

A Study of Community Gardens as Catalysts for Positive Social Change

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Abstract

The community gardening movement has gained momentum in the past decade in response to an increasing interest in resisting global trends in food production as well as to the limitations of personal choice that result from the industrialization and globalization of agriculture. The multifarious nature of community gardens reflects the equally diverse motivations that inspire individuals to participate in the gardens. Some gardens have the potential to create social connections that enable social change beyond the bounds of the garden. This paper examines how community gardens may act as catalysts for positive social change by conducting an informal case study of a community garden in Hyde Park and by exploring the literature that concerns the social, political, and ecological dimensions of community gardens. The principal conclusion is that the garden in Hyde Park successfully satisfies community needs while minimally catalyzing social change as defined for the purposes of this paper. The particular circumstances of a community have been determined to be highly influential in creating the conditions necessary to support such social change.

1) Introduction

Over the past hundred years America has drastically changed from an agrarian nation where almost a quarter of the population participated in some kind of food production to a nation where less than 2% of the population farms. Even fifty years ago, 1.2 billion acres were devoted to farmland. Today, only 925 million acres remain farmland (Nabhan 70). As Abiola Adeyemi explains, there are a number of reasons for this loss of farmland:

“Unfortunately, in modern times, arable land acreage is decreasing due to soil and environmental degradation, surges in industrial development, and the need to accommodate increasing urban populations. Urban sprawl causes annual cropland losses equivalent to an area one kilometer wide stretching from New York to San Francisco. These trends contribute greatly to concerns about natural resources and food security.”

Most people are not involved in growing their own food and are not connected to any sort of local food production. The implications for this disconnect are huge—creating entirely different relationships between people and food, agriculture, land, nature, and place. A large percentage of the population inhabits cities and is even further removed from an agrarian landscape. However, a portion of the population participates in urban agriculture projects that allow them to garden in the city. The community garden is one model for a garden that combines the urban agriculture experience with an integral social element that emphasizes interactions among participants. There is no unified credo or singular objective of community gardens, each having its own purpose and serving the particular needs of its unique community (Lawson).

I have examined a community garden in Hyde Park, Chicago, to explore that garden’s potential to effect positive social change. I used the concept of the creation of social capital to constitute my definition of positive social change, and found that while

many gardens throughout the country have created social capital, this is not one of the central benefits of the garden I studied.

I will first provide a short history of community gardening and subsequently describe various models and styles of operation as a way of understanding what is meant by “community garden.” I will then explain my methodology relative to the garden I studied, and go on to compare my findings with other case studies. My conclusions are based upon the that interviews I conducted and the literature that I reviewed concerning other community gardens.

2) The History of Community Gardening

Broadly speaking, a community garden is a collectively used plot of land where people participate in the activity of gardening, but the term “community garden” emerged with a more specific definition in the 1970’s, when the community gardening movement first developed. “Community gardens” referred to gardens created by grassroots initiatives as opposed to the public gardens of the 1890’s and 1950’s, which were largely the result of federal and local government funding (Hassell 91). These urban garden programs were intended to improve the “soul and body,” provide moral uplift, encourage self-reliance and hard work, enhance the food supply with homegrown and fresh produce, beautify neighborhoods, and help dispel social tensions. During the 1890’s in cities such as Detroit, New York, and Philadelphia, city gardening projects were specifically created to address unemployment, by giving people both land and the possibilities for work in vacant lots (Lawson 1). Before the advent of food stamps, gardens were seen as a viable

way to support the hungry poor. As a result of these subsistence garden programs, in 1934, around 23 million households generated \$36 million worth of produce (Lawson 2).

During World War II, the American government encouraged participation in “Victory Gardens,” neighborhood and backyard gardens, as a way to support the war effort. A poem on a promotional poster reads, “Vegetables for Victory, Give vitamins for health—Add riches to the nation—Augment our country’s wealth. Now go to work good neighbors, With busy rakes and hoes, So that garden diligence, Will help defeat our foes. The vegetables have registered—Each root and bulb and leaf—All stand awaiting your command—Their General-in-Chief (Boekelheide).” As a result of these gardens, Americans produced 40% of the food they consumed. The gardens were an opportunity for Americans to express their patriotism while ameliorating their own health, connecting with their neighbors, and learning valuable skills. Unfortunately, many of these gardens were abandoned once Americans were able to rely upon the efficiency of industrialized agriculture to support their consumption needs.

Community gardens didn’t disappear completely, but it wasn’t until the 1970’s that there was a real revival of interest in gardening. The inspiration for many of these new gardens was less nationalistic and instead focused more on local community empowerment. The gardens emerged as an expression of the new environmental ethic and self-sufficiency during an energy crisis, as a result of the desire to create more social justice, in reaction to rising food prices and urban decay, and as part of open-space initiatives to regain public ownership of the “commons.” One of the founders of the Boston Urban Gardeners, Charlotte Kahn, says of her experiences with urban community gardens in the 1970’s, “For me, the gardens were a symbol of the opposite of what was

going on—the possibility for a better city and a real centered community, an expression of people getting along together. In opposition to what was going on in Boston at the time, as in racial violence and divisions among people, and [a] top-down approach to urban renewal, the garden was an expression of what is best in people” (Lawson 213).

Community gardens emerged in unlikely places all over the United States and reflected the diversity of participation, interest in gardening, and community involvement. Organizations in major cities sprouted up to provide support in the way of volunteer and staff assistance, land acquisition, garden construction, educational programs and other activities that demanded aid from the outside. These organizations, such as the New York City Green Guerillas, Seattle P-Patch, Boston Urban Gardeners, and Philadelphia Green, were all very self-aware and made great efforts to be unobtrusive to the communities they attempted to aid, focusing on creating local control and maintenance (Lawson 205).

A general trend in community gardens of the 1970’s that has persisted today is the focus on community empowerment. While the federal support (and the paternalism that was associated with it) during the era of Victory gardens was not completely rejected, people found the social elements of community gardening to be of equal value to the aspect of food production, and thus were more inclined to create grassroots supported gardens. In many gardens, social networks that connect local leaders to government representatives or national organizations are necessary to address issues of land ownership, the source of funding, and the resources needed to create and maintain a well-functioning garden.

“The community garden movement in the United States in the last three decades of the twentieth century was (and continues to be) subject to four interlocking sets of dynamics: the politics of space in the context of urbanization and land scarcity; the transformation of the relationship between processes of food production and food supply in urban environments; conflicting agendas framed around aesthetics and urban beautification, on the one hand, and functionality and urban agriculture, on the other; and the clashes between administrative policies and ideologies and grassroots initiatives (Hassell, 91).”

While garden participation today is not nearly as great as it was during the war, the community garden movement has continued to grow since the 1970’s. Even by 1994 there were more than 80 American cities with community gardening programs, a statistic that excludes the large number of community gardens without any national or local government support or recognition (Hassell). “The American National Gardeners Association estimates that some 35 million people are growing their own food in backyard gardens and allotments in the United States. Their contribution to the informal economy is estimated to be about \$12 to \$14 billion per year” (Pretty and Barlett 306).

While community gardening is ostensibly on the rise, the struggle to keep gardens alive remains significant. Many grassroots inspired community gardens have come into existence using land that has been abandoned. Usually this land is owned by the city, state, or even federal government, and is vacant only because its value isn’t great enough to put money into its development. Unfortunately, the process of gardening restores vacant lots in a way that makes them appealing for development. The benefits that accompany community gardens, which potentially include reduced crime rates and domestic conflicts (Kuo and Sullivan), contribute to heightened property values, and thus enable developers to take advantage of such communities by destroying the source of the improvements and exploiting the benefits (Armstrong).

3) What is a Community Garden?

The American Community Gardening Association defines community gardening thus: “Our vision is that community gardening is a resource used to build community, foster social and environmental justice, eliminate hunger, empower communities, break down racial and ethnic barriers, provide adequate health and nutrition, reduce crime, improve housing, promote and enhance education, and otherwise create sustainable communities“(Lawson 239). This definition helps to illustrate that the ever-increasing number of community gardens in the United States do not form a collective entity with a single agenda. Each is managed and created in a way that reflects its particular environmental and social context. While most gardens seem to share similar ends—the production of plants for human use—how the garden operates and the impact of the garden on the community may be radically different. A community may create a garden to preserve native species or for purposes of neighborhood beautification with no intention to create a local food source. Some communities may be very active politically and use the community garden as a meeting ground for community networking and organizing.

The term “community garden” can be applied to a variety of gardens, though some people would define a community garden more specifically as a communal vegetable plot. This paper is largely concerned with community gardens that are created for and by the community with an integral social aspect, though it still remains important to consider the large number of community gardens that operate in very different ways and yet serve similar purposes (Lawson).

For every potential benefit that might result from a community garden, there exists a garden that emphasizes that particular asset. A new development in greening research has clearly identified the benefits to be gained by living near or working in green environments, including community gardens. According to this research by Kuo and Sullivan, green environments have been associated with positive effects on social interactions, domestic conflicts, and crime rate in urban neighborhoods. While there are clear societal benefits, “Most documented benefits of living, working, or playing in a green environment accrue to individuals” (Westphal 138). With the intention of profiting from these benefits, there are therapeutic gardens for the elderly and ill that serve no other purpose than to provide a healing, beneficial environment.

Educational gardens have existed since the popularity of school gardens in the 1890s and 1920s. The primary purpose of these gardens used to be to provide job security—the creation of useful skills—in the way of job training or instilling a work ethic that could be applied to other jobs (Lawson 56). In addition, the gardens were created out of a reaction to what were considered unhealthy urban conditions. Today, there is more of an emphasis on empowering students with the process of growing and on imparting social messages about food production and nutrition. School gardens are increasingly popular today—California has a “Garden in Every School” program that is struggling to keep up with the interest in gardening as an educational tool (Kirschbaum 2). Alice Waters, an organic gardener and owner of the popular San Francisco restaurant Chez Panisse inspired the creation of “The Edible Schoolyard,” a garden that is integrated into the school’s curriculum and lunch program. “It involves the students in all aspects of farming the garden—along with preparing, serving and eating the food—as a means of

awakening their senses and encouraging awareness and appreciation of the transformative values of nourishment, community and stewardship of the land” (Lawson 282).

There are also gardens that exist to address larger social issues such as food security. For some people, who do not have access to affordable produce, gardening provides the only alternative. Subsistence community gardens may not be as popular today as in the 1930’s, but many people are still motivated to garden in order to supplement their diet with produce and to save money. For these individuals, the opportunity to garden may be the main reason they participate in the garden. The garden simply provides them the physical space, the lack of which otherwise inhibits them from growing their own food, and thus the social/community element may be relatively inconsequential. The net savings from food produced in a garden can be quite substantial. In the 1970’s, the Department of Agriculture did a number of studies that estimated a family could save between \$200 and \$300 a year by planting their own vegetable garden (Lawson 215). Today, “The national average for savings is \$250 per 600 square feet of garden” (Naimark 6).

For other participants, the main motivation to garden may be political in nature—resistance to industrialized agriculture or active participation in the struggle for food security. “In combination with farmer’s markets, cooperative groceries, and local food processing centers, the community garden adds resiliency and options to neighborhoods, particularly inner-city neighborhoods that have been deserted by the large supermarkets and, as a result, have fewer resources for fresh food and pay higher prices” (Lawson 270). “Pantry gardens” are a specific type of garden that addresses the issue of food security by functioning in order to distribute fresh produce to the clients of soup kitchens and

pantries. “The USDA estimated in 1993 that urban gardeners involved in its programs grew \$16 million worth of fresh food. One study of gardens in Newark, for example, found that an average 720-square-foot plot earned \$500 from a \$25 investment” (Lawson 270).

Of particular interest to this study are the gardens that serve only to foster a greater sense of “community” and create beneficial “community development.” “Starting in the early 1970s, community gardeners and activists in New York City have appropriated the concept of empowerment and allied it with themes of political, economic, social, and cultural resistance; notions of an endangered environment at local, national, and global levels; and alternative visions of community, society, and urban life. The struggle on behalf of community gardens straddles grassroots community activism, urban agriculture, environmental activism, and a more individualized search for meaning, spirituality, and community” (Hassell 91). Whether or not community gardens succeed in any of these endeavors may depend upon what is meant by “community” and “empowerment.”

Determining who consists of the “community” served by the community garden is a challenging endeavor, but is crucial to understand the social dynamics within the garden. The conception of “community” isn’t informed by standard social or uniform geographical conditions. As Lynne Westphal says, “Colloquially, ‘community’ often means something warm, fuzzy, and a little nostalgic” (138). I will examine a more geographically based notion of community where social networks are created that serve to benefit those people in a given area. Community gardens may create their own sense of community that is not contiguous with the larger community within a neighborhood.

Some may argue that there is no such thing as a community garden that serves the entire community, but rather that the term “community garden” defines the model of operation—where anyone within a community may obtain a plot within the garden to grow food. The notion of “community” within the garden may be defined as the group of people that come together because of their shared interest in gardening. The definition that may be most interesting to explore is one in which “community” relates to a connected group of people within a particular geographical location (a neighborhood perhaps) that support one another and interact sufficiently enough to extend their social networks beyond the garden itself. Examining the social-political implications of the “community” reveals the ways in which community members organize themselves politically, make decisions within the community, and appeal to the representatives of the community to contribute to decision-making outside of their community (Malakoff).

4) Defining and Understanding Positive Social Change

“Positive social change” in the context of urban community gardening can mean anything from active resistance to industrial agriculture with the production of local foods to an altered perception of land-use and agriculture. In this paper I chose to define positive social change as the creation of social capital. Social capital “refers to features of social organization, such as networks, norms, and trust, that facilitate coordination and cooperation for mutual benefit. Social capital enhances the benefits of investment in physical and human capital” (Putman). To even further specify “positive social change” in the context of community gardening, I would apply Hancock’s term, “community capital:”

“A healthy community is one that has high levels of social, ecological, human and economic ‘capital,’ the combination of which may be thought of as ‘community capital.’ The challenge for communities in the 21st century will be to increase all four forms of capital simultaneously. This means working with suitable partners in the private sector, making human development the central purpose of governance, and more closely integrating social, environmental and economic policy. Community gardens, sustainable transportation systems and energy conservation programmes in community housing projects are some of the ways in which we can build community capital” (Hancock 275).

