CULTIVATING EFFECTIVENESS:
LEADERSHIP AND PARTICIPATION IN LOCAL, VOLUNTARY GROUPS

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ABSTRACT

Sarah Morris Cote: Cultivating Effectiveness: Leadership and Participation in Local, Voluntary Groups
(Under the direction of Kenneth Andrews)

Why are some local, voluntary groups more effective than others at achieving the goals for which they were founded? The majority of research on the effectiveness of organizations in the voluntary sector has studied large, incorporated, nonprofit organizations that operate at the regional or national level or with local chapters tied to a national organization. Thus, knowledge of the non-federated, small, local voluntary groups that undergird civil society in towns and cities across the country is extremely limited. I add to this limited research base by studying a particularly vibrant form of local, voluntary group – community gardens – in Greenridge, a mid-sized, Southeastern city. Drawing on data from over 100 in-depth interviews, content analysis of group documents, and group site visits, I examined how different forms of group capacity relate to group goal attainment, specifically material resources, internal group structure, sociopolitical legitimacy, and participation.

Analyses revealed that, although theorized to boost organizational effectiveness, sociopolitical legitimacy and material resources did not account for differential group goal attainment due to the institutionally supportive and resource-rich environment for community garden groups in Greenridge at the time of the study. Through an examination of the broader context surrounding community garden group establishment in Greenridge in the last decade, I show how a convergence of certain conditions can create resource-rich organizational

environments that challenge the assumption of competitiveness underlying much of the work in social movements and organizational sociology. Moreover, I show that only when a local, voluntary group has a leader with the knowledge and skill to mobilize a participant base to capitalize on favorable conditions does a resource-rich environment contribute to the likelihood of group goal attainment. In doing so, I support recent work that brings leadership and leader development to the forefront of analysis in social movements and the study of civic associations.

To the village who helped me get here – you know who you are.

To all of those individuals who welcomed me into their lives as they shared their stories of struggle and success in pursuit of a healthy garden and a vibrant community.
I am forever grateful.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

You know, the garden…just died. Don't know why…I rode down there [to the garden], and it's just grass…I can't answer why this [the garden being neglected] is taking place again. Because [at]…the initial start, it's the greatest thing since sliced bread. And it is. It's a great thing. But…I'm stumped. I wish I knew, but it's, uh, I really fear that this is it for us [the Oakridge Community] and the community garden world.

Tom
Director of the Oakridge Community Parks and Recreation Department

At 8:00 am on the morning of July 15, 2015, I sat under fluorescent lights in the wood-paneled office of Tom, the director of the Oakridge Community Parks and Recreation Department. I was there to talk with him about his impressions of the Oakridge Community Garden Group, which was founded three years before in 2012. At the time of my visit, the Oakridge Community Garden was covered in grass and weeds and looked like, in the words of Tom, "a damn jungle." Tom was more than happy to spend an hour sharing his frustration over the continual failure of the voluntary group that oversaw the garden to regularly maintain it, the produce of which went to a local food bank. However, he was "stumped" as to why it kept happening year after year.

At the heart of this dissertation is a simple question: why do some local, voluntary groups, like the Oakridge Community Garden Group, struggle to meet their goals while other groups flourish? The majority of research on the effectiveness of organizations in the voluntary sector has been done using large, incorporated, nonprofit organizations that operate at the

regional or national level or with local chapters tied to a national organization (Andrews et al. 2010; Edwards and McCarthy 2004b; Smith 1997b). Examples include the Sierra Club, the Red Cross, Mothers Against Drunk Driving, the Boys and Girls Club of America, and the United Way. Our knowledge of the non-federated, small, local, voluntary groups that undergird civil society in towns and cities across the country is extremely limited (Smith 1997b, 2000). These are the community gardens and neighborhood associations, the volunteer orchestras and citizens' groups, the community watch groups and local arts councils that are formed by individuals to make a difference or institute change in their communities.[1]

The voluntary organization of individuals into groups and associations to accomplish socially-oriented goals has been a hallmark of United States democracy for generations, famously observed by Alexis de Tocqueville almost 200 years ago (Tocqueville [1835–40] 1969). Today, longtime nonprofit scholar David H. Smith argues that despite the focus on the "bright or most visible" paid-staff nonprofit organizations, voluntary groups still comprise the majority of the nonprofit sector and carry out the bulk of its work (Smith 1997b, 2000). As such, scholars should have a greater understanding than we currently do of what makes the efforts of these groups successful.

[1] Scholars have correctly identified that there can be a "dark side" to voluntarism and civic engagement (Fiorina 1999). The building of social capital is the mechanism that is often put forth to explain the benefits to democracy of voluntarily organizing into groups and associations. However, in the words of van Deth and Zmerli (2010:633), the benefits of social capital also apply to "any organization or social network, regardless of its criminal or nondemocratic character." In other words, the joining together of individuals to pursue a common cause is good to the extent that the cause itself is good. Examples of times when the cause pursued had at its foundation social exclusion, intolerance, and criminal behavior include the Ku Klux Klan, the Mafia, and the Hitlerjugend or Hitler Youth organization of the Nazi Party.

In pursuit of this understanding, I spent two years studying community gardens, a particularly vibrant form of local, voluntary group with a long history of being utilized by communities to address a myriad of social problems. Within the context of Greenridge, a mid-sized, Southeastern city[2], I identified community garden groups that were more and less effective. Through content analysis, site visits, and dozens of interviews with gardeners and community leaders, I worked to uncover why some were better able to meet their goals than others.

I borrowed from both deductive and inductive research approaches to design this study. While I left room in the research design to allow for the discovery of unexpected answers to my question, I started my initial investigation with the belief that it was the organizational capacity of these groups, their ability to respond to and capitalize on conditions in the organizational environment, that would determine goal achievement. Drawing on literature from organizational sociology, social movements, and the study of nonprofit organizations, I conceptualized organizational capacity as a multidimensional construct (Andrews et al. 2010; Doherty, Misener, and Cuskelly 2014) and identified resources (Cress and Snow 2000; McCarthy and Zald 1973, 1977), internal group structure (Bloemraad and Gleeson 2012; Cress 1997; Minkoff 1993; Staggenborg 1988), sociopolitical legitimacy (Baum and Oliver 1992; DiMaggio and Powell 1983; Edwards and Marullo 1995; Walker and McCarthy 2010), and participation (Andrews et al. 2010; Han 2014; Knoke and Prensky 1984; Smith 2000) as the four types of

[2] Throughout the dissertation, I use pseudonyms in place of the proper names of all individuals, places, and organizations/groups associated with the study site in order to maintain the anonymity of participants. I discuss my decision to anonymize my data in Appendix A.

capacity that should matter most to the ability of community garden groups to accomplish their goals.

I conducted a systematic comparison of the existence and degree to which each of these types of capacity were present in community garden groups, expecting to find patterns in how different types of capacity were linked to one another among more and less effective groups. For example, as suggested by the literature in organizational sociology, perhaps groups that had more sociopolitical legitimacy also would have more resources (Aldrich and Auster 1986; Pfeffer and Salancik 1978), and this combination would be present most clearly in groups that were achieving their goals versus groups that were struggling to sustain themselves.

However, instead of clear patterns in how different types of capacity hung together in relation to group goal attainment, what I uncovered through this comparison was a puzzle. Success in mobilizing participation was the only element of capacity that consistently separated groups that were more and less effective in achieving their goals, and despite an overwhelming amount of past research arguing the contrary, resource mobilization and sociopolitical legitimacy did not seem to matter at all. Unraveling this puzzle became the focus of my research. I sought to understand why resources and legitimacy did not distinguish between groups that were and were not able to achieve their goals, and how leaders played a central role in the mobilization of participation.

Overall, this dissertation is a step towards exploring the degree to which extant theories in organizational sociology, social movements, and nonprofit studies have relevance in understanding the factors that contribute to the ability of local, voluntary groups to achieve their goals. In the next section of this chapter, I clarify the exact type of organized collective to

which I am referring when I use the term "local, voluntary group," followed by a brief discussion of why I studied goal attainment as a measure of group effectiveness. I then describe the case I used to answer my research question and provide a summary of the study design and nature of the data I collected, details of which can be found in Appendices A and B. I conclude by previewing the main themes and findings of the remaining chapters.

LOCAL, VOLUNTARY GROUPS AND CONCEPTUALIZING EFFECTIVENESS AS GOAL ATTAINMENT

Local, Voluntary Groups

There has been significant work to categorize and conceptualize the variety of organizations, associations, and groups that make up the nonprofit sector. Researchers have studied interest groups, advocacy organizations, and civic associations (Andrews et al. 2010; Andrews and Edwards 2004; Han 2014; Knoke 1986; O'Neill 1989; Walker 1991); community-based organizations (CBOs), community development corporations (CDCs), community organizing groups, and social change organizations (Kunreuther 2011; Levine 2016; Marwell 2004, 2007; Walker and McCarthy 2010); and social movement organizations and groups (Andrews and Edwards 2005; Edwards 1994; Jenkins 1987; Staggenborg 1988; Zald and McCarthy 1987). Given the lack of standardized terminology and the overlapping nature of many of the above designations, it is worth clarifying my use of the term "local, voluntary group."

In this study, "local, voluntary group" refers to locally-based, non-federated, organized collectives for social change for which the majority of work is done by members or participants who are not financially compensated for their efforts and/or do not derive their livelihood from the group's activities. By locally-based, I mean the efforts of the group are limited to a single,

geographically-bounded area no larger than a county but perhaps as small as a neighborhood or city block. By non-federated, I refer to groups that are autonomous, not a chapter, extension, or sub-unit of a larger organization located outside of the group's target geographic area. By social change, I mean that the group was started to address a specific problem(s) or implement a specific shift in thinking, culture, or practice in the target community.

In sum, I am interested in what Smith (1997b) calls the "dark matter" of the nonprofit universe[3], those voluntary groups that make up the backbone of day-to-day civic society, many of which are not legally incorporated and often do not appear on the radar of scholars interested in organizational studies or social movements. These types of organizations have been variously termed in the literature "voluntary groups," "grassroots associations," "local associations," "community associations," and "voluntary associations" (see, for example, Cnaan and Milofsky 2008; Harris 1998, 2015; Milofsky 2008; Smith 2000).

