalls for cultivating memories and cultural practices is the British weather. Plants failing or falling short of expectations is most often accredited with the different climatic conditions encountered in the UK[3]:

> *A few years ago my mum brought me back some aubergine seeds when she was out there. She goes "oh yeah, I was told it's a really good variety" and that kind of thing, so I thought okay I'll try them. And they just didn't survive here because they just, they're not made for this weather. So it was a nice idea of his to say well let's try and grow them kind of thing, but… so it's a completely different I guess growing method and system here with the winters. (Jaswinder)*
>
> *I don't know whether it's the different climate or .. we are not good enough. (Wang)*

The continuation of cultural practices in a different climate as a form of connecting, belonging and/or memory work is thus fraught with risks in the narratives of participants. Thus, the emotional and embodied investment in both space and vegetables grown can be challenged by different growing conditions as well as loss and such damage done to plot and harvests (by animals, pests or humans) creating a need for considerable resilience in cultural traditions invested cultivation practices.

Whilst it has been established how foodways are key forms in which (migrant) families do memory-work, there is often a gendered nature underpinning the processing and consumption practices in the home (Marte, 2012). The ways in which the embodied practices of food cultivation are gendered outside the home – on the plot or in front and back gardens – is an aspect this chapter was unable to explore in more detail but would deserve further investigation.

Conclusion

The concept of wellbeing has become a contested one, both within and between disciplines and yet it remains central to debates about health as seen in the recent Geneva Charter for Wellbeing, which focuses on 'wellbeing societies' (WHO, 2021). Approaches driven by measuring Subjective Wellbeing (SWB) offer certain insights such as hedonic aspects of wellbeing but they fall short of eudaemonic concerns with meaning, happiness, belonging, fulfilment or flourishing (White and Jha, 2018). In explorations of the relationship between gardening, health and wellbeing, the restorative effects of green spaces and therapeutic gardening have received a lot of attention due to the 'spectrum of benefits aside from food production that allotment gardening can provide: peace, health, social interaction, nature connectedness, commensality, recycling and a feeling of autonomy, pride and ownership of one's allotment plot' (Dobson *et al.*, 2020: 10). However, the ambivalence and complexity of

[3] However, the Thai participants' ability to grow almost everything they put their hands on was instructive to one of the interviewers, herself a migrant to the UK, whose own pre-conceptions about climate differences being the sole culprit of lack of success was put into perspective by the Thai couple.

emotions which might compromise objective or subjective senses of wellbeing are rarely considered.

Recognising this ambivalence and nuanced complexity, this chapter explores how migrant urban food cultivators might narrate their gardening in terms of cultural practices and how nostalgia and memories are emplaced and embodied through food growing as well as food sharing. Like others (Li et al, 2010; Pearsall et al., 2017) we found that maintaining cultural heritage can be a primary motivation for foreign-born gardeners, contributing to their sense of self and connection to others. Rodriguez *et al*.'s (2022) term this 'cultural continuation' yet the invocation of memory through gardening and food cultivation as a continuation of past life has resonance for anyone with a past, as research with older adults has shown (Wang and Glicksman, 2013).

Concepts of nostalgia and the idea of 'cultural continuation' come together here through the visceral and multisensory aspects of embodied and emplaced food cultivation practices. Wellbeing – or a healthy sense of self and self-continuity – is thus deeply intertwined with a continuation of, and/or sometimes invocation of memories around, familial and cultural food cultivation practices on the plot; an idea that deserves its own emphasised conception in the plethora of dimensions of wellbeing, namely cultural wellbeing. Gardening, as a verb, is a great reminder that as a practice it continuously needs to be enacted and it is the continuous and embodied efforts inherent, and the new connections to people and space, which help build 'ontological security' (Mossabir *et al*., 2021: 8). In deploying the idea of cultural wellbeing which is indicative of spaces and practices that enable and validate values, belief systems, habits (knowledge, systems of symbolic meaning) and memories connected to one's identity, sense of belonging and diasporic connections to other places it is worth remembering that any idea of wellbeing is contingent and culturally specific.

In suggesting that food practices (both growing, sharing and consuming) emerge as a key aspect of cultural wellbeing the implication is to further question the concept of wellbeing to include cultural dimensions but also a reminder to question available access to cultivation spaces for migrant families. Any invocation of the salutogenic 'gardening is good for you slogan' or emerging social prescribing needs to recognise the relational aspects of outdoor embodied practices and the structural inequalities pattern that persist.

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