For a garden to create social or community capital, it must facilitate relationships between people. While the benefits that individuals gain from gardening are important, they are relatively negligible in contributing to real social capital. “To be successful, community development must not only address the current conditions but also commit to dispelling larger economic and social forces that inhibit a community’s self-actualization” (Lawson 294). The positive social change that could be created by a garden is recognizable in community meetings, or in community leadership, or in community activism, or in the political connections a community gains. Without some measureable positive outcome, it would be difficult to determine whether or not a community had created social capital (Lawson).

5) Examples of community gardens that have created social capital

The resources that a garden produces are the most measurable sources of social capital. One of the five core tenets of the American Community Gardening Association handbook is as follows: “In order for a garden to be sustainable as a true community resource, it must grow from local conditions and reflect the strengths, needs and desires of the local community (Lawson 244).” In order for any social or community capital to be produced a community garden must nurture community investment and local

leadership (Lawson 244). “Through the food and flowers they grow, the people they involve, and the physical environment they create, urban gardens are community resources at multiple levels. Urban garden projects are uniquely capable of providing a food source, a hobby, a place to socialize, and a place to express urban ecology all in one” (Lawson 301). Garden projects have the potential to inspire community activism when connections are created between community members, local and national organizations, and/or federal agencies (Lawson 302).

In a study of 63 community gardens in upstate New York, garden coordinators reported that 33% of the gardens supported additional community organizing. Community organizing—such as additional beautification, tree planting and crime watch efforts—was only made possible by the social connections and networks forged within the garden (Armstrong). Community gardens have proven their ability to instigate positive social change in the form of the creation of social capital, but it is more difficult to determine the conditions that make such change possible. The following are some examples of gardens that have succeeded in creating positive social change.

An organization that began as a coalition of gardeners, the San Francisco League of Urban Gardeners, has extended itself beyond the realm of community gardening to address youth unemployment issues. While this doesn’t represent positive change inspired by a single garden, it demonstrates the potential for gardens to address social issues. In this instance, the garden provides a space for employment and job training for local residents (Boekelheide).

In many cases, gardens provide the community with economic opportunities that would not otherwise be available. For example, at a community garden in the South

Bronx called “The Farm,” participants also run an indigenous firewood business. When hauling companies and tree services started dumping their loads illegally at the Farm, gardeners saw the opportunity for income generation by chopping up the pieces of wood and selling them in the city. Without the social organization that was created by the Farm, the firewood business would never have been established. The Farm has moved beyond the garden and used its green spaces to host a number of other programs—a sleep away camp for kids, a tenants program, a summer youth employment program, and a college preparation program. Community organizer Lipson, says, “To be honest, the gardening is almost a relic at this point. We still run a program in the summer, but we’ve moved on to so many other things” (Riddell).

For many migrants or people who have been displaced, community gardens provide the roots necessary to establish a sense of place in a new and sometimes hostile environment (Christie). A study that compared immigrant and nonimmigrant gardeners in San Jose, CA found that “immigrant gardeners with horticultural experience or fewer years in the United States were able to acculturate more easily and connect to their homeland through gardening” (Stuart 64).

In the deteriorating part of South Central Los Angeles, the Urban Garden Program of the Los Angeles Regional Food Bank spearheaded a garden that was intended to heal the community after the 1992 civil disturbances. Low-income families now have the opportunity to grow “culturally appropriate” food and subsidize their food expenses. This garden has provided the community with a real source of food security that allows its participants, mostly immigrants from South and Central America, to have access to

fresh produce. This represents a complete transformation of the community (Lawson 272).

Another garden in California, the Berkeley Youth Alternatives Community Garden Patch, provides a source of employment, enjoyment, and education for at-risk kids and their families. The community-designed garden supports community activities and a youth-market garden that not only provides employment, but also leadership opportunities, where youths take on the responsibilities of the market garden and the coordination of the farmer's market. Local schools use the garden for after-school and summer programs so that the kids can grow the food that will later become their snack and also learn about nutrition. The garden acts as a resource for all community members—for one year, developmentally disabled youth maintained a couple of plots that were set aside for them (Lawson 275).

The Pico Union garden in Los Angeles was created for a mothers' club attached to the local school. Common Ground, a program created by the United States Department of Agriculture's Cooperative Extension, helped secure the land (almost an entire city lot) for the garden, but it was about twenty mothers who picked up all of the rubble, garbage, and removed abandoned cars in order to create the space for their garden. Drug deals were a problem in the neighborhood, and even went down on a corner of the garden. The participants of the garden put pressure on the police to arrest the dealers, thus improving the neighborhood for all. The garden also managed to aid homeless Mexican youths who otherwise would have been overlooked if they had not lived near the garden. Participants of the garden hired the youths to build benches and work in the garden, and eventually helped them to find jobs and found them bicycles to

help them get around. It might be easy to say that this was simply the work of a few philanthropic people, but it was the garden that provided the social network for these individuals and catalyzed a collective effort to take care of their needs. The caretakers of this garden are very self-aware of their ability to effect change and takes a responsibility to reflect the social structures that make it so successful, “To develop fresh leadership, the Pico Union garden appoints a different volunteer to be in charge each month” (Riddell).

6) The 61st and Dorchester Community Garden

As its name indicates, the community garden that I examined is geographically situated at 61st and Dorchester. In this position it sits between the Woodlawn and Hyde Park neighborhoods of the South Side of Chicago. The idea for this community garden arose in the 1970’s when the Resource Center, a citywide recycling organization, first established the garden on the land upon which an extension of the elementary school now sits. In the 1990’s, the Resource Center lost the land to this development when the city took the property by eminent domain. The community garden was then moved across the street to its current location on University-owned land and has continued to expand until this year. While there is no current threat of development, the University has made no formal agreement with the participants of the garden to protect the land from being used for other purposes. The University did agree informally to give warning to the gardeners if such development were to occur and to refrain from interrupting a growing season. The original garden was less of a community garden in the sense that the participation consisted of a smaller group of people who were already well socially connected. The

garden has changed leadership multiple times since the 1970's but in its new location has been consistently under the lenient management of Jack Spicer, a community activist of sorts who is also a landscape designer by profession.

The garden occupies about half an acre of land, which is divided up into around 150 plots used by 100 or more families. Each plot is ten square feet and costs \$40 to use per season—a fee that covers the costs of the mulch, water, and compost. This is an allotment style garden, a popular way of organizing community gardens in most cities, but only one of three gardens like it in Chicago (Viertel). The few rules of the garden include a policy of no dogs and no pesticides in order to maintain an entirely organic garden. There are also some general expectations of participants such as cleaning up their plot at the end of the season and preventing tall plants or trellises from shading other plots--general mindfulness in how one's actions within the garden will affect others. However, there is no formal enforcement of rules, and any expectations act more as unspoken guidelines for those gardeners who are even aware that they exist.

Jack Spicer maintains a very lateral and passive style of management. He describes the garden as self-regulatory and requiring little input on his part, but contributes enormously by providing gardeners with mulch and woodchips for the pathways and compost for their gardens. He is a self-proclaimed “farmer” as opposed to “gardener;” as he puts it, farming is motivated by production beyond one's own needs, while gardening is an activity of recreation for oneself. In the margins of the garden, Jack grows enormous amounts of basil that he shares with others. Once a year, he opens his home to his fellow gardeners and makes pesto with the surplus basil and garlic from the garden. There are many informal gatherings throughout the season, but only one

meeting at the beginning of the growing season in order to discuss the distribution of plots. The accounting is relatively informal as well—consisting of a “silly” bank account that is kept near zero. If there is ever any extra money, he finds some way to put it to use in the garden.

7) The Interviews

I choose to examine the garden on 61st and Dorchester because of its allotment style organization as well as its close proximity to the University, which would facilitate the coordination of participant interviews. It was my desire to be close enough to the garden to insert myself informally and meet as many people as I could without being directly involved. However, the academic school year does not coincide with the growing season and thus I was unfortunately precluded from interacting with people while they were actively using the garden. I had an initial informal meeting with Jack Spicer as my first introduction to the garden, and a subsequent interview in which I gained a list of participants to contact. All of the interviews I conducted concerning the 61st and Dorchester garden, sixteen in total, included people from this list and those that were connected to them. Without any experience with the interview process, my attempts at consistency included a set list of questions from which I worked, but I make no claims at collecting quantitative data of any sort. I recognize that any conclusions that I make are at best anecdotal, limited by the lack of an impartial interview selection as well as a highly limited proportion of total participants.

While the questions asked during the interviews remained relatively unchanged (see Appendix 1 for my list of questions), I was initially most interested in relationships

between people and food, people and the land or a sense of place, and how the garden contributed to or changed those relationships. My interest then evolved to issues more centered around notions of community within the garden and the potential for gardens to effect positive social change.

To determine the human composition of the garden, I asked participants questions about their own backgrounds and about how they thought the garden reflected the broader community, without specifying what was meant by, “community.” About half of the participants interviewed were affiliated with the University of Chicago in some respect. Of all of the interviews conducted in person, every single interviewee was white. Most of the participants described the garden as very white and not representative of the larger community. There were widely differing views about the gender and age representations within the garden. Some believed the garden to be very diverse, while others found the garden very late-middle aged. Six of the interviewees had children who would sometimes participate in gardening activities. Nearly all of those interviewed related the sentiment that it would be nice to see more racial diversity within the garden. Not all participants had the same notion of which community the garden was in a position to serve. Less than a third were aware that the garden could serve the Woodlawn community as well as the Hyde Park community. However, the distinctions between neighborhoods are not well defined—some people see Woodlawn as being part of the Hyde Park neighborhood.

Regarding the sense of community within the garden, there was a wide spectrum of responses ranging, from feeling a strong sense of community to none at all. This may reflect the different degrees of social participation within the garden, since most of the

participants who felt a positive sense of community were also those that participated in the informal gatherings like the basil harvesting pesto making event. One of the gardeners plans to get married at the garden this summer because she feels as though the garden is an integral part of her community that she wants to share with her friends and family. Many of the people who felt a slight sense of community mentioned feeling as though the community generated by the garden was something they could tap into if they wanted or needed to. Many people, especially those with families, expressed their busy lives as preventing their increased participation. Others mentioned the limited interactions with other gardeners as a result of the few numbers of people at the garden at a given time. Only one person mentioned socializing with people outside of the garden, whom had met through the garden. Others estimated that they knew 20-25 people by face, and 10-15 by name. Many of the participants became involved in the garden through friends, and thus mostly interact with the people they already know.

The community aspect of the garden is far from the most important element of the garden for some, while it is the most essential for others. One of the questions I asked concerned the main motivation for gardening in the community garden, and provoked a wide variety of responses. While some people's love of fresh, homegrown produce inspires them to garden, others simply like the therapeutic and relaxing qualities of gardening. One gardener says, "It's not really about the produce, but the process...the emotional and spiritual renewal." Many gardeners are motivated to garden for a number of reasons and the very fact that this one activity embodies them all. Another gardener describes gardening as a way of finding one's "peasant roots, which we all have." Her son and grandchildren have plots of their own within the garden and so the garden

provides a way for her to connect to her family as well. The intergenerational motivation is a common theme, even when multiple generations are unable to garden together. For some gardeners who have come from farming families or whose parents and grandparents gardened, there is a sense of connection to those loved ones in the continuation of the cultivating tradition.

The 61st and Dorchester community garden has provided many participants with their first experience gardening. While even experienced gardeners express the same passion, many new gardeners love the process of watching something grow. The new experience of gardening also provides them with a process of discovery and learning. The tangible results create both satisfaction and wonder. A couple of participants garden almost entirely for the return of fresh vegetables—to fuel their love of food and the production of specialty veggies, to have the opportunity to control the way in which the food they consume has been produced and thus connect them to their food, to avoid buying produce that isn't organic and has been trucked from a long way away, to save money on the food that they would buy otherwise, and to have the opportunity to share their bounty with others. Several participants enjoy gardening, yet live alone and proclaim that “they could not possibly use all of the vegetables they grow,” and thus share most of their produce with others. Less than a quarter of participants mentioned the community and social aspect of gardening as a prime driver to community garden, but nearly all mentioned their appreciation for the social element the garden provides in facilitating spontaneous and informal interactions.

Some see gardening as a way of creating roots in a place, by connecting with the land and the community. Many participants also enjoy the element of nature they find

within the garden. Gardening necessarily requires increased attention to natural cycles and processes such as rainfall, temperature changes, and awareness of the other life forms within the garden. While rabbits and slugs may not be as welcome as birds and beneficial insects, many people enjoy seeing a part of nature in the garden. The garden becomes a place of therapy and relaxation, usually quiet and peaceful in comparison to the noisy and stressful pace of urban life.

One gardener uses the garden as a teaching tool for his kids, who are interested by the diversity of life within the garden. He relates that there are many social lessons in the process of community gardening, such as respect for boundaries—the understanding of how one’s activities in one space may affect another person’s space, the patience and nurturing required for growth, the idea of planning ahead—planting seeds, and a multitude of other lessons that can be applied outside of the garden.

About half of the participants see gardening as an extension of their political beliefs and an opportunity for personal action. One gardener says, “Gardening is doing what you talk about,” supporting Jack Spicer’s sentiment that, “The garden is an opportunity for people to confirm their beliefs about things.” Another gardener relates that gardening is “not about me, it’s about something bigger,” just as another gardener sees the garden as a symbol of hope.

A year ago, the garden acquired an educational element when Jack Spicer donated a plot to a new kindergarten teacher. This woman teaches at Andrew Carnegie Elementary, a local public school, and after previously being involved in a similar project, decided to incorporate a garden component into her curriculum last year. She brings four classes into the garden every week, each class spending at least twenty

minutes in the garden. She integrates lessons in class with observations and projects in the garden, using it not only a space to teach about organic gardening, but also as a natural environment that reflects the concepts they've learned in the classroom—the garden is a learning tool on multiple levels. She describes how much the kids love having the opportunity to spend time in the garden and see it as a special privilege.