I use the term "group" to clearly demarcate the type of organized collective that is the focus of this study from civic associations, which have received much more coverage in the literature. I use the combination of "local" and "voluntary" instead of the term "grassroots," which is promoted by Smith (2000), to avoid confusion with the use of "grassroots" in relation to social movement organizations.

[3] In using the term "dark matter," Smith (1997:115) is comparing local, voluntary groups in the "nonprofit universe" to the "dark matter in the astrophysical universe" that is difficult for astrophysicists to observe.

Goal Attainment as Effectiveness in Local, Voluntary Groups

Since the 1980s, scholars of both for-profit and nonprofit organizations increasingly have relied on multidimensional models to measure organizational effectiveness (Andrews et al. 2010; Baruch and Ramalho 2006; Kanter and Brinkerhoff 1981; Kaplan and Norton 1996; Quinn and Rohrbaugh 1983; Rojas 2000; Sowa, Selden, and Sandfort 2004). These models assume complexity of organizational structure, processes, and goals – assumptions that are safe to make when the organizations under consideration have a formal structure, including defined hierarchies of authority, clear boundaries of membership or affiliation, and documented processes and rules. However, in the case of local, voluntary groups, goal attainment, the oldest and simplest conceptualization of effectiveness, is the most useful.

While some scholars moved away from conceptualizing effectiveness as goal attainment due to criticisms that organizations were too complex to consider goals as the only indicator of success – see Kanter and Brinkerhoff (1981) for a review – the simple, often informal organizational structure of voluntary groups and the targeted purposes for which they are founded renders these criticisms moot. According to Smith (1997b), the majority of voluntary groups are not legally incorporated as 501(c)3 or (c)4 organizations and thus do not have the common elements of organizational structure (e.g. a board of directors, defined budgets, etc.) that accompany legal status.[4] The inconsistent presence of these elements across voluntary

[4] There is a small literature in organizational sociology that considers "minimalist organizations," entities with few of the typical markers of formal organizations; see Halliday, Powell, and Granfors (1987), Aldrich et al (1990), and Seabright and Delacroix (1996) for studies on state bar associations, trade associations, and Alcoholics Anonymous groups, respectively. However, despite the minimalist nature of the organizations analyzed in these studies, local, voluntary groups often are even more loosely organized. As such, I do not rely on the research on minimalist organizations as a theoretical frame for this study.

groups means that we cannot use multidimensional models that incorporate them to assess group effectiveness.

In addition, local, voluntary groups are founded in direct response to the desire to address specific problem(s) or institute specific changes in a local community, in other words, to accomplish specific goals. While all organizations and groups have goals they are trying to achieve, in local, voluntary groups, the goals or mission serve as the "raison d'être" and are not used simply to orient the group's work or motivate better management practices (Baruch and Ramalho 2006:44; Minkoff and Powell 2006). Moreover, unlike larger organizations that are more regional or national in scope with dispersed constituents, local, voluntary groups are intimately tied, at least geographically, to the communities they serve. Such close proximity imposes more pressure to produce demonstrable progress towards goals. Thus, claiming effectiveness based on, for example, efficiency of organizational processes or coherence of organizational structure does not carry much weight if the goals underlying a group's existence are not being addressed.

To put it briefly, due to their simple organizational structure and targeted reasons for existence, I consider goal attainment to be the most relevant measure of the effectiveness of local, voluntary groups. In doing so, I place my work alongside other scholars who also have emphasized the value of examining the factors relating to goal attainment in loosely organized, socially-oriented groups (Doherty et al. 2014; Torres, Zey, and McIntosh 1991).

CASE STUDY: COMMUNITY GARDENS IN GREENRIDGE

To explore the ability of local, voluntary groups to achieve the goals for which they were founded, I looked to the population of community garden groups in Greenridge, a mid-sized city

in the Southeast. Community gardens are a particularly vibrant example of a type of local voluntary group in the United States. Examples of community garden groups can be traced back to the 1890s, and efforts to build and sustain such groups have repeatedly swelled in times of economic recession and social turmoil, and waned in times of abundance and peace (Lawson 2005). When recession struck the economy during the 1890s, Detroit became the first city to advocate for the collective development of communal gardens on vacated lots to supplement assistance given to the unemployed (Lawson 2005). During the Great Depression in the 1930s, American citizens applied for subsistence garden plots in communal spaces; in 1934, gardeners grew approximately $36 million worth of food for private consumption (Lawson 2005). In World Wars I and II, the U.S. government encouraged citizens to grow their own food in order to free up commercial domestic food supplies to be sent overseas (Lawson 2005). During the social upheaval of the 1960s and 1970s, and the accompanying rise of the environmental movement, community garden groups once again grew in popularity as forms of active resistance to urban

Figure 1.1: USDA Poster Promoting Victory Gardens. 1917.
Uncle Sam says – GARDEN To Cut Food Costs. Ask the - U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D.C. For a FREE Bulletin on Gardening - It's food for thought / / A. Hoen & Co., Baltimore.

neighborhoods abandoned by those fleeing to the safety and controlled environment of the suburbs (Lawson 2005). Today community gardening is thriving again, thanks in part to former First Lady Michelle Obama's Let's Move! campaign, which emphasized fighting obesity through fresh food and exercise programs.

While some define community gardens as just urban phenomena (Glover 2003a), as the above brief history demonstrates, the term "community garden" encompasses a wide range of local, voluntary groups established and endorsed for a variety of reasons. Some scholars and advocates have argued that imposing a specific definition on what community garden groups are limits the opportunities of garden groups (and those who study them) to expand their vision and scope to adjust to community needs (Ferris, Norman, and Sempik 2001), although various scholars have attempted to do so (Grayson 2007; Lawson 2005; Nettle 2014; Okvat and Zautra 2011). For this study, I follow Nettle (2014), who incorporates self-identification as a key part of her definition. In order for a community garden group to be defined as such, it must be a plot of land maintained, gardened, and/or farmed by a collective of people who self-identify as a community garden.

In addition to being a well-recognized and vibrant type of local, voluntary group, community gardens are a strong case study because, by nature of being place-based, they are restricted to serving communities within a relatively restricted geographic area. As such, they are hyper-local in their scope. Community garden groups also are a single type of group (in the sense that they all are organized groups of people cultivating a shared plot of land) with significant variation in the goals for which they are founded, their internal organizational structure, and the resources to which they have access (depending on who founds them and

whether they are connected to a larger local institution such as a church or school). In this regard, my proposed research is similar to other single institution studies (Andrews et al. 2010; Edwards and McCarthy 2004b; Small, Jacobs, and Massengill 2008) that allow the researcher to look at variation in similar indicators like forms of organizational capacity across different settings.

Moreover, community gardens as a case study are particularly well suited for this type of research as comprehensive lists documenting populations of them are readily available in certain areas of the United States, including Greenridge. Part of the reason there has been a dearth in research on the effectiveness of local, voluntary groups is because of the difficulty in identifying population frames from which one can sample or select case studies. It is much easier to find lists of legally incorporated nonprofits for which there exist federal (e.g. the IRS), state, and independent databases (e.g. Guidestar) that often can be sorted by the size, category, and location of the kind of organization one wants to study.[5] The often informal nature of local, voluntary groups means finding official record of their existence can be tough. However, resurgent interest in community gardens since the late 1990s, in combination with the development of GIS technology, has led to a number of national and local organizations seeking to map their existence. For examples, see the American Community Gardening Association's (ACGA) database (American Community Gardening Association n.d.); the directory of gardens maintained by Gardening Matters, a network and resource organization for

[5] See Aldrich et al. (1989), Andrews et al. (2016), Edwards and Foley (2002), Grønbjerg and Clerkin (2005), and Kalleberg et al. (1990) for examples of studies that have examined the representativeness of using samples of organizations, movements, and nonprofits from various sources.

community gardens in the Twin Cities and Minnesota at large (Gardening Matters n.d.); and the GreenThumb Garden Map of New York City (NYC Parks and Recreation GreenThumb n.d.).

Greenridge, the Southeastern city in which I conducted my research, had a list of the community gardens active throughout the county that bears its name at the time I began my study in 2015. This list was maintained by GrowDirt, a local community garden support organization similar to Minnesota's Gardening Matters, which had been publically tracking the locations of community gardens across the city and county since the summer of 2011. Unlike the other available source of information about Greenridge's community garden population, ACGA's national database which relies on self-registration, GrowDirt actively sought out the establishment of new groups and tracked the status of existing groups. As such, its list overwhelmingly was more comprehensive; at the time of data collection, GrowDirt listed 54 community gardens in Greenridge County, in comparison to ACGA, which listed two.

Below, I give a brief snapshot of the city and county of Greenridge to provide a sense of the setting in which these community garden groups operated.

A Snapshot of Greenridge

Known for three-fourths of the 20th century as a booming textile town and gateway to the state, Greenridge experienced significant decline in the 1960s and 1970s as the textile industry relocated overseas. Always known for being the state's most progressive area (according to the state's Work Projects Administration in the 1940s, the city was a "hot-bed of Union sentiment"), Greenridge today is the direct result of the city's recognition of its decline and concerted attempts to chart a new path forward, something many former Southern, textile centers have struggled to accomplish. The election of a visionary mayor in the mid-1970s led to

the development of a cohesive vision for Greenridge's future as a leading center of culture and business in the South. By the early 2000s, Greenridge had made significant progress towards its goal and began receiving numerous regional and national accolades. Amazed at the city's transformation, chamber of commerce groups from all over the country visited to learn how Greenridge went from a languishing textile community to a flourishing center of arts and commerce with a booming business and creative class. In fact, the mostly rural county Greenridge anchors experienced a population growth rate of forty-five percent from 1990 to 2015 as increasing numbers of new businesses arrived, followed by young and middle-aged workers looking for jobs.