For this teacher, one of the most important objectives of the community garden is to provide the students with an understanding of where their food comes from. She also hopes that the garden will serve as an example of the way in which growing one's own food allows one to take ownership of certain choices relative to food. While she primarily uses the garden for the space that it provides, the community aspect of the garden has recently become more significant to her. Last year she created an activity in which kids wrote down their "Hopes, wishes, and dreams," and placed them in bottles and hung them on trees in the garden, as well as decorated the space with glitter, sparkles, etc. She relates that she got positive feedback from other gardeners who were curious about the affair and enjoyed the decorations. This year there will be even more interaction with the community—an elderly couple from the garden, who have done extensive gardening, have been invited to the school as guest speakers. There also tends to be some interaction between the families of the students involved and members of the garden, when the kids bring their families to see the garden.

According to most of the participants interviewed, the community garden generally operates very smoothly, even if lacking in organization and efficiency. Most gardeners are surprised by the minimal theft that occurs within the garden, and thus the biggest challenges seem to result from pests and disease. The one management issue that

was problematic for a number of gardeners was Jack's decision to change the watering system last year, which consisted of a messy jumble of hoses that people would sometimes drag over each others gardens. Jack Spicer installed a number of large watering buckets in the periphery of the garden with the intention of creating another source of informal interactions for participants. However, the new system, which came about unexpectedly for many, caused frustration for some people who had multiple plots far from the water source and were forced to spend a great deal of time hauling water to their plots. The whole issue was then exacerbated with the onset of drought. While some complained, others loved the new system and only expressed their frustrations with the selfish reactions of other gardeners who destroyed the system and dragged hoses over other people's plots. The "water problem," as it was repeatedly referred to, constitutes the most contentious issue within the garden, which reveals the successful operation of the garden, considering that most of the people who were dissatisfied with the situation, in the end, dismiss the problem as rather trivial.

In response to the question of how satisfied participants were with the management of the garden, the reactions were decidedly positive. Some people mentioned the undemocratic nature of the decision-making process within the garden as sometimes frustrating, but recognized the lack of interest for increased participation within the garden as the main culprit. One gardener suggested that "work days," during which participants would come to help maintain paths and clear weeds, would contribute to social exchanges within the garden. Everybody who had substantial interactions with Jack Spicer had only good things to say about his efforts within the garden.

Another common concern is the lack of organization within the garden, but this seems to be an issue that people are willing to easily relinquish. It is exactly the informal and lateral style of management that some people cherish about the garden. One gardener says, “The beauty of the garden is in its informality and lack of agenda.” Participants expressed their satisfaction with the spontaneous interactions that occur within the garden and the ability to choose one’s level of social engagement. People with busy lives can access the community when it’s convenient for them to do so.

8) Conclusions about the garden

In order to evaluate this community garden’s role in creating positive social change, I must begin by identifying the “community” the garden supports and how the needs of that community are being addressed. “Each garden consists of a complex web of interpersonal dynamics that involve issues of race, class, and gender. Each garden community confronts the ongoing challenge of balancing individual interests and needs and interests of the group” (Hassell 101).

Perhaps an even better place to start is with the question, “does the community garden have a community?” While all participants don’t share the same sense of community, in the broadest sense, there exists a community formed by a collective group of people who share the same space and participate in the same activity. People have come together, regardless of differing levels of social interaction, as a function of a shared interest. The interest may be new or old, occupy a large or small space in each person’s life, and result in a wide range of experiences for each participant, but there is at least some commonality of interest, and thus the garden constitutes an unintentional

community of sorts. As such, the community is defined entirely by the participation within the garden. According to most participants interviewed, the garden is not a reflection of the larger community (which I have taken to mean Hyde Park and Woodlawn); however, the garden still may have the potential to serve the larger community outside of the garden. The only way that the garden currently may extend itself to this degree is in its educational component.

Using “community” to define the participants of the garden, what are the needs of this community and how are they being addressed by the garden? With the understanding that the interviews are only partially representative of the garden and thus constitute a limited perspective, I would still venture to say that the majority of the garden is comprised of people who garden as a recreational activity, rather than as a necessity. Therefore, the only essential requirement of the garden is that it provides the land and space to support the activity of gardening. The plot system is an effective one for this community. Many of the participants inhabit apartment buildings and have no land available to cultivate. The garden provides them with the arable land needed to grow vegetables and flowers. There is a monetary requirement of \$40 per plot, which seems a reasonable and comfortably met condition for the participants involved. The rules are fair and simple, and actually quite minimal.

The garden was created with the intention of providing space for gardening without a political agenda or expectations for community empowerment. While some individuals may desire to extend the influence of the garden throughout the larger community, there has not been any effort to use the garden as a resource to address larger community issues. The Hyde Park and Woodlawn communities are fairly stable, with

ample resources and alternative ways of addressing community needs. Many of the people involved in the garden are well connected to other socially progressive groups in Hyde Park, and describe themselves as active members of the community. However, it seems that the garden has not been used as a space for any sort of community development. There hasn't been a demand for collective action that would necessitate a community-driven response in which the garden could participate.

The garden's primary function is to provide community members with the opportunity to garden. While it may contribute to a sense of community for some, others opt for minimal social interaction and choose not to partake in any sort of community within the garden. The garden has succeeded in meeting the needs of its community—it provides the earth and water necessary to support plant life and enough organization to maintain a well functioning and busy garden—but it has failed to move beyond its identity as a garden and fully engage its “community” component. This is not to say that the garden has failed—it has in fact succeeded in fulfilling the objectives of its creation—but that the garden has no intention of creating social capital, which does not necessarily imply that social capital is not an emergent property of the garden.

The participants of the garden have an overwhelmingly positive response to the community garden. As mentioned previously, while the opportunity to garden may be paramount to the garden's community element, the majority of participants appreciate the informal social exchanges that occur within the garden. While the garden may not be used to mobilize community action, it does provide a social gathering place of sorts. For many participants employed by the University of Chicago Press, the garden affords them the opportunity to interact with their co-workers in a different setting. Jill Roper, a

graduate student at Rutgers University, conducted a study that supported the notion that, “community gardens do get people talking to each other” (Malakoff 7). Charles Lewis goes on to say, “A community activity such as gardening can be used to break the isolation, creating a sense of neighborliness among residents” (Malakoff 9). Even if social networks for community activism haven’t been formed by participating in the garden, people are able to recognize some of their neighbors thanks to seeing them in the garden.

According to the aforementioned definition of positive social change that was established at the onset, the 61st and Dorchester garden falls short of creating social capital chiefly because of its limited influence on the larger community. The new educational aspect of the garden may be the one area in which the community garden may function to create social capital. The garden may have a real potential to link otherwise disconnected community members and to change the perspective of the students involved, having a real influence on future decisions they may make and increasing their social network.

The educational component still represents only a small usage of the garden, occupying only one plot and existing solely on account of the hard work of one motivated individual. Similarly, many attribute the success and even existence of the entire community garden as resulting from the hard work of a single individual, Jack Spicer. The garden seems to be full of good intentioned individuals without any sort of collective effort to create change, and yet it may take only one person to bring about change within the garden. There is no community-based struggle that unites people to action and thus the garden has no identifiable agenda. Participants have their own reasons for

participation in the garden, and the garden allows them the freedom to use the space in whatever way they desire (so long as they don't infringe upon the interests of other gardeners) without asking anything more of them.

Lawson writes, "In both the past and present, the act of building a garden on a vacant lot was intended to yield not simply a prettier lot but an inspired and activated community. Having started with such a satisfying product as a garden, the community would hopefully move on to other civic improvements as well" (Lawson 291). While the community garden at 61st and Dorchester has not inspired any noticeable community activism by connecting community leaders to address community challenges, there seems to be a lack of demand for such activity. The community does not seem to be in need of empowerment or in search of new leaders, and thus the community garden is not in a position to support larger goals that may be more appropriate to gardens elsewhere with different community needs. The conditions of the community can inspire or motivate change that may begin in the community garden. The degree to which the garden is considered an agent of social change is reflective of the unique conditions of the community in which the garden is situated.

The previously referenced study of 63 community gardens in upstate New York found that, "Community gardens that were located in low-income neighborhoods were four times as likely as gardens not in low-income areas, to lead to other issues in the neighborhood being addressed. Characteristics including the age of a garden, whether a local church or school maintained a plot, whether gardeners held regular meetings or worked cooperatively were not associated with a garden leading to other issues" (Armstrong 322). Community gardens may provide fragmented or transitional

communities with the space and networking capacities needed to address issues of community health and empowerment. The garden may be the one resource that is able to succeed in bringing people together. For a community rich in resources, like Hyde Park, there may be other avenues that people use to address community issues.

All of the community gardens referenced earlier as examples of gardens that had catalyzed positive social change were situated in impoverished neighborhoods and used the community garden as a resource beyond supporting the recreational activity of gardening. For some gardens, while they may not have had such intentions at the start, the community provided the need as the impetus for action. Other gardens may have been created with the intention of providing the community with a particular service. Many of these gardens are connected with, or even started by, other social groups that have already established the networks that make community organizing possible. For example, one of the aforementioned urban community gardens that succeeded in providing immigrants with a needed source of food, was created by the Los Angeles Regional Food Bank to address the lack of nourishment in the neighborhood. The community garden on 61st and Dorchester has succeeded in supporting a community desire for gardening, and while there is no present need for the garden to provide more, it very well could adapt its functions in the future to address an additional or different community need.

9) Implications for public policy and the community gardening movement

It is difficult to set standards or create a framework for the success of community gardens, which take unique meanings from the communities within which they are

situated and the experiences and personalities of their constituency. The organization and management of one “successful” garden may be completely inappropriate for another. “Success” itself has a distinct meaning for each particular garden—and as such, there is no “one size fits all” formula for success. Each community garden has its own set of objectives (intentional or unintentional) that reflect the needs of the broader community and/or the community within the garden and may be uniquely effective or ineffective at fulfilling those needs. As Lauren Baker recognizes, “The multiple meanings of community-gardening activities change with the perspective of the diverse actors involved: gardeners, alternative food movement activists, community organizers, property managers, public-housing staff, and others” (Baker 325).

It is precisely this multiplicity of meaning or lack of singular agenda that makes the promotion of community gardening extremely difficult. The multi-dimensional benefits of community gardening make it hard for policy makers to pinpoint a single advantage, measured in monetary value, which proves that community gardens are a better use of funds and land than another public project. The tangible, more measurable benefits of community gardens include the production of food, recreation, education, economic opportunity, community activism, environmental restoration, among other things, to individuals and communities. “Shifting away from normative agendas for urban garden programs and toward articulating the actual resources that gardens provide clarifies their real effectiveness in meeting the needs of individuals and communities” (Lawson 297). Yet another danger in advocating the creation or protection of community gardens comes from unreasonable expectations of the extent to which a garden has the potential to heal or improve a community, since a garden “cannot by itself solve the

bigger problems facing urban communities—it cannot single-handedly stop drug sales on the adjacent street or the lack of public services to maintain vacant land” (Lawson 293).

While it may be dangerous to consider community gardens as the all-encompassing remedy to community concerns, it still remains important to recognize the overwhelmingly positive capacities of community gardens. As Maria Elisa Christie puts it, “Gardens help people feel peaceful, self-sufficient, useful, healthy, and in touch with the living earth. Garden products go far beyond edible plants to include social networks and healthy environments, economies, and people” (Christie 263). Community gardens provide a wealth of benefits to individuals, communities, and the society at large, and yet, gardens are continually faced with challenges.

The American Community Gardening Association did a study in 1996 and found that the two biggest threats to community gardens are the loss of land to development and a lack of continued interest on the part of the participants. While the latter threat may be difficult to address, perhaps not even warranting a response, there are certainly numerous ways to remedy the former (American Community Gardening Association).

There are good reasons to garner public support for community gardens, not only because of the positive effects of the gardens themselves, but also as a way of protecting community gardens from development. If the public (and thus the government) places adequate value on community gardens as public goods, than money may not be the prevailing factor in considering land for development. Some gardens are well protected because they are situated on parkland—considered established green space—while other gardens are privately owned and under the protection of the individual land owner. Anna

Viertel believes that permanency of land tenure is an important condition for community empowerment because the garden is guaranteed to remain under local control.

There are several ways that community gardens can secure land, including, private purchase or lease, private or public land trusts, government or institutional land, and, the use or creation of city green space or municipal parkland. There are many organizations and groups working to help community gardeners gain control of their land. The Trust for Public Land purchases land for community gardens that is under threat of development and then works to transfer ownership and responsibility of such lands to the local leadership within the garden (MacNair 20). Neighborspace, a non-profit organization in Chicago created in 1996, similarly buys land at the request of neighborhood groups and block clubs. So far, the program has been working well, even though there is a limit to the number of properties that can be purchased in a year. So far, seventy community garden sites throughout Chicago have been purchased (MacNair 22).

While some believe that permanent land tenure is an essential element of community empowerment and the success of the garden, others see the garden's effectiveness tied solely to community interest, and thus when there is no interest there is no use in any sort of land security. The latter perspective asserts that if community gardens are sufficiently valued, then people—the public, the government—will make an effort to preserve the land. Unfortunately, many well respected and highly valued community gardens have been lost regardless of the community's investment in the garden, due to private development and other forces beyond the control of the people involved.

Lawson writes, “Today, as advocates assert that gardens should be permanent community resources, we are poised to change this legacy. It is a good moment to consider the purpose of urban gardens, why they have been conceived as temporary, and what actions are needed to validate them as permanent community resources” (Lawson 288). While government funding and outside aid in the development and maintenance of community gardens may be desired or even required, the survival of community gardens ultimately depends on the local support and involvement of community members. Because community gardens are necessarily locally based operations, help from the outside can be disruptive or simply fail to satisfy the requirements of the community and be an unsuccessful endeavor. “This distinction between interest-based advocacy and local participation has implications for the sustainability of urban gardens. To increase local resources and expand social networks that support the garden, both top-down and bottom-up investments are necessary” (Lawson 298). A balance of both horizontal (community based) and vertical (government) investments allow community gardens to expand their networks and better prepare them to face challenges such as funding, land tenure, or community participation (Lawson).

A study conducted by the American Community Gardening Association in 1996 found that, “The way a garden is initiated or developed does not seem to be the strongest factor in why losses may occur or interest may wane. In the case where gardens were started by outside intervention rather than by interested gardeners themselves, there are no strong trends to indicate that these gardens are lost more frequently than others. Comparing other cities where percentages of losses are more than 25 percent, there are just as many gardens initiated from community-driven interest as well as program—or

administration—driven assistance. Maintenance of group interest or governance may be a stronger factor that influences losses, along with how a particular garden is valued in the community” (American Community Gardening Association).

In citywide greening efforts there is some controversy that surrounds the conventional parks vs. community garden debate. There has been some research done on the difference between public parks and community gardens. One study conducted in 1987 in Sacramento, California, found that the city parks experienced less than four times the usage of community gardens, while being, “20 times more costly to develop and...27 times more expensive to maintain” (Boekelheide 14). In addition, the study found that, “City residents place higher value on community gardens and open space than city officials do. Officials conversely place a higher value on parks than city residents do” (Boekelheide 14). Community gardens foster an increased sense of ownership and investment within a neighborhood that conventional parks often fail to provide (Malakoff). “Community gardens are one of the finest examples of public spaces that build a sense of place and community. They cross boundaries of age, income and culture, bringing people together through shared interests in gardening and food. Community gardens also facilitate the kind of casual public life that is missing from many neighborhoods” (MacNair 6).

The community gardening movement has gained significant momentum in the last decade. In 1991, 2,332 U.S. community gardens were reported. Only five years later, 6,018 were reported (Boekelheide). And thus while there are a significant number of gardens lost to development, there are even more gardens created.

“Monroe-Santos identifies four trends she sees as positive for the community gardening movement: 1) Strong growth of immigrant

communities that possess agricultural skill. 2) Increasing cooperation to promote and elicit funds through partnerships with the well-supported environmental movement. 3) Offering additional services to teach self-governance and self-support as well as gardening skills. 4) Exploring entrepreneurial opportunities through sale of garden produce and value-added products. She also points to potential negative factors, including: 1) The greater distance from agricultural knowledge and experience with the passage of each generation. 2) Dangerous competing activities, such as drugs and gangs, drawing people, particularly youth, away from activities such as gardening. 3) Competition for funding” (Boekelheide 21).

Despite the many challenges that face the community gardening movement, there are countless ways in which it is supported by other movements that are connected to the various aspects of community gardening. The slow foods movement, the food-security movement, the local food production movement, the grassroots community development movement, and the new agrarian movement, provide only a few examples of movements that are highly connected to the activity of gardening.

One of the ways in which community gardening is promoted is by disregarding the “community” aspect of gardening altogether and focusing on the benefits to be gained by the activity of gardening. The community element is introduced as a positive emergent property that comes from participation in a community garden. “Moving against this dominant ethos of distance from nature, a surprisingly diverse group of urban grassroots efforts are building reconnection to place and to the natural world” (Barlett 14).

The very act of gardening may have the ability to create positive social change in some regard. The process has the potential to heal, support new relationships with the land and nature, and instill valuable lessons that transcend the realm of the garden (Naimark). The community garden provides a little piece of nature within an urban

environment and requires the awareness of natural processes, from the life cycle of a plant to the observation of weather patterns, and thus connects urbanites with their environment in ways that wouldn't otherwise be possible. Even the benefits that accrue from the passive interaction with green space have proven to have considerable impact on the physical health of an individual. "Stephen Kaplan says that a 1990 study by Bernadine E. Cimprich highlights the restorative value of nature. Cimprich, a nurse working with cancer patients, noticed that seven patients with excellent medical prospects often reported a severe inability to focus and had difficulty in managing their lives after leaving the hospital. After testing, she found some breast cancer patients earned attentional capacity scores that placed them in a 'brain damaged' category. Patients who agreed to regularly participate in restorative activities such as gardening, however, rapidly improved their scores. They also returned to work and their normal lives more quickly than patients who did not participate in restorative activities." Kaplan, a psychologist at the University of Michigan, states his point clearly by saying, "the studies prove that Nature is not just 'nice'...it is a vital ingredient in healthy human functioning" (Malakoff).

Beyond the healing and restorative capacities of gardens, the act of gardening itself may have the potential to effect social change in multiple ways. Gardening is a nurturing activity that requires the care for a living thing. A gardener must concern him/herself with the health of a plant and is continually faced with challenges like pests, plant diseases, drought, shading from other plants, etc. Gardening demands time, patience, planning, and a willingness to learn. Regardless of a garden's capacity to create

social cohesion, the very activity of gardening supports healthy activity and may contribute to the cultivation of community knowledge (Hassell).

The process of gardening may also have the capacity to change people's conceptions of where their food comes from, their relationship to the land, and their sense of place. It may be difficult to attribute such changes in conception to gardening, and even harder to measure, but the possibilities have real implications on the decisions people may make in the future. Intangible benefits, like the satisfaction that might result from gardening are hard to measure, but cannot be ignored as valuable contributions.

“[Community Gardens] restore a sense of place and foster a deeply meaningful renewal of relations with the earth. Their efforts resist some of the environmentally and socially destructive effects of contemporary industrial culture and economic globalization”

(Barlett 1). Clarissa Kimber outlines the three types of interactions that occur in the garden as 1) “between humans and the natural world..., 2) between humans (social exchanges)..., and, 3) between human subjects and the meaningful spectacle or symbol of the garden,” and lists the results as being 1) the production of useful material goods, 2) the increased potential for social interaction and, 3) “a state of consciousness” (Kimber).

10) Conclusion

“Community gardening is a small but serious challenge to many current policies and practices. It challenges the economically and ecologically destructive policies of agribusiness and local politics, which put profit before human needs—greenery, open space, fresh food. Community gardening challenges the social and economic structures that keep a vast number of urban and rural people from owning land and from gaining a small measure of control over their own lives” (Naimark 9).

There are 55,000 vacant lots in Chicago and a number of organizations working to help people convert some of them into community gardens (MacNair 18). Whether or not community gardens should become a permanent part of the city landscape is a question left in the hands of the public. How valuable are community gardens and in what ways? The central interest of this paper was to examine one of the ways in which community gardens are beneficial on the social level—community gardens as catalysts for positive social change. According to the way in which positive social change was defined—largely as the creation of social capital—the community garden at 61st and Dorchester only began to create such change last year with the introduction of the educational component.

In exploring why this garden has generally failed to create social capital in other ways, it became evident that the conditions of social change as defined in this study were dependent on particular community circumstances. With the consideration of crucial differences between community conditions, and the understanding of the ways in which a garden's context influences its ultimate place within a community, the question of how a garden was a catalyst for positive social change was revealed to depend on a multitude of factors. While one may be able to identify community gardens that have catalyzed a particular form of social change, discovering the ways in which multiple gardens situated in diverse contexts are able to achieve different forms of equally valuable social change may be just as important. Certain communities in need of empowerment are able to use community gardens as a catalyst for improving and addressing community issues, while other more stable communities require community gardens to satisfy recreational and informal social desires. While the community garden at 61st and Dorchester has not

catalyzed the creation of social capital as it has been defined, it has succeeded in fulfilling important community needs.

Community gardens provide a necessary alternative to an increasingly industrialized world where globalization homogenizes everything from culture to the landscape, by fostering care for the earth, nurturing human relationships, and supporting a vision of a livable future.

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13) Appendix 1: Interview Questions

How long have you been gardening for? In the D. garden and in general?

How did you first hear about the garden?

How close are you to the garden (where do you live)?

How many plots do you own?

What do you plant?

How do you plant? (techniques, style, etc.)

How much food do you grow? Is it enough to provide a reasonable supplement to the garden?

What are your biggest challenges/concerns with the garden?

What do you enjoy most about the garden?

Do you know a lot of the fellow gardeners? Have you met a lot of them in the garden or in related bbq's, etc.

What have you learned from the garden? Do you share your knowledge with fellow gardeners? Have you learned anything from your fellow gardeners?

Has the garden changed or impacted your relationship with food? Or nature? Or the land? If so, how?

Do you have a garden at home?

Where do you buy your food?

Why do you garden?

What are the perceived benefits of gardening? in this particular garden and in general?

Do you feel connected to any larger organizations, groups or movements supporting either community gardening, gardening or alternative agriculture?

What do you think about the organization of the garden? Are there opportunities for you to contribute or share your ideas?

14) Appendix 2: Transcripts of Interviews

Note: All names have been replaced with “xxxxx” to protect the privacy of the interviewees.

Interview with xxxxxx—She got her P.h.D at the University of Chicago and teaches part-time (French-literature). Her husband started the experimental station, but she’s been doing the administrative side of things. A center that tries to unite lots of different people, is selective in doing so. Not intended as a monoculture of artists, but rather entrepreneurs, etc. Creates a space for people to do their thing, and then the emergent property is that it connects them. The resource center had a garden by where the extended wing of the public school lies. xxxxxx was in charge of that garden. He was the king of the garden whereas now xxxxx is King. xxxxx considers herself queen. She thinks democracy has a place, and in terms of decision-making within the garden, she thinks this is the best way, and that xxxxx makes good decisions...not all of them are right, but most of them are good. The city by eminent domain took the land away from the resource center for the school. They (xxxxx, etc.) were angry at the city because the city valued it as worth nothing (taking land values from inside woodlawn instead of the university side or even the average of those values). Community Gardens aren’t recognized as valuable. Everything is looked at in terms of development.

Note—we talked outside of the garden. IT was cold, xxxxxx didn’t seem to care. She talked the whole time animatedly...was friendly and willing to share. She seemed more interested in representing it her way rather than waiting to hear where I wanted to take it, but she seemed a little nervous, so this may have been why.

The garden across the street lasted from about 92 to 98, when it moved to where it is now. Moved in spring99. Unclear about how it happened exactly with the university. They also recognized the importance of sep. identities (experimental station and c.g. being their own thing, but connected). The “Urban Farm Project” is what the agricultural aspects of the experimental station and the community garden are called.

Started 18 years ago.

Personally...she lived in minneappolis and searched for a sense of place. So she dug up the backyard to create belonging. Garden failed, but a cathartic process. Ever since, she finds roots in digging into the soil. She found herself in U of C, and dug roots to create sense of place...many roots now.

Experimental station is an incubator to foster education, environmental initiatives, art, etc. projects. A lot of collaborations happen.

Personally, she is not that involved in the garden perse, but does a lot of managing and maintaining (less now, they helped put up fences...they clean up garbage), she does the group things (basil), but really her time commitment isn’t that much. She gardens by the experimental station in a plot of her own not connected with the garden. She talks to people a lot, she manages the kindergarten coming over to garden.

The only thing she claims she would do differently is to put in an outhouse for people. Otherwise she thinks xxxx is doing a great job and would not criticize anything. She says they set aside plots for African Americans from woodlawn, she hopes xxxx is still doing it. She mentions that the older generations are more involved with the younger generations (her generation) who have a problem getting dirty. The older generations are still connected with the soil, where there seems to be resistance to getting their hands dirty of younger generations. She mentions that it might be too close to slavery. She says the ideal would be for the community garden to reflect the community better.

I ask if there is a sense of community, she mentions that the people who participate in the group events, probably feel a sense of community, but for the rest, probably not. She mentions the “crabby” people who have been gardening ever since it was in the other plot of land and don’t interact with anybody. People get together for the basil event, the eggplant event. Some would say they felt a part of a community others would not. Definitely not a source of community empowerment (quick reaction to that question). She mentions that one African American woman ate a whole hot pepper and was seriously affected. That brought the people together to figure out what to do.

She mentions the connections that the community garden does support. The connection to the experimental station...the existence of the promontory point coalition (those people met through the garden...political action?(me saying that) ...she met xxxxx from the garden). Building all sorts of great relationships. Deep relationships.

I ask her how her conceptions of nature/land/community/food/agriculture have changed since gardening. She says at home they talk about food all the time. They talk about vitamin green, vitamin yellow, vitamin red...meaning all of the vegetables... “Gardens are a wealth of health”...she emphasizes the changed awareness of food and how important that is. The garden is organic. Strictly organic, you’ll be kicked out if they find you’ve not been organic.

They are a part of a food buying club. They started their own from the exp. Station. The woodlawn buying club. She tracked down her eggs and found that Farmer Brian was growing them. Soon he started delivering them to them. Then he could not keep up with demand. Now they get their dairy and eggs from Moore Farms in IL. Someone from the coop drives the two hours every month to pick up all the food. There is no organization that she is connected to, but she is connected to the people who grow her food. She wants to support the food and the people. Her kids have seen the cows they are going to eat next month.

Her favorite thing about the garden...is the increasing connection of what we eat...the connection to the process...she says she’s never thought of this before, but the awareness of the connections between our food also bring awareness of the connections between people.

She claims she's a bad gardener. She loves that she can put as little effort as possible and reap such great bounty. She says nothing else works that way.

Interview with xxxxx—afternoon, her apartment, she's slightly sick. Friendly, but not especially gregarious.

Grad school—duel degree M.D. PhD. Two more years.

Grew up in the suburbs outside of Boston

Mother is gardener (grew up on a farm...huge part of her life), xxxxx wasn't really interested in it until she had her own space. She's been doing the community garden on 61st and Dorchester for the past four years...the first gardening she's done. Mother has been a resource for learning how to garden. Wanted to be involved in growing her own food, the process of growing things from the ground up.

Gardening is a process of discovery...learn as you go...have to be more attuned to your environment (weather patterns, rainfall)...brings you closer to your environment instead of being isolated from it (you have to be aware). Likes that the garden is organic. Being organic, every year there is a new challenge...some beetle that attacks the beet crops, etc. Have to be more willing to relinquish.

Time commitment—in spurts, depends on the weather, maintenance, sometimes every weekend, sometimes, like last summer when it was really dry, every day to water.