Today, the city of Greenridge has a population between 60,000 and 80,000, while Greenridge County boasts a total population between 450,000 and 500,000.[6] With a median age of 36, the population of Greenridge is young; the median age for the county is not much higher at 38. Only 40% of those who live in the city and 32% of those who live in the county have a bachelor's degree or higher, although these numbers reflect a dramatic increase from the 1990s due to population growth fueled by in-migration from the Northeast, Florida, and parts of the Midwest. Median income for the city is around $40,000 with a poverty rate of 20%, while the county has a median income of around $50,000 with a poverty rate five percentage points lower. Finally, unlike its sister cities in the state, Greenridge's population is largely white,

[6] The data in this paragraph are from the 2010 Census and the 2016 Census Bureau's Population Estimates Program. To protect the privacy of participants in this study, I do not include specific citations for these Census profiles. For examples of other research that similarly did not provide citations of descriptive city data in order to protect participant privacy, see Straut-Eppsteiner (2016), Silver (2012), and Ribas (2016).

at a rate of 74% of all individuals in the county and 65% of individuals within the city limits. African Americans are the next most populous racial group, comprising roughly 18% of all individuals in both the county and the city.

As will become apparent in Chapter 3, Greenridge's dramatic revitalization in the last two decades, and the subsequent growth in its population and economy that ensued, is key to understanding the role, or lack thereof, that a group's capacity in the areas of material resources and sociopolitical legitimacy played in its ability to achieve its goals.

STUDY DESIGN

To explore why some local, voluntary groups are more effective than others at achieving their goals, I set up a mixed-methods, comparative case study of 18 community garden groups in Greenridge. Below I provide a summary of the case selection process, data collection methods, and analysis approach.

Case Selection

I selected 18 community garden groups as case studies in the spring of 2015 based on a variety of factors. First, I sought to maximize variation in the degree to which groups were achieving their goals so that I could look for differences in factors linked to goal attainment. Given the infeasibility of assessing the goal attainment of all 54 community garden groups in Greenridge before selecting cases, I made use of the only available proxy, group "vibrancy," an informal, three-point index of the degree to which garden groups were active. The index was developed by Wyatt, the director of GrowDirt and the individual in Greenridge with the most up-to-date knowledge of the garden groups in existence at the time, to note struggling groups to whom he could reach out to offer assistance on behalf of his organization.

According to Wyatt, in "vibrant" garden groups, depending on the season, there were plants in the ground and people who were active in taking care of the garden. "Struggling" garden groups, on the other hand, were ones he described as being at "the stage before shutdown"; gardens were "tilled up…no garden volunteers, [fallow] beds…maybe only one member left."[7] Finally, "failed" garden groups were those with no active garden beds and no signs of recent activity or indication of plans for future activity. While "vibrant" garden groups may have had differing degrees of goal attainment, these groups arguably were attaining more of their goals (even if they were just maintenance goals of keeping plants alive) than garden groups who were "at the stage before shutdown." Thus, while not ideal, using "vibrancy" as a proxy enabled me to have variation in goal attainment in the cases I selected. In the spring of 2015 at the time of case selection, Greenridge had 36 "vibrant" garden groups, 18 "struggling" garden groups, and 22 "failed" garden groups.

In addition to selecting based on maximizing variation in goal attainment, I also selected garden groups based on another classification scheme used by GrowDirt to organize the kinds of garden groups present in Greenridge based on the nature of the community that founded them: faith-based, community, neighborhood, nonprofit, school/youth, or workspace.[8] Within

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[7] From a conversation with Wyatt on March 3, 2015.

[8] See Table A.1 in Appendix A for details on the differences between these garden group types.

The American Community Gardening Association and North Carolina Community Garden Partners also classify garden groups based on a combination of the type of institution that hosts the group and the target population of the group (American Community Gardening Association n.d.; North Carolina Community Garden Partners n.d.). The only scholars who have proposed a typology for garden groups are Ferris, Norman, and Sempik (2001). Their typology is based upon the *purpose* of the group (e.g. crime diversion gardens; leisure gardens; demonstration gardens) rather than host institution or target audience. While many other organizations that map community garden groups do not classify their groups – see, for example, the Minnesota organization *Gardening Matters*

each of these six categories of garden group types, I selected three groups of different "vibrancies" (one "vibrant," one "struggling," and one "failed" group), based on the degree to which their external environments (e.g. geographic/demographic) were similar (Perkins et al. 1990; Small et al. 2008; Swaroop and Morenoff 2006; Taylor 1996; Wilson 1997). For example, within the category of neighborhood-based community garden groups, I chose three groups within neighborhoods that were as similar as possible to each other in size, percentage of low-income residents, and percentage of minority residents. Selecting gardens from within each of the six garden types allowed me to observe community garden groups in a wide range of institutional settings, maximizing variation along a host of factors that might have proven relevant to understanding differential goal attainment. For example, perhaps goal attainment would be related to the degree of group organizational structure: workspace, faith-based, nonprofit, and school garden groups might have been more organized due to their direct connection to a host institution. Or, perhaps participant mobilization would be easier for faith-based garden group leaders than others due to the availability of religious rhetoric to encourage people to participate in the group.

Overall, this selection process left me with 12 active and 6 failed community garden groups that would act as my case studies for comparison. Table 1.1, below, lists the groups I selected for study. Readers can find a more detailed summary table of each case garden in

(Gardening Matters n.d.) – Kurtz (2001) argues that doing so is important in order to communicate to potential participants the type of experiences they can expect to have when joining a particular group.

Appendix B, and a description of other, ancillary factors I took into consideration when selecting cases in Appendix A.

Table 1.1: Selected Cases

Garden Group Pseudonym	Garden Group Type	Garden Group "Vibrancy" at Time of Selection	Year Founded - Year Died
Oakridge Community Garden Group	community	vibrant	2012 - present
Livingston Community Garden Group	community	struggling	2012 - present
Hillview Community Garden Group	community	failed	2011 - 2015
St. Eugene Catholic Church Community Garden Group	faith-based	vibrant	2007 - present
Mount Pilgrim Presbyterian Community Garden Group	faith-based	struggling	2012 - present
Brookdale Presbyterian Community Garden Group	faith-based	failed	2011 - 2013
Glendale Road Neighborhood Garden Group	neighborhood	vibrant	2013 - present
Sturgis Neighborhood Garden Group	neighborhood	struggling	2011 - present
Bennett Neighborhood Garden Group	neighborhood	failed	2012 - 2015
Nourish Community Garden Group	nonprofit	vibrant	1998 - present
Greenway Garden Group	nonprofit	struggling	2012 - present
Hand-in-Hand Community Garden Group	nonprofit	failed	2011 - 2013
Laurel Road Elementary School Garden Group	school	vibrant	2011 - present
Arnold Academy School Garden Group	school	struggling	2011 - present
Bramlett Elementary School Garden Group	school	failed	2010 - 2013
Human Teach Community Garden Group	workspace	vibrant	2013 - present
Lightyear Technologies Community Garden Group	workspace	struggling	2012 - present
ID Sales Corporation Community Garden Group	workspace	failed	2012 - 2014

Data Collection Methods

Having selected 18 community garden groups for study, I utilized a three-pronged, mixed-methods data collection strategy: in-depth interviews with key informants from each garden group and its surrounding community; site visits to the physical location of each community garden; and content analysis of documents from various sources, including national

and local newspaper articles, grant applications, planning documents from the city and county, key informant emails, and records kept by each individual garden group.

Interviews with Key Informants

My primary data comes from 102 semi-structured, in-depth interviews with individuals who were associated with the 18 garden groups or who occupied a social or institutional position in Greenridge such that they had a broad, community-level perspective on the proliferation of community garden group establishment in Greenridge starting in 2010. Taking a multiple constituency approach[9] (Connolly, Conlon, and Deutsch 1980; Jun and Shiau 2012; Zammuto 1984) to identifying key informants, I strove to speak with founders, leaders, core participants, occasional participants, non-participant constituents, and local community leaders associated with each garden group in order to get different perspectives on each group's level of effectiveness at achieving goals. During interviews, I asked questions targeting the four

Table 1.2: Number of Interviewees, by Type

Respondent Type	N (%)
Founder	20 (19.6)
Leader	13 (12.7)
Core Participant	15 (14.7)
Occasional Participant	15 (14.7)
Non-Participant Constituent	14 (13.7)
Community Leaders Tied to Garden Groups	16 (15.7)
Leaders in Community Gardening in Greenridge	8 (7.8)
Greenridge Community Leaders	1 (1)
Total:	102 (100%)

[9] By a multiple constituency approach, I mean that I sought to get a variety of perspectives from different types of constituents or stakeholders on the degree to which each group was achieving its goals. In doing so, I follow Jun and Shiau's (2012:637) use of the approach as a "modified goal attainment model" in their study of the effectiveness of neighborhood councils.

areas of organizational capacity I began this research with an interest in studying. In addition, I also pursued numerous other lines of questioning to gain a comprehensive understanding of the founding and evolution of each garden group, as well as interviewees' backgrounds and previous history with gardening. Pursuing these sorts of questions and other interesting topics that arose during the course of interviews helped me remain open to alternative answers to my motivating research question.

As the study progressed and it became clear – often through these tangential lines of questioning – that dynamics happening in the organizational environment of community garden groups in Greenridge played a significant role in the emerging story, I scheduled interviews with individuals who were leaders in and/or had a broad perspective on Greenridge's community gardening scene at the time. These individuals included the Greenridge County's 4-H extension agent, the Executive Director of Greenridge County Parks and Recreation, and the head of Partners in Care, the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation funded coalition that founded GrowDirt in 2011. I interviewed eight of these "leaders in community gardening in Greenridge" (see Table 1.2) during the two years of data collection.

Site Visits

Over the course of the study period, I visited the physical location of each community garden at least once to document garden features of interest and the community surrounding the gardens. Features of interest included the number of garden beds (or in-ground rows), the availability and accessibility of water (including the existence of an irrigation system), the existence of a shed or other place to store tools, availability and accessibility of restrooms, and the existence of a fence surrounding all or part of the garden. Each time I visited a site, I took

photos to document the state of the garden at the time of my visit. During analysis, I frequently returned to these photos to verify details from my notes or to mentally place myself back in the setting when reading interview transcripts.