Garden started small, and has expanded a lot. Estimates that she doesn't know 80% of the gardeners. She participates in the basil harvesting, eggplant processing, that xxxxx coordinates...the same group of people 10-20...out of 150 gardeners. Some people don't do anything communal...everyone has their own style. Guesses that the garden started off as being more communal. Started the discussion-group, but it really didn't take-off. Issues to talk about—no lock on the gate, so maybe a whole crop of kohlrabi will be gone. Stuff was being taken and there wasn't really a forum for talking about it. Water issues—how do we all use the hose (only one)...thinks the discussion group started too late in the season...maybe this year it will have more activity. Everyone uses the garden for different reasons. Maybe only about half signed up to the listserve in the first place.

xxxxx has been wonderful...if it wasn't for him, the garden wouldn't exist. He does a lot--He provides compost, mulch, leaves, sets up the water. This year, because of the drought, there were water problems...the system he set up didn't work--was to have large water basins. If you have two plots (over 150 ft²) and you can only use watering cans, it takes forever. Water problems was the catalyst for the whole discussion group to be set up and have a more democratic process for making decisions. xxxxx very open to it. xxxxx makes executive decisions and most of the time there's never a problem, but this year, with the water, there was some friction. Garden has gotten much bigger...with so many people involved maybe only having one person in charge doesn't work as well. Maybe a garden committee needs to be started. People tend to garden in a way that they only tend to their own plot and don't interact...don't know how much desire or interest for committee...ultimately it's American and people have their little space and they don't really share...maybe against what you think of a community garden as doing...that's how it has been working. It could be that xxxxx is responsible for not creating infrastructure that allows for more democratic participation because he's designated "dictator." If it had been set up from the beginning with a board or committee that oversees some of the

decisions then people would know about it and be able to go to the committee. I think a lot of the ways a garden is set up has a lot of implications for how it ends up working and how changes are accommodated. Management overall is excellent, there are just some crisis that show that there are some weaknesses in how the system is set up.

All the gardeners share a common interest...growing organic produce, working with the land, producing things...there is probably a common philosophy about why you want to garden...but in terms of interaction with other gardeners, I have very little...often a function of when people want to garden (the time...morning, afternoon, weekends, etc.). At any given time, there are probably only two or three other people there. And that's probably pretty common. It's hard to build to a sense of community when there aren't people there..I know some of the gardeners and we chat and share plants and give each other extra vegetables, but it depends on how you define community. Is community this common sensibility or is it something a little more interactive? The first is there, the second one, not as much.

In response to my question...I think some people have relationships outside of the garden, but I don't think it's very common...only because people's lives are busy and they come to do gardening, they don't come to hang out, although there are places to hangout and people do, but usually just the people who are already friends, who joined the garden as friends.

I don't think the garden necessarily represents the demographics of hydepark and woodlawn, it's mostly white, and wether university affiliated and people that are connected to xxxxx xxxxx and his crew. There's a whole group of people living in hyde park who have nothing to do with the university, progressive, aging hippie types, and various offshoots of those types of individuals...a large contigent of the garden. And of course people connected to the university. If the university wasn't here there probably would still be a garden. Representative of one aspect of hyde park, but not necessarily the African American or minority population. Although, there are increasingly people from that neighborhood participating in the garden, and it's nice to see.

Anyone who comes up to the garden is given information, but there hasn't ever been outreach to have people join the garden. The question becomes should there be extra effort to make it more representative? Rather than saying this is an open garden that everyone can participate in and have the people who garden be the ones who approach xxxxx. I think a lot of those people are the ones who have contacted xxxxx. It's not closed. You can argue the same thing about a lot of social organizations...should there be more outreach for the organization to be representative of the community or neighborhood or be more passive about it.

The food in the garden really supplements diet in the summer. Two plots. It varies, depending on which crops are successful and which are not...root vegetables, beets, kohlrabi, take longer to grow. I live right across from the produce market, so in the winter I'm probably there every other day, but in the summer, I'm there maybe once a week. We basically grow everything...beetles attack squash...

I do buy some organic things, I don't buy exclusively organic, I don't actively participate in those kinds of movements or organizations, but I'm sympathetic to them and certainly see what I'm doing as one component of some kind of more organic living. In the winter I go to the produce market and get what I can. I eat more in season, but I still eat tomatoes in the middle of winter...in the summer I try to eat what's available in the garden before going to the store...probably a little bit asymmetrical...I tend to eat what's in season in the summer.

Community gardens can vary quite dramatically...I wouldn't take this garden as representative of all community gardens...in other neighborhoods, it's much more of a subsistence approach...they're relying on their food for supplementing their income...whereas it's more of a pastime and luxury for people in this garden...you're going to find if you go to pilsen or asian communities...those are real factories...really producing that they can live on...

It kind of depends on how people come into the garden and how the community gets formed around it...different in different places.

Benefits? I enjoy the actual activity of gardening...I like being outside, getting my hands dirty, and its very gratifying to sort of nurture something and grow it and eat it. But it's also the aspect of having control over what I'm eating and to know that that grew out of composted soil and I didn't use any pesticides...whether it's better for me or not, I don't know, but it's being to have control over that process.

Getting married this summer, planning on doing it down by the summer...reasoning, because this is part of our community...this is something that we really enjoy, that's part of our lives, and we want to show our families what our community is...so on the one hand, I see the garden as part of my community and something that's important to me, but whether or not there is something more proactive and political offshoot for me from the garden, I'm not so sure. It's definitely part of my community and is something that I really enjoy about living in hyde park, but whether or not the garden generates community is kind of a different question for me.

Interview with xxxxx xxxxx: We meet at starbucks only to find no room—meet at the Hutchinson commons. He is very friendly. Is from NYC originally, went to law school at the U of C...after many jobs, has now been in real estate development for the past five years. Has three kids, ages ranging from 10-16 years old. Has been in hyde park for the past 10-12 years. Xxxxx is a neighbor and one of the first people he met. He's good friends with him. Can't remember how long he's been gardening at the community garden...thinking back maybe three summers, maybe four. It's hard to find time for the garden. Has a garden in his backyard for flowers, wanted to have a plot for vegetables. Has two plots. His parents probably introduced him to gardening...they always grow stuff. He enjoys the ritual, experiencing the seasons. He doesn't participate in the gatherings and doesn't interact with others (minimally)...he makes the point of saying he's friendly, but really hasn't built any relationships. He repeatedly seems almost ashamed or feels guilty for not being involved in the community aspect. Maybe because of the way I presented my b.a.

In terms of having xxxxx manage it, he's happy to have someone else manage it. He grows what he calls standard vegetables...tomatoes, eggplants, lots of kitchen spices. The time commitment is intense at the beginning to prep the ground and plant, but his time commitment is irregular...it depends on a lot of things...weather, his time..he's been gone for a month at a time and has had other people take care of his plot (he said this last august he let things go to seed). In terms of the actual amount of food produced, he seems to think that it's pretty minimal. That little comes from the garden in terms of his diet in the summer. He enjoys gardening because it's relaxing and he enjoys the process of watching things grow.

He supports organics and buys a little. He thinks of gardening as a luxury, a recreational activity that takes resources. He enjoys being outside, but that's not the motivator to garden.

He picks through seed catalogs to buy his vegetable seeds. He used to be seedlings...ordering them...he still tries to, instead of starting them like he did at first. He's practical in his gardening style and the layout. He used to be much more meticulous at first, labeling everything with laminated cards, but now he doesn't put in the effort. He learns a lot by experimentation. Of what he wants to grow...he'll try something new, and sometimes it won't work. He uses compost from xxxxx ...the soil quality is fine...the garden is used intensively, there isn't enough room for cover crops he says. He thinks a lot of the original soil came from leaves from the neighborhood that were composted so they would find bits of plastic, etc. He likes to have a good variety of veggies. He likes home-grown tomatoes, he discovered cabbage is not worth it...he likes sweet onions a lot. He cooks for his family. He cooks a wide variety. He has a deep love of food. He sees it as a way to connect people...he likes to keep meals interesting and varied for his family at home, a way for them all to come together amidst busy schedules. His interest in gardening corresponds to his interest in food.

He mentions in passing that he likes the community of hyde park, iis sending his kids to the lab school and wishes there was more diversity reflective of the community. He feels apart of the community it seems.

Interview with xxxxx xxxxx. 7:30 am-8:50 am Starbucks Woodlawn 55th

Waiting patiently with newspaper when I arrived. Jumped right in...I made conversation...easy to talk to but a little awkward...hesitant, slow.

I told him where my thesis was going and the first thing he mentioned was that he doesn't think this garden is the right garden to look at. He mentioned that it wasn't an intentional garden with a political agenda. He talked about the "interesting" gardens being the ones in transitional communities or fragmented communities...the ones that use vacant lots and change or transform the communities. He talked about how the Dorchester garden had no such political intentions and that the community is secure, so everything that happens just happens. It reflects the ideal social order an ideal state that doesn't need to change. The garden is a source of recreation for its participants and many

of the participants have been gardening for a while. They've learned from their parents, etc. this is only a continuation for something. (I made the point that it's still an opportunity for learning and he wholeheartedly agreed). He says this community is not fractured, it's not under threat and so the things that are going on are more subtle...there are ephemeral changes.

He made the analogy of people growing their plants in their own plots differently just as countries operate differently. And that just as small countries are always trying to expand, so are the plots of many gardeners. It's hard to accommodate the desires of all of the gardeners now.

The differences of growing styles, but the interactions between people is a demonstration in the inherent properties of communities. This is just something that happens...that will happen, just as the DNA in seeds have inherent properties about how they grow in their own particular ways. People in the garden have common goals, but not necessarily the same way of growing. Similar methods to achieve goals in that they are gardening in the first place, but their own style is an expression of their own personality. There is a wonderful informal interchange and spread of information. The garden is an opportunity for people to confirm their beliefs about things (in response to my question about opportunities for learning as an emergent property).

Details about garden: the building across the street used to be the resource center. The land to the north of the garden was first used. The school is connected to the garden. There was a student geneticist who wanted to grow corn and hybridize corn to figure out the father plants. Had plots all over the place. This was one of them (the land to the north). A student of this student's had a wife that was from Peru and she grew potatoes. Purple ones that sometimes still appear in the garden today. Xxxxx xxxxx became involved in a communal effort to grow basil. He forgets how exactly he became involved. This was in the 70's. The second student was theoretical in his approach. Thought that there should be a well so that all the people would have to meet in order to get their water. People wouldn't drag water hoses across other people's gardens...which would create problems. This student's job was to fill the well. Needed to be in a position of power with a clear job. Xxxxx xxxxx was largely responsible to the move across the street. There was a switch of land with the school that gave the gardeners a plot of land that isn't gardenable and maybe the land they have today. The university owns that land. The resource center became an experimental station for artists. The same people are in charge. xxxxx and others used to make pesto with leftover basil that they grew (they sold a lot...most of it, because that was the intent...at a farmstand type of deal). They would congregate at xxxxx's house and make pesto. The idea came to grow garlic for the pesto the next year. Etc. xxxxx still has a basil project going on. He describes himself as a farmer rather than a gardener. His wife is a gardener, he is a farmer. The distinction is that he grows beyond his own personal need as a farmer. He shares this surplus with others (mostly other gardeners). He gets his crew to help him in the garden. He is a landscape gardener. A landscaper. He referred to himself previously as a designer. I didn't know what that meant...he did so when describing his own personal aesthetic preferences. He doesn't like to see the water buckets above ground, so he's been sinking

them into the ground. Someone had the concern that small kids could fall in. So he raised the bucket again...he uses this anecdote to explain how the circumstances of the interactions between people at different times create these changes or difference. It explains how he's been impacted by the garden.

He says the garden has been constantly expanding, but that it can't really support anymore expansion. Doesn't clearly explain why. I ask him what he sees his role being...he says staying out of the way. He sees the garden as self-regulatory and not needing anything. I ask him what the problems are...he mentions that sometimes things are stolen, there are rabbits, when there were droughts people complained of having to water a lot. There is a lot of waste, sometimes people don't harvest everything. Sometimes kids accidentally squash vegetables. There are 6 basins of water. He doesn't like to be prescriptive or advisory it seems because he's always mentioning that even if he made suggestions, people wouldn't necessarily have reason to listen, they figure things out on their own. When people were complaining about the water, he went out and bought some cheap water buckets to make it easier. They were used. He could make suggestions about what plants to grow, but he thinks people only listen to their neighbors in the plots. It wouldn't help coming from him. While we're talking about ways he doesn't regulate, he then mentions rules of the garden that he most likely has created. No dogs, because they are chaotic.

People pay him for the plots. There is a "silly" bankaccount that he keeps at about zero. If there is extra money, he figures out what to do with it (for the garden). There are informal bbqs. People from the garden and their friends. There are lots of groupings that happen within the garden as people get to know each other, but he never feels excluded. There is a meeting to figure out how to distribute plots. He's in charge of this and seems frustrated. People are always asking for more, or to let them know if their neighbor is not coming back. He doesn't seem to have the patience for it anymore and says that he's not going to deal with it anymore (meaning he won't take requests for people with multiple plots to keep expanding). I ask him about turnover. He says there is a low turnover rate. He would like to see it higher. One of the informal gatherings he does is the pesto creation...everybody is welcome. Another informal gathering surrounds pickled eggplant. An Italian tradition. Every family has their own way of doing it. Grow the spices, oregano and jalepeno's for the pickling. One Italian in the garden has been doing it.

His gardening or farming past is sort of unclear. He says he kind of got into it with the basil. In terms of a time commitment, he has no idea. He doesn't try to commit every weekend or anything. He says there is almost an alternative to church contingent of people who work on the garden every Sunday, because that day seems to work for them. On the distinction between farming and gardening he mentions that he, as a farmer, can just go once a weekend for two hours, but that gardening requires tending to every day. Twenty minutes a day, like walking a dog. There are different times in the garden when people have no time. The spring and the fall. There is a lot to do, but people are busy. Some of the problems are that people don't anticipate things...like that sunflowers will grow eight feet tall and block the light in their garden and other people's. Or things go

unpicked. Or one old religious woman put American flags all around her garden. Made people uncomfortable. Always tells people god is looking over their gardens...brings her religion in a way that might be hard for some people.

The main point he makes at the end is that the garden is always changing, all the time, every year, it's always different. Some people will grow vegetables all the time and then grow flowers. Some people grow food that is too expensive in the stores. People all have different reasons for gardening. I ask if he thinks it's a substantial supplement to people's diet. He first says yes, and then goes on to say the previous thing about people growing different things to meet different needs. He seems to have no problems representing or talking about what people are doing in the garden, but doesn't talk that much about what he personally does...I don't think he wants to think of himself as having an important big position, but regardless, he still doesn't talk about his own personal experiences in the garden so much. I forgot to ask him what his visions for the garden were. He mentioned in the beginning that there were many benefits to the garden, he just didn't think that I would be interested in them according to my thesis focus.