Content Analysis

Over the course of the two years I collected data for this study, I amassed thousands of pages of written material associated with the 18 selected garden groups and/or related to community gardens in Greenridge in general. I sourced these documents from interviewees and internet searches. Upon request, most interviewees who had documents related to their garden groups shared those files with me; these included handwritten notes, early drafts of mission statements, tax documents, brochures, flyers, grant applications, reports, and hundreds of saved emails participants forwarded me from their inboxes, among other things. In addition, I assembled relevant documents via internet search, including city and county plans for neighborhoods and communities, social media posts by community garden groups and those supporting them, and over 50 articles from the local newspaper, *The Greenridge News*, from 2000 to 2015 that mentioned the phrase "community garden."

ANALYSIS

I stored all of the interview transcripts, site visit notes, site visit photos, and documents within MAXQDA, a qualitative software program, for analysis. Approximately halfway through data collection, I began analyzing the data using a combination of coding methods – provisional coding, descriptive coding, and process coding (Saldaña 2015) – and memo-writing strategies (Corbin and Strauss 2007), eventually compiling comprehensive memos of everything I knew about each garden group and its history into something I called "group general narratives."

These narratives mostly were organized in chronological order and were summaries of the information I learned about each garden with my thoughts, impressions, and questions interspersed.

Given the design of this research as a comparative case study of community garden groups, throughout the coding and memo-writing process, I continually compared the general narratives of the garden groups to each other to look for clues as to what made some groups more able to achieve their goals than others. Eventually, I found the only way to distill the amount of information I had into something manageable was to create charts with the garden group names on the vertical and the themes or garden attributes I was exploring at that time on the horizontal. I then would proceed to mark whether each theme or attribute was present within a particular garden's narrative and to what extent (see the Appendix A for an example). Eventually, these charts became the foundation for the scales and indexes I used to assess the capacity and goal attainment of garden groups in Chapter 2. The resulting puzzle that emerged from this analysis informed a subsequent, more open and inductive exploration of the data that led to the findings presented in Chapters 3 and 4.

Finally, it is worth noting that in the initial analysis presented in Chapter 2, I consider only the 12 garden groups that were active at the time of data collection, while in Chapters 3 and 4, I draw on data from all 18 garden groups selected for study. My decision to look at only the 12 active garden groups in Chapter 2 is due to the fact that in my initial analysis, I considered the goal attainment and internal capacity of groups *at the time of the study*. As the six "failed" garden groups had ceased to exist before the study began, I could not collect data on their degree of goal attainment and internal capacity during the same period of time. In

addition, as the interviews I conducted with affiliates of the six failed garden groups were retrospective in nature, the point in each group's trajectory on which interviewees reflected differed; some interviewees recalled when their group was flourishing, while others mainly focused on their group during its final throes of existence. As such, I was unable to reliably identify a similar point in time at which all failed gardens could be assessed. However, the analyses I present in Chapters 3 and 4 were not affected by this issue, and therefore, I draw on data from all 18 selected garden groups in those chapters.

OUTLINE OF DISSERTATION

To reiterate, the motivating research question behind this dissertation is *why some local, voluntary groups are more effective than others at achieving the goals for which they were founded*. Having long been recognized as playing a vital role in society by supplying goods and services that are not provided by the state (Marwell 2004; Steinberg 2003; Weisbrod 1977, 1988), voluntary groups are an important part of any society's organizational sector. And yet, work in the for-profit field still dominates organizational sociology, and research on the nonprofit sector largely is comprised of studies of formal, legally-incorporated organizations, not small, often informally structured groups. A full understanding of the role played by organized collectives, whether large or small, formal or informal, necessarily should include a consideration of voluntary groups.

In Chapter 2, I present the theoretical setup for and results of my initial investigation into the differential goal attainment of the 12 active community garden groups I selected for study. I begin by defining goal attainment and providing examples of what it looked like in the context of Greenridge's community garden groups. Next, I suggest that because of their very

nature, local, voluntary groups can be thought of, theoretically, as formal organizations that perpetually are in a phase of emergence. As such, we can look to the existing scholarship on what types of capacity are most critical to the ability of a formal organization to successfully navigate startup and early growth in order to understand what types of capacity should be most relevant to goal attainment among voluntary groups. I then assess the degree to which the 12 active garden groups had four types of capacity (resources, internal group structure, sociopolitical legitimacy, and participation) necessary for early growth in relation to their level of goal attainment. I found that participation was the only type of capacity that distinguished groups that were and were not achieving their goals. These patterns motivated the analyses in the remaining chapters of this dissertation.

In Chapter 3, I draw on data from all 18 cases to examine the primary puzzle that emerged from my analysis of group capacity and goal attainment in Chapter 2, specifically, why sociopolitical legitimacy and material resources were not associated with the goal attainment of community garden groups in any systematic way. Briefly, the explanation lies in the overwhelming amount of sociopolitical legitimacy in Greenridge for the establishment of community garden groups and the wide availability of material resources to build and sustain them. In tracing the emergence of the popularity of community gardens in Greenridge in the mid-2000s, I show how the convergence of three conditions can create resource-rich organizational environments that challenge the assumption of competitiveness underlying much of the work in social movements and organizational sociology. I then suggest that rather than increasing the likelihood of group goal attainment, in the case of local, voluntary groups,

such environments simply make it easy for individuals to form groups quickly without ensuring the degree to which they have commitment from their target participants.

In Chapter 4, I examine the ways that leaders of groups that were achieving their goals mobilized and sustained participation. I begin by painting contrasting portraits of two community garden groups, one with active participants and one that lacked a strong participant base. The groups had similar levels of sociopolitical legitimacy in their respective communities and high levels of material resources, and yet one thrived while the other flirted with failure each season. Again, drawing on data from all 18 cases, I argue that the reason some community garden groups in this study had more active participants than others is that their leadership engaged in the active recruitment of participants, built or leveraged existing rapport within their target participant population, and helped participants have successful and meaningful experiences when working with the group. In focusing on the ways leaders, in particular, engaged participants, I bring renewed focus to the inseparability of the actions and characteristics of leaders in small and emerging groups, and group success or failure at goal attainment.

Finally, in Chapter 5, I review the arc of the study and provide an overview of the main findings. I consider contributions to both scholarship and practice, summarizing how this research challenges and extends current theories in organizational sociology, social movements, and nonprofit and voluntary studies. In addition, I discuss the implications of this study for those who wish to establish local, voluntary groups and the individuals, organizations, and institutions that wish to support their efforts. In conclusion, I offer suggestions for future research.

CHAPTER 2: GOAL ATTAINMENT IN LOCAL, VOLUNTARY GROUPS

I received a variety of answers when I asked people to describe the mission of their community garden group. Harriet, the leader of the Arnold Academy School Garden, told me in a slightly incredulous voice as she leaned back in her desk chair:

> There are children, bright children, highly intelligent children who don't understand that carrots grow underground, you know?!...I don't think children are as connected to outside as they used to be (laughs), um, and I think there's value in getting them out there.

I interviewed Carol, the founder and leader of a community garden group in the Glendale Road neighborhood, in a faux-wood-paneled room inside of an old church whose outer walls formed a backdrop for the community garden outside. Lamenting the decline of the neighborhood over the past couple of decades, Carol responded to my question by telling me:

> [The garden] is a, an outreach…It's a, it's a big way to connect to the people in the community and learn from each other. Uh, cause I think that's really, really important. And so many times I've seen, it's one of those things that's lost in today's society.

A month after talking to Carol, I spoke to Claude, founder and leader of the St. Eugene's Catholic Church Community Garden Group. Inside the cool, air-conditioned church social hall, Claude described to me how he wanted to help the neighborhood surrounding the church:

> [Y]ou know, in, in around here, it, it's a lot of poor people, you know, that don't have much as far as, especially fresh vegetables, you know? We give out something like…50 bags of…canned goods and stuff, non-perishable stuff [at the church food bank]…and, and the garden adds a few fresh vegetables to that bag.

Connecting children to the outdoors. Helping residents in a rundown neighborhood get to know each other. Supplementing the canned goods given out by a church food pantry. These statements are representative of the sorts of altruistic goals that residents of Greenridge aimed to achieve when they started community garden groups. These statements also are representative of goals pursued by local, voluntary groups, in general – small in scope, limited to a specific community, and targeted towards making changes that typically would not make the agenda of local or state governments. And yet, despite arguably modest ambitions, many local, voluntary groups struggle to achieve their goals. In fact, of the three leaders I quote above, only Claude can claim that his community garden group consistently met the goals for which it was founded.

This chapter presents my initial investigation into why this was the case, beginning with how I defined and operationalized goal attainment in the context of Greenridge's community garden groups. I then present the results of my assessment of the goal attainment of the 12 active groups I selected for study. As discussed in Chapter 1, I consider only the 12 active groups as there was not a similar point in time at which all failed gardens could be assessed. Next, building on theory from organizational sociology and social movements, I suggest that some groups are more effective than others at achieving their goals because of differing levels of internal group capacity, specifically, differing levels of material resources, internal group structure, sociopolitical legitimacy, and participation. In the final sections of this chapter, I examine this theory by undertaking a systematic comparison of the degree to which community garden groups had each of the four types of capacity in relation to their levels of goal attainment.

DEFINING AND ASSESSING GOAL ATTAINMENT

For this study, I define goal attainment based on the work of Price (1972), who argues that scholars should differentiate between an organization's *official* versus *operative* goals. While *official* goals are those an organization was founded to accomplish (e.g. the organization's mission), *operative* goals are those objectives an organization seeks to achieve on a day-to-day basis, including "maintenance" goals, the pursuit of which are necessary to keep an organization alive (Davis and Scott 2007; Perrow 1961; Price 1972).

Given that a community garden was the vehicle used by each group in this study to accomplish their mission, I defined the operative goals of all study groups as the accomplishment of those daily and weekly tasks associated with consistently maintaining an established physical garden: seasonally planting vegetables and/or flowers, watering and weeding plants, and maintaining raised beds and other structures.