Interview with xxxxx xxxxx and xxxxx xxxxx ...conducted in the University Press Lunchroom where they both work. William is a manuscript editor at the Press.

He's involved in the garden through his mother, who is on the board at the resource center. His mother and daughter had a plot elsewhere and now then decided to have a plot at the 61st and Dorchester garden. He has a small garden at home. Four years ago, they started with one plot, the next year two plots when they recruited xxxxx to help them figure out what was going on...then they had a third plot when xxxxx's mother wanted to garden. Unfortunately, xxxxx mother died earlier this year...but they still divide the three plots among themselves. His oldest daughter has a plot of her own. xxxxx has an experimental section...they get together in the spring/winter for dinner and discuss what will be planted...and buy the seeds.

xxxxx has no gardening experience, he grew up in hyde park, and then mentions other cities that he's lived in, explaining that as a city kid, he had no idea about gardens. He had no clue when he started so he relied on any advice he could get from fellow gardeners, friends and family. There are a fair number of gardeners at the press...it's just behind the building.

In terms of the organization of the garden, he's happy to have xxxxx organize it— whoever has the time to do it. He and his wife haven't really participated in the group events. Life is busy, especially with kids, but there is still a sense of community. At least the community is there and available if he needs it. He emphasizes how informal the garden is and how the interactions are spontaneous. There is a feeling of place of being a part of something. The people are mostly made up of old hyde parkers. The garden might not be as representative as it could be because it's mostly through word of mouth that people find out about the garden. It's sort of a self-selected community where people with similar interests join. Mostly upper middle-class. The snail has a plot where they grow their basil and hot peppers...like a factory... xxxxx mentions this to explain about the diversity.

They take their lunchbreaks there in the summer. A nice relaxing place to get away from the computers and the indoors. They both stress the quiet reprieve from their daily lives. William wishes there were more kids in the garden. His kids have learned a lot. They used to have to be told not to destroy things or stomp on things or pick things, but now they've sort of figured it out. They play around and are interested by the wildlife in the garden. The family of snakes that appeared last summer, which they used to monitor and check up on each time they came to the garden.

xxxxx has been gardening all of her life...her mom was really into gardening...she grew up in a suburban environment. She sees gardening as a "powerful antidote to the rest of her life where she is surrounded by computers, etc." It's really about the therapy that the garden provides. The emotional and spiritual renewal...it's not really about the produce, but the process.

She has contact with other people and enjoys the spontaneous connections. She was once walking around and spotted a large squash that had been infected with pests...she chatted with the man about what to do...because it's organic and you're faced with those sorts of things. She talks about the opportunities for interaction...you could be weeding with your head down and not really talk with someone, but when you see someone up walking around, then you sort of chat. There are likely to only be a couple gardeners in the garden at a time and that limits your interactions.

Both of them are very aware of the other gardens in the area and the rich history of community gardens in the area that have been lost to development (xxxxx attributes this to the gentrification in the area that happened in the 70's). He met people through the garden that he had limited contact with before through the various political things he's involved in...the leftist community. He seems to be very aware of the political history of the area (because he grew up here) and sees activism (my word) as an important part of his life. The community seems very important to him. He mentions the other things that take up his time...he's involved in an alternative pre-school of some sort, but he won't be after his youngest daughter is through with it, so he's looking for something else to occupy his time...maybe more involvement in the garden...because he seems to need a balance between his work life and non-work life (where he's still doing stuff).

xxxxx mentions how the garden is full of wildlife, birds, goldfinches, butterflies, and snakes and she laughs about the not so good ones...snakes and rabbits, etc. They both seem to accept that there are some things about the garden, like rabbits and the occasional stolen vegetable, that are out of their control. As an example of how the garden is important to her, when 9/11 happened, after she was told about it, she walked out the garden and sat on a bench to be in the garden.

They both really like to have the opportunity to hang out with people, and teach the kids about nature—important social lessons about boundaries, can't step on the plants, respecting other people's gardens, how long it takes to grow things, and the importance of planning.

The Contact with other people is what xxxxx likes about it too. They both find an extreme pleasure in seeing things grow.

The time commitment is intense in the spring and then about every other day during the season to water...or whenever they have to water. xxxxx says she feels more connected to the weather cycles and seasons, just more connected to larger cycles. xxxxx asserts that it's a less intense way of involving yourself in the community. It's a really friendly endeavor.

I ask them if they would like to be involved in more discussion groups, etc. with more intense participation to increase interaction, and they both say that it would be too invasive, they like the sort of spontaneous, informal interactions that occur in the garden on their own terms.

xxxxx describes the structure as non-hierarchical, very lateral...everyone has their own plot and is doing their own thing...the organization is really minimal—just deciding who gets a plot where, really

xxxxx got his boss a plot...everybody wants one, which is why the garden is expanding so much...when they first had their plots they were at the end of the garden—now they're about in the middle. People talk about the garden all the time. Sharing is kind of spontaneous. xxxxx mentions that it's a nice way to have different interactions with the same people she's working with, when she sees them in the garden. Everybody in the garden seems to have a different way of gardening and a different philosophy about it. Some people seem to be really political, and others aren't. There is significant produce gained from the garden. Last year they got about 250 tomatoes. They can't ever keep up with some vegetables. It is about food in some sense—creating something healthy. xxxxx has always placed importance on local foods and tried to buy from farmer's markets, etc. xxxxx says he's not really there yet. With the kids he's at the stage where he eats more mac and cheese than he wants. They incorporate vegetables though. Trish loves to share her vegetables. They've gotten from vegetables and seeds from other people.

The only problems were with the watering last year...some people were dragging the hose over other people's plots and their cabbages were stolen. It doesn't really happen too often. They expected it to happen more often. See it as sort of harmless. xxxxx is involved in the Garden Fair, where they sell unique varieties of plants...she says it's sort of political "BUY PLANTS!" and considers this her connection to organizations outside of the garden. They both kind of like the lack of organization and the randomness. Each plot is wildly different. The beauty of the garden is in its informality and lack of agenda. The listserve that they are both on is seasonal...they would like to see a little more communication...but problems with SPAM...they don't have time. There is a sort of non-attachment to the land...a sense of the temporal nature of the garden...they never know how long it will be there for. With guerilla gardening there is always this sort of instability. They go on to talk about the other gardens that have been destroyed. They

would be upset if it happened. They seem to have grown quite attached. They are both very friendly and open and seem like good friends.

Interview with xxxxx xxxxx

Started in 2000. Got one plot with her friend. Her friend is responsible for choosing what they grow. She's been involved with gardening because her family has farmed...not too far from the generations that farmed. She likes gardening most for the excitement she gets out of seeing what you plant grow and then just eating it. The produce produced is significant...all of the tomatoes in the summer she eats come from the garden, and about 30% of all other vegetables. She likes to grow flowers too...the kinds with the long stems that she can cut. They choose the plants based on the best yield. She does buy organic, but not because of the garden. She doesn't do the events, but likes the good interactions she has in the garden. She feels a real sense of community within the garden. She mentions that the social activity in the garden could be your social life if you wanted it to be because there's so much. She thinks it's very well managed. She's not a part of the listserv and doesn't think there should be a discussion board. The garden is mostly U of C white people. There are several people of color, which is nice, but the garden doesn't try to be representative. There are a lot of aging hippies. She puts about on average 5-6 hours a week into the garden. People have given her seeds and produce. She probably know about 5% of the people in the garden by name, and about 30% by face. It's nice the garden has confirmed that people can and are doing these things. She says it's cynical of her, but she has been surprised by the minimal theft. Nobody takes anything she says, and that gives her a good feeling about people. She doesn't feel connected to any movements of anysort. She is sort of quiet and gives one line answers and doesn't quite give me eye contact. I think she's probably friendly enough and appreciates the interview for something to mix up her day.

Interview with xxxxx xxxxx

She lives in ukrainian village north of the loop and works at the press. We're having lunch at the press. She saw fresh veggies in the office in a basket. They were free and from the 61st St. garden. She heard about how to join the garden from a colleague...she'd seen the garden before.

She used to live in Colorado and had little experience there growing things. She came to this garden with very little knowledge, so she read lots of books and asked fellow gardens she saw. She has two plots and at first wasn't thinking about what she wanted to plant for what she liked, but what she wanted to grow. Now she chooses her plants based on what she likes to eats. 25% of what she eats in the summer comes from the garden. She doesn't buy herbs, greens or tomatoes.

Asking about feeling a sense of community—she says everything in hyde park has a sense of community. She hasn't been going out of her way to participate in the garden but she could network more. It's been hard for her to find out about events, xxxxx is bad about keeping her informed. The record-keeping is really bad. It's all quite informal.

She mentions that xxxxx left a plot open for several years convinced that someone owned it, when they'd really moved away. She didn't know when the garden was expanding. And nobody knew about the change of the water system, which xxxxx created with asking anyone and which didn't work and created a lot of trouble for everyone. Nobody knew why he created the system he did.

She likes it because it's great fun and relaxing. She thinks there should be more discussion and decisions should be more democratic, but when I ask her what the forum for this discussion should be, she doesn't know. The management of the garden is not terribly organized, but that's okay. It doesn't have to be perfect. xxxxx does what he wants to do...and that's not a criticism of xxxxx.

She's been surprised and pleased that nothing has been stolen. She goes out at lunch time and it's a good break. The first and foremost reason she gardens is for its relaxation. The garden is quiet, you are surrounded by flowers, and then it's gratifying to see something grow. She gets excited everytime her plants come up. It's good to see nature in action.

It's not important to her that it's organic. She thinks she's a minority in this way. She goes on to describe all of the ways that the soil could be polluted and the air could be polluted. (she's kind of misinformed about the soil—it has been tested and is safe, unlike her statements). She thinks that not using pesticides in this really polluted area, doesn't make much of a difference. She will not pay a premium for organic.

She got her seeds and ideas for what she wants to grow at the Garfiled Park conservatory gardening fair thing. She seems to really value her interaction with other gardeners and explains about all the things she's learned from hearing about fellow gardener's experience. She seems to be connected to these other people by their interest in gardening. She's planting new things including heirlooms.

She thinks the garden is representative of the community. She doesn't know how exactly the garden serves the community, but she has had people stop by the fence and talk about their past gardening experiences, so she thinks that it might jar people to think about gardening a little bit more and maybe even inspire them to grow their own garden in their backyards. It's a good bridge to other relations...there are all sorts of people in the garden. It's not a threatening thing, it's nurturing and it provides something positive. It's an example of good stuff going on in this area instead of people thinking that hyde park is known for it's gangs, people are aware of the garden. There is a good mix of people she thinks...people who have nothing to do with the Univeristy have plots, there are people of all ages, races, and colors. She's come to a greater appreciation for the people that bring their food to farmer's markets. She's interested in organic offerings, even if it's not important to her in the garden. She doesn't feel connected to any larger organizations or movements. But everything is political in hyde park. Even the garden. It seems her awareness has increased. It's a very positive experience for her. A good way to distress...she loves being outside and being in nature. She shares her vegetables with others...she lives alone

Interview with xxxxx xxxxx ...in the same spot right after my other interview. He seems much more political, much more engaged, interested, and knowledgeable about these sorts of things...you can tell he's been thinking of them. He brings me a whole packet of printed out material I should look at and mentions a SMART gallery show I should look into that happened in 2002 that documented community gardens around the city of Chicago.

He had always been aware of the garden and had wanted to participate, but there was really no room until about 5 years ago. It was his first gardening experience. He learned through trial and error and people were very willing to share their experiences, and information with him. He now has two plots. He feels a real sense of community at the garden. He says the garden might not be the most important part, but it is certainly key in making him feel a part of the neighborhood and community. A good way to interact with people outside of the U of C. There are also the tangentially associated experimental station and the buying club (which he participated in once, but wasn't practical for him...he lives alone). He relates socially within the experimental station and considers himself a customer.

He occasionally interacts with people outside of the garden. He does participate in the events that xxxxx has, but can't always make them all. He seems to interact a lot with people. He goes to the garden and walks around and chats. He loves to share his produce, and gets produce from other people as well. He can't ever eat all of the food he produces, so he always shares. A substantial portion of the produce he consumes over the summer comes from his garden. He had a bumper crop of cucumbers a couple years ago and canned 50 cans of pickles...he still has some cans.

Gardening hasn't changed his conceptions too much, it was kind of the other way around. The reason why he was interested in gardening, was because he thought that food production was important. He doesn't buy exclusively organic. It is important to him that the garden is organic, although that has its problems as well. He had squash beetles the other year and couldn't just spray them with industrial chemicals. He also got some heirloom varieties at the Hyde Park garden fair.

There is a diverse group of people in the garden (diverse not used euphemistically). But the garden is not sufficiently representative....it's gotten better over the years. He thinks it has in large part to do with the question of availability. He doesn't know how there could be an effort made to bring in other people. He thinks there's a bit of a sociological difference between the rich, more educated perspective and the lower income with less time available poor. He said he was talking to someone from Woodlawn about gardening, and it turns out he had farmed, so it was just a nuisance to him to get dirty...too connected to work, whereas people in the office just want a break from being outdoors. He thinks the garden is made up of people who are interested in gardening...but why there is a certain group of people interested in gardening is an interesting question.

The garden is not very democratic but it's well managed and there aren't actually that many decisions to make in the first place. He's never had any problems. He's a member of the listserv, but hasn't been too active, it hasn't been used that much and he hasn't used it that much. It's a tool that's there for people though. He doesn't think there should be any further efforts at discussion. He says that when there is a need, people usually find a way to address it, so if there was a need for more discussion, something would be created... There's no need right now.

What he likes most about gardening is the community and social aspect. He loves sharing food and getting his hands dirty too. He just enjoys it. At the bottom of the list is eating the food from his garden. He doesn't really feel aligned with any movements but is sympathetic to them. Not in a really active way does he feel connected. He identifies himself on the non-authoritative left, but isn't necessarily politically motivated. He thinks the garden won't appreciably change food production in this country, but changes individual's consumption, and maybe that's enough. More importantly, the garden has a role as a vehicle for integrating the community. The garden is part of it though, it definitely goes against the trends of the larger society. He says it's a bit of hope in a grim contemporary condition.

Interview with xxxxx xxxxx

She works for a non-profit organization in Chicago called Growing Power. It's a national organization... might be worth it to check out this organization. Responsible for trainings for local initiatives. Facilitates the growth of community based food systems, especially emerging urban agriculture projects. Philosophy pretty clear—do not work in communities unless invited to. The interest and the request for help/aid/advice has to come from within the community. Many of the gardens are short-term and the work that growing power does is pretty short-term.

There are a diversity of structures/models/hierarchies for how these things work, but the best are most laterally spread. And the support is thus lateral as well. A garden is challenging particularly because it's transient urban space use. Land ownership is important for community empowerment. Green space has to be given to people. Some people think that any green space period is good. There needs to be a longevity of space.

People manage every space differently, because what community means in each space is different, what the space requires, who the people are, etc. The outreach is really diverse. Sometimes it's through the church, which is the main structure and center of some communities. Then they can communicate with the most people. And use the structure that already exists to support more communication within the community. That's empowerment. Elements of empowerment (1. Access to Space—some people like to protect the materials and fence off the garden, but this creates bad things). 2. How the space is defined...so that it remains accessible...what was the space used for before? Was it a kid's baseball field that they're now kicked off of? The garden needs to be a visual metaphor. And it needs to prevent alienation. 3. Cultural appropriate varieties of plants—to provide a comfortable environment/ so that the people are empowered to grow what they want to eat. 4. Youth involvement is really important.

Community empowerment—means having the information/understanding of the systems that create their environment. The distribution of where grocery stores are. And to be empowered is to create a space outside of that structure. Community Gardens work for food systems, the garden becomes a space for brainstorming, a space for dialogue, for healthy healing, a multi-generational project that can provide people with life skills.

The plot system can work very well. The structure of the organization is really important and it needs to incorporate the distinguishing things that make a place a place. Diversity is important in order to promote inclusion. The power of sharing is really important. The garden has to be culturally sensitive...the cultural perspectives of the community need to be accounted for. People who manage the garden have to be driven, and organized and have perspective of what the community aspect means. Chaos is Good. Every situation is different so models of gardens are different everywhere. And Somebody has to be there to pick up the slack...there has to be some big element of dedication to the garden or it will fail. Youth programming is huge.

Interview with xxxxx xxxxx

xxxxx is an old friend and is how she became involved in the garden. And now it is much more organized and better than the original. She's been doing it for the past four years or so (I think that's what she said, but she may have been doing it for longer). She doesn't think that xxxxx acts as a dictator because some people barely know xxxxx, and you never feel like xxxxx is running the garden, he sends out an email and that's about it. She would say she knows about 20 people by face (familiar faces) and knows 10 well, but knew them outside of the garden. They all share vegetables and it's very informal. She's learned how to garden by looking at people's gardens asking questions, like finding out where people get their seeds. She gets some seeds from the Garfield Park Conservatory Garden Fair. She's always grown flowers. Growing up she had a garden. Now she can grow vegetables. She shares 3 plots with family friends (her doctor). They have a little discussion to prepare the garden and decide what to plant. She grows heirloom tomatoes and heirloom lettuce. She participates in seed sharing and gets seeds from other people. She doesn't even buy vegetables during the summer because they produce so much.

The fact that the garden is organic is pretty important to her. She buys organic when she has to buy vegetables. She avoids the coop at all costs and goes to trader joes, etc.

She likes the loose structure of the community gatherings. She doesn't always go, but has in the past. She likes that she could. She does the basil harvesting and then makes pesto herself. She feels the garden is diverse in terms of age, but not so much in other ways. There are a lot more African Americans and this is good.

She grows a real variety of vegetables. Last year, because of the drought, she would go 2x every day during the summer. She might see 5 people at any given time with the exception of the social gatherings...when people have bbq's or cookouts, etc.

She is most motivated to garden because she loves to cook, she loves to give her produce away, and she loves being outside and checking in on the garden everyday. She finds it really interesting and the passion of garden is creeping up on (she used to be sort of a casual garden, but finds herself becoming more serious). Some people garden all year...she talks about it as if she might want to try it.

She likes the fact that there is a little interaction in the garden. People walk around and ask questions. In terms of being connected to larger social movements, she hasn't yet bought food from local farms (interesting that this is the first thing that pops into mind...she's thinking of the local foods movement). And she and her husband are members of SLOW foods. She thinks gardening is a huge luxury. The community garden has become a real part of life for her. She thinks everything in hyde park has the potential for community empowerment.

Interview with xxxxx xxxxx

met at her home

She can't exactly remember how she got involved in the garden. She grew up in an apartment in hyde park. She knew xxxxx ...everybody knows everybody she says. And she thinks by talking to people and by walking by the garden she learned about it. She mentions trying to grow tomatoes outside on the pipes (?) of her apartment, but having to share with the squirrels.

She's on the board of the resource center. She's probably been gardening for the past 5-6 years. She says that this was her first experience gardening, though she remembers when she was 5 during WWII she helped garden in Jackson Park, but she grew beets, which she still doesn't like. So for this garden she decided to have xxxxx who has been gardening a lot, to help her. xxxxx is her gardening partner. She's not sure how many plots she has...this information doesn't seem to be important.

When I ask her what the most important thing about gardening is, she says tomatoes. She loves her tomatoes. What's important is knowing what's in your food. And they taste so good. Everyone likes jobs that produce something. Tangible results. She works at home so can be in the garden during off hours. She was involved before her son, and now gardens with her granddaughters. She says xxxxx, the younger granddaughter has always avoided vegetables, but she'll just stand by the peas and eat them because they taste so good. This is a good thing.

She thinks the organization of the garden works well, it would be too chaotic otherwise. xxxxx knows what he's been doing. She busy so she usual doesn't go to the events (ex. Basil harvesting party) but when they do (she's speaking for her husband xxxxx too) she enjoys going and talking with everyone. She leads me to believe she's quite social because she talks to whomever is in the garden when she's there. She thinks the table, in the shade, acts as a sort of meeting/gathering place and will talk to anyone she sees hanging out there.

She thinks the watering system in the garden works especially well and is thankful for xxxxx's decision making. There are possibly things stolen in the garden, but she doesn't see this as a bad thing. She says, let them enjoy the tomato, they're delicious. She and patsy had a watermelon volunteer that they thought was going to be stolen, but it wasn't. Maybe this is because it was hidden, but it doesn't seem important to her. She doesn't share so much with people in the garden, but instead with people in her building. She had lettuce/greens three times a day for a while. It's very important to her that the garden is organic, and she buys organic outside of what the garden produces. The produce provides a substantial supplement to her diet in the summer, with peas and squash and beans and tomatoes.

She doesn't think the garden is representative of the community, but it's a good slice, there is still some diversity within the garden, but most people are younger than she is and white. Diversity happens within the garden, but it's probably not as diverse because word of the garden comes through word of mouth. Children are around and that's nice. She says that xxxxx says that everyone has their own style of gardening, and some garden "wrong", but they still are producing things.

Gardening is about "doing what you talk about." It's comforting to have something you can do to make things better. She wishes more people had the opportunity. She likes being surrounded by people who feel the same...going back to her sense of community, this is part of what she likes about the garden, it's sort of a self-selected group of people, so that someone can say "they're from the garden" and she already feels like she knows a little something about them. Her style of gardening is that she just listens to Patsy and Xxxxx.

She also says gardening is about finding your peasant roots, which we all have, and that's comforting in it's own way. Her parents farmed in Sweden, but she grew up in an apartment in a big City, so she feels like there is a generational connect.

xxxxx xxxxx

Met at the starbucks...She's a teacher at the Montessori k-5. She met xxxxx because her son attended kindergarten with his kid...so she was friends with xxxxx and xxxxx before becoming involved in the garden. She's also a member of the buying club and really excited about being able to get her meat and eggs from a local farm. She has to drive down there every once in a while and because the moore's (the farmers) are very vocal, she is kept informed about the various things going on in the world of agriculture. She seems very interested by it. She has been gardening for the past seven years. She never gardened before and she thinks it's silly but it really changed her life. She's had three plots for the past 4 years. She was first involved in the new location, she wasn't part of the garden when it was across the street.

Her gardening style is that she just "fakes" it. By just doing it she was able to learn a lot. She mentions people asking her how to tell a weed from a plant when you've never gardened before and she says, you just know. It seems a real trial and error sort of thing.

She's learned to plant what she likes to eat. She always comes out with more than her small family can eat, so she gives a lot away. Her son's school had a silent auction and one of the things was for her to bring groceries of produce to someone (could be anything she had). She learned a lot from the organic seed-catalog, but still buys plants based on what she will consume. She grows flowers too (she's trying edibles) and had raspberries for a while and a strawberry patch that twists and takes over. She grows peas and lettuce too. Organic is important to her and local is especially important (the buying club). She is aware of those issues and makes an effort. She sometimes does fundraiser's with her extra produce but on a pick-your own basis, she thinks this works best, because then people will take what they really want and can really use. She puts quite a bit of time into it all. She waters everyday which can take about 45min-1hr. probably puts in about 10hours a week. Maybe a whole Saturday. It's really therapeutic for her.

The community aspect is really great. She thinks it's fun to check on how the vegetables are doing. She enjoys the interactions. She got to know people in the garden that she interacts with outside of it. She probably knows about 20-25 people by face and about 10 well. She used to participate in the events a lot, but for the past two years hasn't really. Everyone is very friendly. There was a beautification day. It's nice to have a different context for knowing people. She got to know a student in her school better because his family has a plot and she could see him gardening. There is a little bit of exchange, orphan plants are left out on the plant for taking.

It's a very White group of people. Other people will tour the garden though, one time the local cops came by and hung out. It's nice for people to have alternatives to supermarkets (etc.) and to grow alternatives.

What she loves most about gardening is that with a little bit of water it is miraculous to see what can grow. All the production (she makes the analogy to the kids who are growing and expanding their minds in her school). It's beautiful and peaceful. She says, it's not about me, it's about something bigger. It's been very therapeutic for her...weeding was a good way for her to relieve her anger. During a divorce she used the garden as therapy. It's nice because there are all sorts of animals around...her sunflowers brought all sorts of birds and bees and spiders, etc. The garden brings about contact between people that wouldn't otherwise happen.

She has a compost on her plot where she brings her food scraps. The management and organizational structure of the garden is pretty benign, easy, because really the rules are quite simple and clear.

She liked the water system a lot. But there's no happy medium. Some selfish people complained a lot and some wrecked the water system by taking apart the hoses so that they could water their plots with a hose. She thought it was sort of selfish of some people.

Some of her veggies have been stolen...she had eggplants and red peppers she was ready to harvest that were taken, and kids run around, sometimes over her seedlings...and

sometimes there are dogs. She had a problem with rabbits eating all of her food, but a friend told her to put dog fur around her garden, and it's worked.

The garden produces a huge super abundance and there is a lot of waste. But it's much a pleasure as a food source. Sometimes she gets tired of watering and things wilt. She wonders if there could be some way for the extra produce could be collected and distributed throughout the community. She mentions that she would be utterly devastated if the garden was developed by the university. It has become a real part of her life.

She feels connected to her past too. She thinks of her grandmothers who used to garden. She grew up in LA. She also thinks there's such a disconnect from nature, that it's nice to have a little bit in an urban environment.

Interview with xxxxx xxxxx

Quick and on the phone during her lunch break. She works as a paralegal doing social work. She learned about the garden through a friend. She has two plots that she shares with her girlfriend. Gardening has always been a part of her life because of her family...her father grew up on a farm and her mother has always enjoyed flower gardening. She thinks the garden functions well, its pretty loosely organized, nobody is watching after you, the rules are pretty minimal and straightforward. There is minimal structure.

There is Absolutely No sense of community for her. Some people aren't very friendly at all. After a couple of neighboring gardeners found out that she was gay they haven't acknowledged her...it makes her feel uncomfortable. Some people just don't care to interact. She knows some people and is friendly with some of them, but the interactions in the garden are minimal. She doesn't see a lot of people, which might be a function of early morning gardening. She has participated in some of the group events. She's more aware and interested in the gardening related activities and seems very knowledgeable about gardening. She doesn't think the garden is representative of the community. She thinks it would be nice if it were. Most people are university affiliated and white and live north of the garden. She's talked to lots of people South of the garden who are curious about how to get involved and would like to become involved.

What she likes most about gardening—the peace and quiet. The process of planting things and seeing something grow. She loves the learning process and researching new techniques and finding more out about gardening. She plants what she wants to eat. She's very up on what kinds of plants are good for others, etc. She grows heirlooms and buys organic, not genetically modified because she wants to be able to save seeds. She goes to gardening workshops at the Garfield Park Conservatory. She likes to plan her garden ahead. She and her girlfriend have very different styles of gardening. Organic is important to her. She tries to buy organic when she can. The garden provides her with about 1/3 of the produce she consumes over the summer (because she eats a lot of produce). She likes thinking of gardening as part of a greater resistance against corporitization, industrialization, etc. and likes the self-sufficiency aspect of it. She donates to many organizations, including growing power, but doesn't use a CSA because she wouldn't be able to eat all of it.

xxxxx xxxxx and xxxxx xxxxx

In their house for dinner. A very generous couple. Both academic advisors. She teaches at the Garfield Park Conservatory (at the demonstration garden, etc.) once a week. He does research on the side about the World War 1 gardens (in Chicago) that were the predecessors of victory gardens. Both have an interest in agriculture and an avid interest in gardening.

Talked to xxxxx while she was preparing the food. Very knowledgeable about plants, gardening, and has had lots of experience as a gardener. Very interested in my angle. She volunteered with the Austin Green Team, which has been around since the 1980's and which she considers a good example of a community garden. The site used to be a fly dumping site, but then in a sort of neighborhood beautification/greening effort, the block club created the gardens there. The people are mainly seniors, but they try to involve the whole community. They have a program for kids called the sprouts. Community beautification can be an agent for social change. The Austin Green Team is why xxxxx doesn't think of the 61st garden as a community garden, but also because people just don't work together on projects the way they could. That only brings up the multiple and different kinds of community and the motivations for the garden. Does the garden serve a need in this particular kind of community? Probably.