In contrast, the official goals of the community garden groups considered here varied based on how each group sought to use their garden to address certain social problems or generally bring about change in their communities. I identified each garden group's official goals through thematic coding of the transcripts of the 93 in-depth interviews I conducted with community garden group leaders and participants, non-participant constituents, and community leaders, as well as information I gleaned from analysis of the documents I compiled around each group's founding and work.

Table 2.1 provides a summary of the types of official goals claimed by the 12 active garden groups, illustrated with examples from the interview and document data.

Table 2.1: Official Goals of Community Garden Groups in Greenridge

Official Goals	Example Data
Contribute to the revitalization of the neighborhood/community	"Seniors in the Sturgis community…recall a vibrant community where residents were healthy, active and thriving…Today there are many barriers that prevent residents from enjoying a good quality of life…It [the garden] will…be on the forefront of encouraging and supporting a…neighborhood struggling to be revitalized." – *Grant application written by the leader of the Sturgis Community Garden*
Grow fresh food for the hungry	"Feeding families, feeding people, feeding needy people…giving people food that need it. I can sit here and bullshit you more about it but bottom line is, you need food? Take this bag of vegetables here with you. Enjoy." – *Community Leader, Oakridge Community Garden*
Build community and connectivity among people	"[W]hen you're digging in the dirt with someone, that person doesn't care what your 401k is like, and you don't know what their house situation is…but you're there in that moment, and you've got that chance to, um, be human and to converse and, you know, share life experiences." – *Former Leader, Hillview Community Garden*
Provide a place to garden for those who do not have one	"Basically the concept of the garden over here is that anybody in the Livingston community who has limited access as far as land and…you want to grow a garden, but you don't have room to grow it…then we will give you a plot of land." – *Founder, Livingston Community Garden*
Teach people how to grow food and/or live more sustainably	"[T]he goal is to show people that you can grow the food that you eat and you can be sustained by the food and not have to, you know, go out and buy food as much." – *Leader, Greenway Community Garden*
Encourage a healthy lifestyle/promote preventative health practices	"[T]he garden is just one of those things where I can politely email and say 'Guys, get outside, get some fresh air…get away from your boss…' and just that encouragement of doing something that's good for the employees. Healthy employees are productive employees." – *Founder, Lightyear Technologies, Inc. Community Garden*
Provide an opportunity for stress relief	"[I]t's for, um, a way for students to de-stress…for them to have a hobby outside of medicine to, I guess, decompress, um, and just a way to produce something fruitful." – *Founder, Human Teach Community Garden*

The goals listed in Table 2.1 are similar to those identified in other studies of community garden groups (e.g. Alaimo et al. 2005; Alaimo, Reischl, and Allen 2010; Campbell 2004; Cumbers et al. 2017; Kato, Passidomo, and Harvey 2014; Lawson 2005; Wakefield et al. 2007). For example, Alaimo et al. (2005:124) described the use of community gardens in Flint, Michigan, to "improve the conditions of distressed neighborhoods," and in their study of community gardens in Glasgow, Scotland, Cumbers et al. (2017:7) found examples of gardens

that were established to "help people recover from the stresses and strains of everyday life." It is also worth noting that the majority of the garden groups in this study had multiple official goals. For example, the facilities manager at Lightyear Technologies, Inc. founded a group to promote health among his employees, provide an on-site form of stress relief, *and* provide a way for employees to connect with each other.

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To assess the goal attainment of the twelve active community garden groups, I assigned each group two ratings using two scales ranging from 0 to 2; one scale represented success at achieving *operative* goals, while the other represented success at achieving *official* goals. I added the two ratings together to obtain an overall goal attainment score that ranged from 0 to 4. I developed these scales by coding the data for interviewee opinions of the effectiveness of each group; I also relied on my own impressions based on the combination of interview, site visit, and document data.

On the *operative* goal attainment scale, a "0" indicates that a garden group's leadership and participants regularly failed to maintain the garden; on site visits, plants appeared overgrown or dead, garden beds were full of weeds or simply not planted at all, and a general air of neglect hung over the space. See the left image in Figure 2.1 for an example of what a "0" looks like. A "1" on this scale indicates that groups were meeting their operative goals consistently, but based on interviewee accounts, they were struggling to do so. Groups with a score of "2" were meeting their operative goals consistently without any difficulty.

Whereas I assessed the operative goal attainment of all community garden groups based on the same metric, consistent garden maintenance, I assessed groups' *official* goal

attainment by combining interview, site visit, and content analysis data to judge whether each group was achieving the goals for which it, in particular, was founded. For example, I assessed the goal attainment of the Oakridge Community Garden Group based on how well it provided fresh food to hungry individuals in the Oakridge community, whereas I assessed the goal attainment of the Livingston Community Garden Group based on how well it provided a place to garden for those who lacked one and whether it worked to promote preventative health in the Livingston area.

On the *official* goal attainment scale, a "0" indicates that a group was not meeting any of its official goals, whereas a garden group with a score of a "1" was meeting some of its official goals, but not all, or not meeting its goals well. For example, the Glendale Road Community Garden Group sought to provide fresh food for the hungry, but it contributed so little food to the local pantry (perhaps a handful of vegetables, at most, every month) that in effect, it was not providing the hungry with food to any substantive degree. Finally, I assigned a "2" to groups that were meeting all of the official goals for which they were originally founded.

Table 2.2 contains the results of my assessment of each of the community garden groups. For an explanation of the reasons behind each garden's score, see Appendix C. Next, I describe the results and illustrate the differences between "effective," "semi-effective," and "ineffective" community garden groups.

Table 2.2: Goal Attainment of Community Garden Groups

	Operative Goal Attainment *(scale: 0-2)*	**Official Goal Attainment** *(scale: 0-2)*	**Overall Goal Attainment** *(scale: 0-4)*
Effective Garden Groups	---	---	---
Nourish Community Garden Group	2	2	4
St. Eugene's Catholic Church Community Garden Group	2	2	4
Livingston Community Garden Group	2	2	4
Laurel Road Elementary School Garden Group	2	2	4
Semi-Effective Garden Groups	---	---	---
Arnold Academy School Garden Group	1	2	3
Glendale Road Neighborhood Garden Group	1	1	2
Human Teach Community Garden Group	1	1	2
Greenway Garden Group	2	0	2
Oakridge Community Garden Group	0	2	2
Ineffective Garden Groups	---	---	---
Mount Pilgrim Presbyterian Community Garden Group	0	1	1
Sturgis Neighborhood Garden Group	0	1	1
Lightyear Technologies Community Garden Group	0	1	1

***

Four of the twelve existing garden groups – Nourish, St. Eugene's, Livingston, and Laurel Road – were "effective" with overall goal attainment ratings of "4" out of "4". A "4" means they were meeting their operative goals consistently and without difficulty and were able to use their community garden to meet their group's official goals. The Nourish Community Garden, seen on the right in Figure 2.1, is an excellent example of an "effective" community garden

group. Founded primarily to provide vegetables to enhance the meals made in its host institution's soup kitchen, the Nourish Community Garden Group was able to consistently maintain a verdant garden of over 18 raised beds and several in-ground rows that produced hundreds of pounds of produce for the soup kitchen each season.

Figure 2.1: Photos Illustrating Community Garden Maintenance.
Left: The Oakridge Community Garden Group's in-ground garden was taken over completely by grass and weeds. *Right*: A volunteer poses in front of the Nourish Community Garden Group's neatly tended 18 raised beds.

In contrast, with the exception of Arnold Academy, the remaining community garden groups had an overall goal attainment rating of "2" or less. I classified garden groups with less than an overall rating of "4" as "semi-effective," and those with an overall rating of "1" or less

as “ineffective.” Bracketing Arnold Academy,[10] “semi-effective” community garden groups had different combinations of operative and official goal attainment ratings that led to an overall goal attainment rating of “2”. The Glendale Road and Human Teach Community Garden Groups each had a “1” on both operative and official goal attainment, meaning they struggled to consistently maintain their gardens and either achieved their official goals only partway or achieved fully only some of their official goals. For example, the Glendale Road Community Garden Group was founded to provide people in the neighborhood a way to connect with each other. However, the group struggled to consistently maintain their garden of eight raised beds, and despite the founder’s assertions that it did “help the community connect,” I was told in multiple interviews that from a neighborhood of over 1,000 residents, the founder and her daughter were the only ones who truly cared about the group.

While Glendale Road and Human Teach both had “1’s” for operative and official goal attainment, the Greenway Community Garden Group had a “2” for operative goal attainment but a “0” for official goal attainment, and the Oakridge Community Garden had ratings that were the exact opposite. An outreach to a low-income, historically Black neighborhood, the Greenway Garden Group had no trouble maintaining its garden, but at the time of data collection, was not teaching neighborhood residents how to live sustainably, the goal for which it was founded. On the other hand, the Oakridge Community Garden Group experienced the opposite phenomena: the group was not able to maintain their garden consistently, but during

[10] The Arnold Academy Community Garden Group is a unique case. While the garden was maintained consistently – and thus received a “1” on the operative goal scale – often it was the result of the leader using discretionary funds from the school to pay a “yard man” to tidy it.

the periods when they were providing their garden with regular care, the group was able to meet its official goal of regularly donating produce to the local food bank.

"Ineffective" community garden groups shared Oakridge's pattern, but with less success at achieving official goals when in operation. For example, the Sturgis Neighborhood Garden Group, seen in Figure 2.2, was founded for a variety of reasons, including to help with neighborhood revitalization and to foster a social support network among residents.

Figure 2.2: Photos of an Ineffective Community Garden, the Sturgis Neighborhood Garden. *Left:* The pathways between beds at the garden are not visible through weeds and grass. *Right:* A chalkboard sign outside the garden displayed the remainders of an old message for months.

However, the garden was not planted consistently, and according to one interviewee, even when it was, "[I]t's not really used by the community…People who are from, like, around here…They just walk past it and just see it and just keep going."

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What separates the effective from the semi-effective and ineffective garden groups? Why was the Nourish Community Garden Group able to neatly maintain 18 raised beds that

produced hundreds of pounds of vegetables a season, while the Oakridge Community Garden Group's most reliable crops were crabgrass and other weeds?

To help answer this question, in the following section I introduce and evaluate an explanation centered around group capacity. Suggesting that local, voluntary groups be conceptualized as formal organizations that continually are in a phase of organizational emergence, I capitalize on existing theoretical work around what types of capacity help formal organizations successfully navigate startup to explore the organizational foundations of goal attainment among voluntary groups. As will become apparent, the results of my explorations left me with a theoretical puzzle, which I take up in Chapter 3.

EXPLAINING DIFFERENTIAL GOAL ATTAINMENT

Past scholarship seeking to explain why some organizations are more or less effective than others in achieving their goals can be categorized into two camps: explanations that rely on environmental, contextual factors and those that emphasize factors specific to the organizations themselves (e.g. organizational structure).

Arguments that environmental, contextual factors influence organizational performance have a long history in organizational scholarship (e.g. Aldrich and Ruef 2006; Pfeffer and Salancik 1978), social movements research (e.g. Kriesi 2004), and work in nonprofit and voluntary organizations (e.g. Chambre 1997). These arguments can be grouped broadly into two categories: civic and political context and resource availability. Civic and political context refers to the presence of organizational allies and other similarly-minded organizations (Ruef 2000; Sampson et al. 2005; Tarrow 1998), political opportunities (Meyer 2004), and a history of civic activity in the geographical space in which in the organization operates (Greve and Rao

2012). From an organizational sociology perspective, the purpose of looking at civic and political context is that an organization's environment has been shown to shape its trajectory from founding to death and can have a significant impact on its viability and success (Aldrich and Ruef 2006; Davis and Scott 2007; Johnson 2007).

The other major approach to environmental explanations for effectiveness is the availability of resources in an organization's environment. In this study, I consider resources to be the financial and material inputs an organization needs to survive, function, and achieve effectiveness. The impact of resource availability on organizational effectiveness typically is studied through one of two lenses: density dependence or social network ties. The density dependence lens (Hannan and Freeman 1988) considers how many other voluntary organizations occupy the same geographic and social space as the organization in question. While some studies show that organizations occupying a dense location experience a host of benefits, including increasing legitimacy and the sharing of institutional knowledge (Cress and Snow 1996; Ruef 2000; Sampson et al. 2005; Sorenson and Audia 2000), most focus on how increasing organizational density leads to increasing competition for scarce and valuable resources (Baum and Singh 1994; Freeman and Audia 2006). In an environment where resources are scarce, social network ties can enhance or decrease an organization's reserves depending on whether the ties are "weak" or "strong" (Granovetter 1973) and whether they link an organization to homogenous or heterogeneous networks (Edwards and McCarthy 2004b; Uzzi 1996).

While environmental, contextual factors such as civic and political context and resource availability play a role in explaining why some organizations are more effective than others at

achieving their goals, I argue that in the case of local, voluntary groups, what matters more is the ability of leaders to build and maintain internal capacity by recognizing and capitalizing on environmental conditions in ways that are favorable to their groups (Andrews et al. 2010; Ganz 2000).

Perpetual Emergence and the Role of Leadership

My argument rests on the assertion that, theoretically, most local, voluntary groups can be thought of as formal organizations that perpetually are in a phase of emergence. In other words, local, voluntary groups rarely evolve to the point where they meet the criteria of a "formal organization" in the sense of being organized collectivities with clearly defined boundaries, roles that are independent of the people who fill them, and formal rules governing behavior.[11] According to Smith (1992:253) in his work on voluntary nonprofits, "[A] substantial proportion of apparently semiformal organizations, especially in smaller places, have informality as an enduring characteristic, not merely a growth stage…the implications [of which] could be significant."

While scholars have proposed numerous models of how organizations evolve and change over the life course (see Aldrich and Ruef [2006] for a review), they generally agree that emergence and early growth is dominated by the building of internal capacity, particularly the activities of mobilizing resources (Ruef 2005), recruiting employees/labor, determining internal structures of management and work flow, and fostering sociopolitical legitimacy (Aldrich and

[11] This definition follows a rational systems approach; see Davis and Scott (2007) for an overview of this and other approaches to defining organizations.

Ruef 2006). As an organization ages, the intensity with which these sorts of capacity-building activities are undertaken should diminish, but this is not the case in local, voluntary groups.

Due to the necessity of relying completely on financial and material donations, voluntary groups tend always to be engaging in resource mobilization through grant-writing, fundraising, and solicitation. Due to the fact that voluntary groups cannot offer financial compensation or coerce people into donating their time or remaining a member, groups also typically are engaging continually in participant mobilization or recruitment of "employees." The fact that people constantly drift in and out of the group depending on their availability and motivation means that it is difficult to set up stable management structures and work flows (although some groups do achieve it). Briefly put, the resource and staffing constraints under which local, voluntary groups operate means that by their very nature they remain in a phase of perpetual emergence.

The implications of this are significant when trying to explain differential goal attainment. Rather than looking to literature on the effectiveness of formal organizations, we should consider work in organizational sociology, social movements, and nonprofits that examines the factors related to successful emergence. In other words, we should consider the factors that contribute to an organization's or movement's ability to effectively navigate the startup phase through the building and sustaining of capacity.

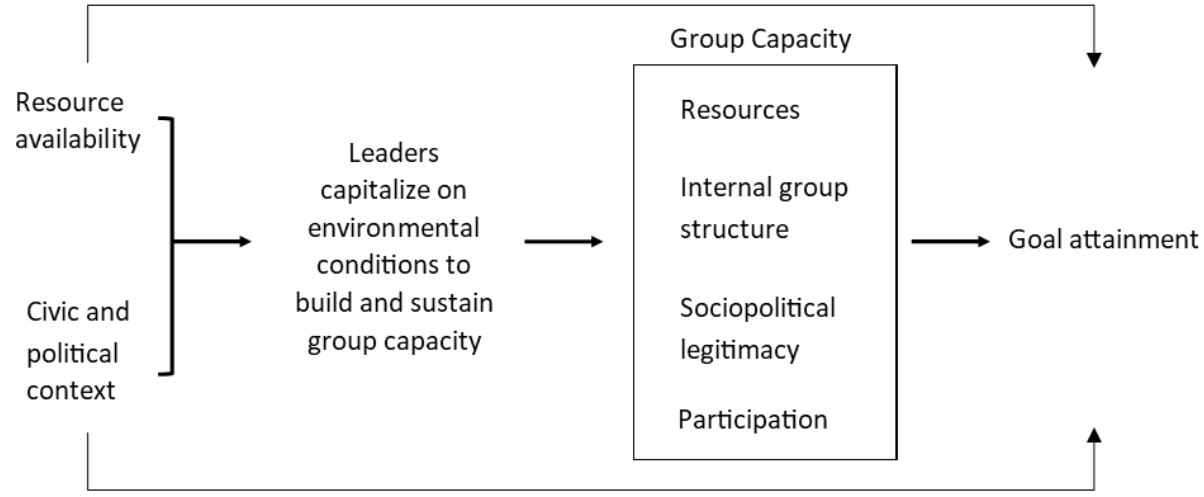
The major factor that scholars across all three fields emphasize is the significance of leadership in building capacity during the early phases of organizational existence. According to Miller and Friesen (1984:1163) in their study of the corporate life cycle, the primary distinguishing features of firms in the "birth" or "entrepreneurial phase" (Quinn and Cameron

1983) are that they are "young…[and]…dominated by their owners." In the social movements world, Miller and Friesen's "owners" are the movement leaders; they are "political entrepreneurs" who determine the efficacy of a movement through their ability to mobilize resources, devise strategy, frame grievances, and build commitment (Ganz 2010; Morris and Staggenborg 2004). And in the nonprofits literature, scholars identify the social entrepreneur or "prime mover…who voluntarily leads – carrying the banner at a formative and critical time in the organization's development" (Bess 1998:38). In fact, in his work on nonprofit entrepreneurship, Andersson (2016) argues that without such a person during the early phases of existence, a nonprofit organization is very likely either to dissolve or become a hobby that never evolves into a more formal venture.

Thus, (1) due to local, voluntary groups remaining in a phase of perpetual emergence, and (2) the critical role played by leaders during the emergence phase, I argue that the goal attainment of local, voluntary groups is related most to how successful their leaders are at building and sustaining group capacity. Although environmental conditions have a role to play in explaining the differential goal attainment of voluntary groups, what matters more is the degree to which leaders capitalize on those conditions to build group internal capacity in ways that can help them achieve their goals. To repeat, the ability of leaders to build internal capacity is critical for local, voluntary groups because their very nature compels them to constantly engage in the capacity-building activities that, in more formal organizations, take more of a backseat as the organization ages. To use the words of Andrews et al. (2010:1201), local, voluntary groups "must be generative…even as they deploy their resources in current activity, they must mobilize new capacity to avoid decline."

In Figure 2.3, I provide a visual summary of this initial argument. As is evident from the figure, I conceptualize group capacity as a multidimensional construct, focusing on four types of internal capacity that scholars have argued are critical to the successful emergence of formal organizations and that I argue also are critical to the goal attainment of local, voluntary groups: resources, internal group structure, sociopolitical legitimacy, and participation.

Figure 2.3: Initial Proposed Model of Effectiveness in Local, Voluntary Groups.



In the following sections, I consider each form of capacity in turn and review what the organizational sociology, social movements, and nonprofit literatures have to say about how each factor can shape a group's ability to achieve its operative and official goals.

Resources

A cornerstone of social movements research is resource mobilization theory, the premise of which is that resources are a necessary, if not sufficient, condition for successful mobilization. As resource levels fluctuate up and down, so too do levels of social movement activity (Cress and Snow 1996; Edwards and McCarthy 2004a; Ganz 2000; McCarthy and Zald

1973, 1977). Furthermore, Walker and McCarthy (2010), in a study of the factors that contribute to the persistence of community-based organizations, found that "cultivating resources was the surest path to survival" (315). Resources also have a prominent place in organizational sociology through the resource dependence approach, which places the need for resources at the center of the work an organization does to navigate, control, and adapt to its environment (Davis and Cobb 2010; Pfeffer and Salancik 1978).