They have one official plot (\$40) and had two when they used an abandoned plot. This is their third year of doing it and they heard about it through xxxxx xxxxx, a friend of xxxxx's through the GPC. xxxxx has been farming since he was little. He grew up on a farm in upstate NY after his father quit his computer programming job, when xxxxx was five and decided to buy 200 acres for a farm. They grew organic veggies and had some livestock. He remembers having to pick stone. And they would bring their stuff to a farmer's market.

xxxxx's family has been doing "gentleman gardening" for a long time. Her grandparents, etc. she names lots of relatives who garden. But her family is far-removed from farming as a livelihood. As soon as she moved to Chicago in 1992, she started gardening, and started to identify herself as a community gardener. She first grew flowers, but then by 94 she started to grow veggies. She lived in Humboldt and then Bucktown and guerrilla gardened in both areas. She initiated it both times. She took over abandoned lots, used her windows and porch for container gardens (and dug up the sidewalk a little bit). Now that lot has sprouted condos. She participates (on the teaching end) in the demonstration garden at the Garfield Park Conservatory and does the planning and maintenance. They also do educational programming there.

In terms of the management of the garden, xxxxx has never been asked for his input, they didn't really realize what the rules were, nothing has ever been really clear to them, they didn't even know it was organic. Things just sort of happen, without them knowing why. They realized there must be rules when xxxxx asked them to help make sure people weren't using chemicals. And they found out about the community plots, the herb plots. They think that it would be nice if the community gardeners helped with them, instead of xxxxx's landscapers doing all of the work. There is the basil harvesting that they do. They think the garden is well run in general. It's kind of weedy and there is a bine-weed

infestation and so they are worried about that and other invasives. They think there should be more of a community role in keeping the garden clean..it's kind of unkempt. But they are happy there is mulch, compost, and a crazy water system. None of these things are a big concern, and they are happy to let go of their concerns. xxxxx's nice and they have picnics and cookouts every once in a while. It's kind of assumed that around 4 on Sunday afternoon, somebody will bring food and there is usually a spontaneous sort of gathering with a handful of couples. There is also a web-page. xxxxx thinks community clean-up days would be nice. And more awareness of shading. xxxxx did tell people who wanted to have trellises to put them north-south. And people should clear their plots at the end of the year. It's about disease control. And turn the compost. And maybe a watering schedule to be put in for the community plots. It is good the way it is though...very casual. xxxxx mentions that people are cool with casual.

xxxxx says again that there are dif. Kinds of community and that she think this garden is not an agent for social change. There is a sort of laissez-faire casual community. People chat, participate in events. They know about 15 people by name. But would really only invite one couple over for dinner. There is a big exchange of food and seeds and knowledge. And an exchange of labor, watering, mulching, tending to people's plots when they're away. They are sort of identified as local experts, so people approach them with lots of questions.

They think the community is pretty representative of the neighborhood. There are lots of people from new woodlawn. It's mainly white and people connected to the university, but Lou supposes those are simply the people that he would recognize. The snail had a plot last year. They had a wonderful planting of claytonia and some spinach. They are on the young side. Most people are in their 50's and there are 2 or 3 families with kids. During the warm season they go tend the garden several times a week, once for about 3hrs. and during the cold season, about 1 every 10 days (they do season extension). It's a pastime of their's and everybody else's to walk through the garden and look at other people's plots. xxxxx mentions as a tangent that she thinks the labor part of community gardening makes her worry about the labor practices in organic agriculture...everyone is concerned with a livable wage, etc., but that the hard work and physical requirements may not be sustainable. She says that for the most part she won't buy organic food at whole foods. It's just too expensive. She thinks fresh and local are the most important things anyway. She just won't pay a premium for organic food.

They get by in the summer pretty well with their plot—meaning that they have to buy a very limited amount of produce. There is always variability in nature though, so they can't rely on it. Organic is important, but only because they are worried about drift. And there is no need for people to use chemicals in a small ten by ten. They did a soil test on their plot and found the fertility to be off the charts. xxxxx think xxxxx did an excellent job picking the site and building it up with lots of compost. She sees him in the garden a bit. They have composting worms in their basement. They pick their seeds from the seed catalogs (they have tons). They buy heirloom varieties, cold-hardy varieties, experiment with different things. Space dictates what they can grow. They choose lots of dwarf things that can grow in a limited amount of space, and can't grow pumpkins. Certain

veggies don't work in their garden. And they choose to direct seed, because transplanting doesn't work for the cold frames. They start everything themselves (most) because they have a system in their house that works for it. It's all about personal preferences. xxxxx volunteers at a couple of community gardens.

What they love most about gardening:

xxxxx —being outdoors, seeing things he planted grow, it's the closest thing to a farm, working with his hands in the dirt, building (cold frames), like the challenge of making things grow.

xxxxx —Being outdoors, being a practionner, having a product is important and a great compliment to her job in academia that has intangible results, and the community aspect is important. They could find a larger plot and grow more, but she likes participating in a broader community. There is also the intergenerational component of gardening that she likes.

xxxxx is very much aware of the food security people, but haven't felt connected to a movement. He thinks that individuals can provide excellent examples. He would like to see more people eating from gardens, and for university students to have the opportunity to have a plot and tinker around.

xxxxx is a member of the ACGA, and thinks that there is awareness and she identifies herself as a community gardener. It's important to have the opportunity to garden. She's an apolitical person and has no political agenda, but she likes to influence people on an individual level.

People from outside the garden stop by all the time to ask questions. The garden could provide a different function (something more...greater than what it provides now).

Interview with xxxxx xxxxx —late night.

She emphasizes how much the kids learn. She started the plot last year. She moved schools last year—she teaches at Carnegie mellon. The plot is donated by xxxxx. She's got 20 kids and 3 classes. She would go three times a week last year, but now because of the interest she goes everyday. She teaches kindergarden, takes two first grade classes every Thursday. Every kid planted a beet seed this year...was a sort of formal exchange. 4 x 20 (kids in a class) = a lot of beets. Today they spent an hour in the garden, but usually its about a 20 minute period.

The garden is really hard to maintain over the summer but she parents help her. It's also hard to get the rest of the school involved. Other teachers express interest, but then don't actually want to get involved themselves (and she doesn't have time to take all of the kids). The kids do weeding and a little harvesting too. She teaches an integrated curriculum where she goes through the animal groups, so everything relates (ex. Growth and change of frogs, like growth and change of plants). Thematic concepts...living things...even the writing process can relate. They did an observation sort of unit where they recorded the what they observed in the garden (the growth) and then also soaked lima beans...

They harvested radishes and each brought home a quart of radishes to their families, just like they brought home lettuce for salad and nasturshiums. She wants to grow perennial strawberries. One parent suggested doing regional groups so they have a pizza section.

The biggest thing that she would like to impart is giving them a sense of where their food comes from. She would really like them to make that connection. And the sense of choice that growing your own food gives you. And the importance of organic.

There extent of the interaction of the kids with the gardeners is limited but there is the possibility for relationships. They had a hopes, wishes, and dreams project last year where they decorated the trees (around the picnic table) around the garden with their hopes wishes and dreams in bottles and glitter, etc. They got a lot of feed back from gardeners who were wondering what was going on. They did a bird unit this year and put peanut butter in pinecones around the garden (in the trees). Some of the kids bring their parents to the garden to show them what they've been doing, and the parents then interact with gardeners. There are some parents involved in the garden. There is one elderly couple in the garden (the threshers?) who are now coming in as guest speakers.

Interview with xxxxx xxxxx ... conducted by phone 3/7/06 9pm...after she's put her two year old to bed.

They have 3 plots

She lives in Hyde Park and has been involved in the garden for the past 10 years/over 10 years...a long time...when the garden was across the street where the school is now. She learned about it through xxxxx, who she volunteered for and then worked for. Now she works for the Garfield Park Conservatory where she coordinates a community garden on one city plot. She's been doing this for the past 5 years (it was created in 2001). It is not a garden that is set up where people can buy plots, but more of an educational garden.

She's been gardening all of her life—she learned from her mother. And has accumulated knowledge of how to garden over the years as she's helped start various community gardens in the city (with xxxxx).

She thinks xxxxx is doing an amazing job as the manager. She believes it take a lot of passion and dedication and he puts a lot of work into it to make it easy for everyone. She thinks this is atypical of gardeners. He doesn't have many rules...because there's not much he does (in terms of controlling people). He provides leaves, mulch, woodchips for paths...he provides a lot. He provides the tools needed for the gardeners to succeed. Everyone has all of these resources at their fingertips. It's typical for some people to try to garden and let their garden grow to weeds, and xxxxx lets them for consecutive years before he will reallocate a plot.

She feels a strong sense of community (they've been there for such a long time). Whenever she goes to the garden she sees someone she know. But it is mainly just the garden itself that provides the community... similar people in one place. The interactions are limited to the boundaries of the garden, but it still provides a sense of community.

She is friends with some people (a close friend gardens next to her) but hasn't made any friendships that exist beyond the garden.

She perceives that there is a little bit of interaction that's happening in the garden. People exchange vegetables and seeds and give plants to each other. xxxxx does a lot—pretty atypical—he opens up his house for group events, like the basil harvesting. So she still feels a sense of community. There is less actual sharing of opinions/ideas etc. than having the opportunity to casually walk around and see what people are doing in their gardens. Which is enough. It's fun and interesting. She stresses the word fun..it comes up a lot.

It's good to see people in the garden with families and kids around. They've changed their garden to create a space where their two year old can play in the garden. She might see one other person in the garden at any given time, or 4/5 people. She's there every week to water but mentions that they grow the things that are most manageable and that they desire most. So that she doesn't have to spend too much time there it seems. They get a lot of produce...pretty substantial...but they just grow what they like and what works. Minimal effort...they could put more work into the garden to get more out of it.

The garden really becomes a part of their lives, to see things grow, to spend time with her friends, it's really nice to have her own space to produce vegetables. It's a lot of fun. She met her husband volunteering (not at this garden...but through the gardens she volunteered at) so gardening is something they both like to do a lot.

She thinks the garden is representative of hyde park but not woodlawn. There is a waiting list to get a plot in the garden. It certainly seems more diverse than it used to be. There's a plot for the school. xxxxx makes an effort to get more people from woodlawn. The white representation is not really surprising.

She's not involved with the listserve...she's not interested in that kind of involvement...she's not looking for that sort of thing and she doesn't have the time. She mentions that her objectives may simply be different from other people's. She likes having the space to grow her own food. She is very happy with the garden and happy to have xxxxx manage it so well. It takes a lot of passion on his part.

There are very few other community gardens like this one. (in terms of the model—renting space)...she mentions two others...I didn't get the names. There are over 200 community gardens throughout the city, but most are filled with flowers and emphasize the aesthetics of the garden more.

She thinks that a garden, to function well, almost needs a “benevolent dictator” (my term) to set the rules. To make the garden a smooth operation (my words, her sentiments). She feels very connected to the larger social movement of alternative ag. Etc. because of her work.

So few people have the space to garden, she feels lucky.

\$30 a plot, more this year...not sure if I got that right. The most important thing about the garden for her is to have a space to produce. She mentions that if you ever got into a pinch, you could provide a substantial portion of your own food...she mentions that it contributes enormously to her own food budget...and it could contribute more if they wanted it to (put in more time). She really feels like the garden is an extension of the community. In the city, surrounded by concrete, it's really nice to have a place to dig your hands in the soil and be connected to other people. It's a really special place. She's enthusiastic about the garden and about my project.

Interview with xxxxx xxxxx

She works for the CSA learning center—non-profit educational organization. She works on the farm Angelic organics, which is a for-profit farm.

Important things related to community gardens—who owns the land. There aren't enough farmers. The regular farmer's alliance—to promote organically grown, sustainably produced food. Growing Home—51st. CSA (20 wk share, drop off place where pick-up food, mix of vegetables, # of participants change options) ...CSA model good because provides an income at the beginning of the season, so there's a guaranteed market. Try to grow a variety. Farmer's markets are a risk.

Things I should do. Look at previous soil tests. The degree of participation is a good indicator. Gardens are a gentrifying concept. Community outreach good. “in the community” vs. “in the neighborhood.” What kinds of group activities are there? Group beds? University affiliated makes them official squatters. Vandalism—kids, stealing. Sometimes gardens are the only greenspace. Fencing can be disruptive. Can't lock a garden. Fence can be a good idea—makes it official, and is symbolic. Look at the flow of traffic in the garden. A challenge can be youths and adults together. Each garden has it's own ideas about protecting/managing security.

Gardens can be health risks. What other things are going on in the gardens? Composting projects? Beehives? Green houses—seedlings. Educational activities associated with garden—youth. Some people sell food from gardens to communities. There are different perspectives on origins of garden. Who are the organizers? Vacant land is neglected in all senses. Not just a blank space—typically houses before negatives housing. Not many empty lots in Hyde park. This is structural violence.

Who is a community leader? Lots of individuals who are looking to gain economically for profit sometimes can be involved. xxxxx 'sstyle of gardening—community? UIs the garden producing new community leaders? Is it self-perpetuating? If the community members are teaching other community members...

Who is managing the budget? Organizers have different expectations of commitment and pace. Need a reason for participation. Long-term community involvement.

Volunteerism, Race, interesting issues. People who can participate in social change have found stability. Vs. Difficult to organize people who are in constant states of emergency.

Victory gardens—40% of food came from family gardens. There is a victory garden on 75th—southshore.

xxxxx says...not too many community gardens survive unassisted. There needs to be an onsite-go-to person who takes care of conflicts. A garden is a place to come together and for community building...its beyond just a place to grow, but a good mix of class and economic backgrounds. There is a lot of inadequate public support. Want to develop a permanent garden site. There is political support. City owned land always for speculation and development (garden not seen as of value) . ken grows for market.. He sees that there are resources in the city that are not being utilized and gardening is a good opportunity to use them. In 1975 the 61st Dorchester garden. Finances are the biggest problem. Grows for high-end restaurants to sustain costs. Half sells affordably back to community with farmstand. Uses compost not soil. \$25-30,000 per acre is what it costs to sustain.