In the context of this research, I use "resources" simply to refer to the material capital, both monetary and non-monetary, that a local, voluntary group needs to function and accomplish its goals. Groups without the material resources needed to fund and support their activities will find it hard to meet their operative goals, much less their official goals.

Internal Group Structure

The term "organizational structure" has been used to mean a variety of things in the organizational, social movements, and nonprofit literatures (for example, see McCarthy and Walker 2004; Scott and Davis 2007; Aldrich and Ruef 2006; and Smith 2000 for different uses of the term). Here, I use the term "internal structure" to indicate the degree to which a local, voluntary group is formalized (Davis and Scott 2007:37) and has a professional staff (McCarthy and Zald 1977; Staggenborg 1988). Formalized voluntary groups have established rules and procedures and defined hierarchies of labor and authority, whereas informal groups are much more loosely organized with a minimal division of labor. According to Smith (1997b), the bulk of voluntary organizations in the United States have a semiformal structure; they are "almost but not quite a formal organization, lacking clear boundaries and sometimes a clear leadership structure" (Smith 1992:252).

The literature on the relationship between an organization's or group's structure and its effectiveness at achieving goals has been mixed. Some argue that formalized voluntary organizations are more efficient, have better reputations (Smith and Shen 1996), and often have greater access to resources (e.g. government and private funding, tax breaks, and physical space to meet and conduct operations) that can make it easier to achieve goals (Bloemraad and Gleeson 2012; Gamson 1975; McCarthy and Zald 1977; Minkoff 1993; Staggenborg 1988). However, scholars have noted how formalized organizations are restricted in the strategies they can use to achieve their goals by the rules placed on them by their funders (Berry and Arons 2003; Bloemraad and Gleeson 2012; Brulle 2000). In addition, formalized organizations are likely to spend more time managing operations, looking for funding and staff, and complying with policies than their less formal counterparts, who can use that time and energy to interact with constituents and progress towards operative and official goal attainment (Bloemraad and Gleeson 2012; Cress 1997; Piven and Cloward 1977). In addition, less formal organizations, like local, voluntary groups may be more effective than their more formal counterparts due to being characterized by more intimacy and trust, which may be helpful in retaining a participant base (Smith 1992).

Sociopolitical Legitimacy

According to Aldrich and Ruef (2006:186), sociopolitical legitimacy "refers to the acceptance by key stakeholders, the general public, key opinion leaders, and government officials of a new venture as appropriate and right." Another way of conceptualizing it is simply as *credibility* (Human and Provan 2000). Organizational and social movement scholars long have argued that an organization's or movement's acceptance as credible by the relevant entities

and key actors in its environment is necessary for survival (Baum and Oliver 1992; Gamson 1975; Haveman, Rao, and Paruchuri 2007; Ruef and Scott 1998).

Being seen as credible should enhance a group's capacity to attain its operative and official goals, as other groups and organizations who favorably view the group in question can provide access not only to more resources, but also can provide legitimacy within the wider community, enhancing the group's likelihood of overall survival (DiMaggio and Powell 1983; Meyer and Rowan 1977). For example, Walker and McCarthy (2010), in a longitudinal study of community-based organizations, found that having sociopolitical legitimacy could help organizations compensate for a lack of resources, while Edwards and Marullo (1995) found that the legitimacy gained from co-sponsoring events with other organizations within the community was central to the survival of small peace movement organizations (PMOs). As local, voluntary groups operate within geographically limited areas, at the very least, being recognized within the wider community, and at the most, being respected by community leaders, should increase a group's overall ability to achieve its goals.

Participation

Unlike paid-staff nonprofits where the staff can keep the organization functioning through periods of little activity and decline (Walker and McCarthy 2010), by their very nature, voluntary groups cannot exist without active volunteers. Regardless of what else a voluntary group tries to achieve, it must attract and retain volunteer participants in order to persist.

In addition to giving their time and labor to power a group's activities, participants bring with them their life experiences, expertise, and skills (Brady, Verba, and Schlozman 1995), which can be utilized to a group's benefit (Cress and Snow 1996; McAdam 1988; McCarthy and

Zald 1977). Having access to individuals with particular skill sets – for example, lawyers, accountants, organizers, graphic designers, or writers – can be critical when a need for those skills arises (Edwards and McCarthy 2004b).

Groups also can benefit from participants' social networks (Edwards and McCarthy 2004a; Meyer and Whittier 1994); the more diverse participants a group has, the greater the access to "weak ties" (Granovetter 1973) that could connect the group to people and resources to which it previously did not have access. Both Edwards and Marullo (1995) and Edwards and McCarthy (2004b) found that social capital aided small social movement organizations in their mobilization efforts.

Finally, participants can bring an organization legitimacy by allowing their name to be associated publicly with the group (Knoke and Prensky 1984), particularly if they are a well-known and respected member of the target community.

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In the remainder of this chapter, I present the results of my analysis of the ability of group internal capacity – in the form of resources, internal structure, sociopolitical legitimacy, and participation – to help account for the differential goal attainment of community garden groups. Note that in this initial analysis, I did not consider what leaders of community garden groups actually did to build each form of capacity; rather, I undertook a systematic comparison of the existence and degree to which each type of capacity was present in the 12 active community garden groups I selected for study. I consider the role of leaders in building capacity in Chapter 4.

At the outset, I expected to uncover paths to goal attainment – combinations of different degrees of each form of capacity – in a fashion similar to how Cress and Snow (1996) identified "resource paths to viability" in homeless social movement organizations. What I found instead, was surprising.

FINDINGS

I first describe the way I operationalized each type of internal group capacity in the context of community garden groups; Table 2.3 provides a summary. I then present the results of my assessment, followed by my analysis of how different types of capacity were linked to one another across effective, semi-effective, and ineffective groups.

Resources

I assessed whether material resources could account for the effectiveness of some community garden groups over others by asking interviewees: 1) what it took materially to keep their gardens going each season; 2) whether their group had everything materially that it needed to continue at the time of the interview; and 3) whether the garden had applied for and/or received any grants or significant external donations. I consider "significant donations" as single-donor, monetary or in-kind gifts worth upwards of $500. It is worth noting that much of what I learned about the resource base of each garden group came not directly in response to these questions but in recounts of how the garden got started and maintains itself over time. In addition, during site visits to each garden, I looked for key factors that are necessary for the successful upkeep of a garden, including ready access to water and sun.

I assigned each garden a rating on a scale ranging from 0 to 2. On this scale, a "0" indicates that the community garden group did not have all of the material resources it needed

to be maintained. In addition, the group had not acquired any external grants or been the recipient of any significant material or financial donations outside of those donations used to found the group. A rating of "1" on the scale indicates that the garden group had all of the material resources it needed to maintain itself, but that it had not acquired any external grants or been the recipient of any significant donations. Finally, a rating of "2" indicates that the garden group had all of the material resources it needed to maintain itself, but also successfully had acquired grants and/or been the recipient of significant donations to support additional group efforts.

Internal Group Structure

I operationalized the degree to which garden groups were formalized and professionalized using an index of five indicators. I considered whether each garden group: 1) had explicitly written rules of behavior for participants (e.g. a list of guidelines for participation); 2) had a hierarchy of authority (e.g. the authority structure was more complicated than the leader versus everyone else); 3) had a mission statement that was formally written down (e.g. in a grant application; on a sign in front of the garden; on official group documents, etc.); 4) was incorporated, in itself, as a 501(c)3 (i.e. was not just associated with a larger organization that had 501(c)3 status); and 5) had one or more paid staff whose job included helping manage and run the group. Garden groups were given one point for every item on the checklist that applied to them; as such, groups can have a rating of 0 to 5.

Table 2.3: Operationalization of Types of Internal Group Capacity

Resources *(scale: 0-2)*	0 = The garden group **did not have** all the material resources it needed to maintain a healthy community garden. The garden did not acquire any external grants, nor was it the recipient of significant donations. 1 = The garden group **had** all of the material resources it needed to maintain a healthy community garden. The garden did not acquire any external grants, nor was it the recipient of significant donations. 2 = The garden group **had** all of the material resources it needed to maintain a healthy community garden. In addition, garden leaders successfully acquired grants for non-necessary garden projects and/or were the recipients of significant donations outside of startup donations of wood, soil, and seeds.
Internal Group Structure *(5-item index)*	› had explicitly written rules of behavior for participants (e.g. a list of guidelines for participation) › had somewhat of a hierarchy of authority (e.g. the authority structure was more complicated than leader versus everyone else) › had a formal mission statement › was incorporated, in itself, as a 501(c)3 (i.e. wasn't just associated with a larger organization that had 501(c)3 status) › had one or more paid staff whose job included helping manage and run the group
Sociopolitical Legitimacy *(5-item index)*	› was covered in local media (newspapers, magazines, blog posts, etc.) › was featured as a site visit on the annual local urban farm and garden tour › had received honorary awards for its work › was affiliated officially with GrowDirt (was listed on GrowDirt's website) › was mentioned by other interviewees in this study
Participation *(scale 0-4)*	The physical community garden was… 0 = maintained almost entirely by the leader(s) alone. 1 = maintained by the leader(s) with inconsistent help from other participants the leader struggled to recruit. 2 = maintained by the leader(s) with consistent help from two to three other people; however, the leader(s) had expectations for more involvement and expressed a need for, but struggled to recruit, more participants. 3 = maintained by the leader(s) with consistent help from one to two others and an active, rotating base of volunteers. 4 = organized by the leader(s) but maintained mostly by participants.

Sociopolitical Legitimacy

I assessed each community garden group's level of sociopolitical legitimacy using an index of five indicators unique to community garden groups in Greenridge, whether the garden group: 1) had been covered in local media (newspapers, magazines, blog posts, etc.); 2) had been featured as a stop on the annual local urban farm and garden tour that ran in Greenridge from 2011 to 2015; 3) had received honorary awards for its work; 4) officially was affiliated with the community garden network and resource organization, GrowDirt; and 5) was mentioned by

other interviewees in the study. Garden groups could earn as few as zero points and at most five points. The more items on the index that applied to the garden group, the more sociopolitical legitimacy it had within the wider Greenridge community.

Participation

I evaluated each garden group's degree of participation on a scale of 0 to 4, using information I obtained via interviews with garden leaders and participants. A "0" on this scale means that the garden primarily was maintained by the leader(s). There may have been one or two participants who came by to work sporadically, but in general, the leader(s) did most of the maintenance. A rating of "1" indicates that the garden was maintained by the leader(s) with inconsistent help from participants that the leader struggled to recruit. A garden group with a score of "2" was maintained by the leader(s) with consistent help from two to three other people; however, in an interview, the leader(s) expressed an expectation and need for more involvement coupled with a struggle to recruit more participants. A "3" on the scale indicates a garden group whose garden was maintained by the leader(s) with consistent help from one to two others and an active, rotating base of volunteers. Finally, a garden group with a "4" is one that was organized by the leader(s) but primarily was maintained by participants.

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Table 2.4 shows the ratings I assigned to each garden group using the scales and indexes outlined above. The order of garden groups in the table is based on their overall goal attainment rating. As a note, specific comparisons between garden groups should be made within each type of group capacity, not across types. For example, it would be appropriate to compare the Nourish Community Garden Group's "4" on sociopolitical legitimacy with the

Livingston Community Garden Group's "2" within the same category. However, it would be incorrect to compare the Nourish Community Garden Group's "4" on sociopolitical legitimacy with the Livingston Community Garden Group's rating of "1" on resources. For a detailed explanation of the reasons behind each rating, see Appendix C.

In examining the results in Table 2.4 for explanations of why some community garden groups were more effective than others at achieving their goals, I compared the four most effective garden groups to each other to see how their ratings across each of the types of group capacity were similar. I then contrasted those ratings to the ratings of the semi- and ineffective garden groups. Ratings on the types of group capacity that mattered most for goal attainment should have been highest for the four effective garden groups, with no similarly high ratings present for any of the semi- or ineffective garden groups.

Looking first to whether resources help account for differential goal attainment, we can see that effective, semi-effective, and ineffective garden groups all have ratings between "1" and "2". While some community garden groups were more successful than others at acquiring grants or courting significant donations to fund garden projects (these groups have ratings of "2"), all of the groups had all of the soil, fertilizer, seeds, sun, and water necessary to build and cultivate a physical garden that could be used to achieve a variety of official goals; this is why I assigned none of the gardens a rating of "0".

In addition, given that there are effective, semi-effective, and ineffective garden groups that received ratings of "2", resources cannot account for why some community garden groups were more effective than others at achieving their goals. For example, the Sturgis Neighborhood Garden Group, which received a "1" in overall goal attainment, had an

abundance of material resources. Sandra, the founder and leader, told me one afternoon while sitting in the neighborhood community center, that in the beginning, the garden group raised "about $3,000, and we've spent, over 4 years, maybe $1,000." Moreover, Sandra convinced the Greenridge County Recreation Department in 2010 to install an irrigation system and over $2,500 worth of fencing at no cost to the group. And yet, while the Sturgis Neighborhood

Table 2.4: Degree to which Garden Groups had Internal Group Capacity in Comparison to Overall Goal Attainment*

	Types of Group Capacity				Overall Goal Attainment
	Resources *(scale: 0-2)*	Internal Group Structure *(5-item index)*	Sociopolitical Legitimacy *(5-item index)*	Participation *(scale: 0-4)*	*(scale: 0-4)*
Effective Community Garden Groups					
Nourish Community Garden Group	2	2	4	3	4
St. Eugene Catholic Church Community Garden Group	2	0	5	3	4
Livingston Community Garden Group	1	3	2	4	4
Laurel Road Elementary School Garden Group	1	1	1	3	4
Semi-Effective Community Garden Groups					
Arnold Academy School Garden Group	2	1	4	2	3
Glendale Road Neighborhood Garden Group	2	0	3	1	2
Oakridge Community Garden Group	2	1	2	2	2
Human Teach Community Garden Group	1	3	2	2	2
Greenway Garden Group	1	4	0	2	2
Ineffective Community Garden Groups					
Mount Pilgrim Presbyterian Community Garden Group	1	1	1	1	1
Sturgis Neighborhood Garden Group	2	1	4	1	1
Lightyear Technologies Community Garden Group	1	1	1	2	1

* For a more detailed description of the application of the scales and indexes to each garden group, see Appendix C.

Garden Group had some success in achieving its official goals when the garden was in operation, the group was unable to consistently plant its garden each season and when planted, keep it from getting overgrown with weeds (Figure 2.2, above, shows a picture of the Sturgis garden after a summer of neglect).

As to whether internal group structure helps separate community garden groups with differing degrees of goal attainment, we can see once again that there are cases of effective, semi-effective, and ineffective groups with similarly high and low degrees of formalization. For example, the Livingston Community Garden Group, which had an overall goal attainment rating of "4," had a semiformal structure with a rating of "3", meaning it had some of the trappings of a formal organization but lacked definitively clear boundaries and a well-defined leadership structure (Smith 1992). The group was run administratively by Elaine, the sponsoring hospital's Manager of Customer and Volunteer Services, part of whose job it was to keep the garden going each season (paid staff). Underneath Elaine was a group of participants who formed a grassroots garden committee to manage the garden on a day-to-day basis, addressing the concerns of other participants and solving problems as needed (a partial leadership structure). In addition, all participants were required to sign a formal document agreeing to abide by certain rules when at the garden in order to release the hospital of all liability (written document with rules of behavior).

In contrast, the garden group at St. Eugene's Catholic Church, which also received a "4" in overall goal attainment, had no internal structure at all. Although everyone in the St. Eugene's group I spoke with agreed on who the two leaders were, neither of the leaders had any formal authority, such as an official tie to an institution, as was the case with Elaine. In

addition, any and all individuals from the church or neighborhood in which the church was located were welcomed to participate at any time, regardless of whether either of the leaders were present, no signatures or release of liability needed. Given that the Livingston Community Garden Group had a higher degree of internal group structure than the group at St. Eugene's, but both groups had an overall goal attainment rating of "4," as a type of capacity, internal group structure cannot account for why some groups were better able than others to achieve their goals.

In regard to sociopolitical legitimacy, the four effective community garden groups were split in terms of the degree to which each had this type of capacity. St. Eugene's and Nourish both had high ratings – a "5" and "4", respectively – while the Livingston Community Garden Group and the group at Laurel Road Elementary scored a "2" or less.

At the time of study, the Nourish Community Garden Group was extremely well known and respected in Greenridge County; many of the people I interviewed pointed to it as an example of a successful community garden group. It was covered often, and prominently, in the local media for its work and the regular large donations it received; the latest article written about it in November of 2016 made the first section of the local newspaper, covering the installation of a $10,000 hydroponic system in its greenhouse. In addition, the garden was featured as a stop on an annual, local urban farm tour for which it was advertised as an "inspirational space [that] serves as an example of the far reaching impact of community gardening efforts and is well worth a visit" (see Figure 2.4). Finally, the garden officially was affiliated with GrowDirt, meaning it was publically listed in GrowDirt's directory of local community gardens.

Figure 2.4: The Write-Up Advertising the Nourish Community Garden in the Guide to the 2012 Greenridge Urban Farm Tour.

The [redacted] Garden initial small garden has grown to a prolific 2,000 sq. foot space and helps [redacted] serve over 200 healthy meals daily. The site also acts as a community space for [redacted] workshops on urban and suburban gardening and provides fresh herbs and vegetables for community culinary school students. This inspirational space serves as an example of the far reaching impact of community gardening efforts and is well worth a visit.

COMMUNITY GARDEN + VEGETABLE GARDEN

All of these factors seemingly would have helped the Nourish Community Garden rise above other groups in achieving its goals. However, the Laurel Road Elementary School Garden Group was virtually unknown in the Greenridge community, and it, too, had a "4" on overall goal attainment. None of the other interviewees in the study mentioned it, the physical garden was not featured on the annual, local urban farm tour, and the only media coverage it received was a short piece in the local newspaper (published in Section H) that profiled the teacher who ran the garden. If the community garden at Nourish were to fail, the wider Greenridge community would know; if the one at Laurel Road were to fail, its lack of existence would not be noticed.

In addition, the Sturgis Neighborhood Garden, which, as discussed above, had a "1" on overall goal attainment, had an enormous amount of sociopolitical legitimacy. Sandra, the founder and leader, gained official endorsements from the Greenridge County Parks and Recreation Department and a prominent city councilwoman. Moreover, the Reverend Jesse Jackson spoke at the dedication ceremony of the garden in the spring of 2011, leading to a prominent write-up in the local newspaper (see Figure 2.5).

Figure 2.5: The Reverend Jesse Jackson spoke at the dedication ceremony of the Sturgis Neighborhood Garden in the spring of 2011.


Growing a community

The Rev. Jesse Jackson speaks to [redacted], an advocate for the senior citizen community in [redacted] County, at the dedication of the [redacted] Community Garden in the [redacted] Community in [redacted]. The half-acre park is being made available for members of [redacted] as well as residents of the neighborhood. View more photos from Thursday's dedication at [redacted]Online.com.

If the garden groups at both Laurel Road and Nourish could achieve their operational and official goals while having completely different levels of sociopolitical legitimacy – and the Sturgis Neighborhood Garden Group could not leverage its legitimacy to achieve even its operative goals consistently – then the amount of credibility a garden group has in the wider community cannot explain differential goal attainment.

Having ruled out resources, a group's internal structure, and sociopolitical legitimacy, we are left with participation. Looking at the results in Table 2.4, we can see that the four effective garden groups all had ratings of "3" or above on participation, while none of the semi- or ineffective garden groups had ratings higher than "2." In fact, participation is the only factor for which all of the effective garden groups scored higher than all of the semi- and ineffective

groups. Practically, this means that groups that achieved their operative and official goals had active participant bases that regularly helped maintain their group's physical community garden, whereas groups that struggled to achieve operative and/or official goals were kept afloat solely by the sheer effort and commitment of their leaders.

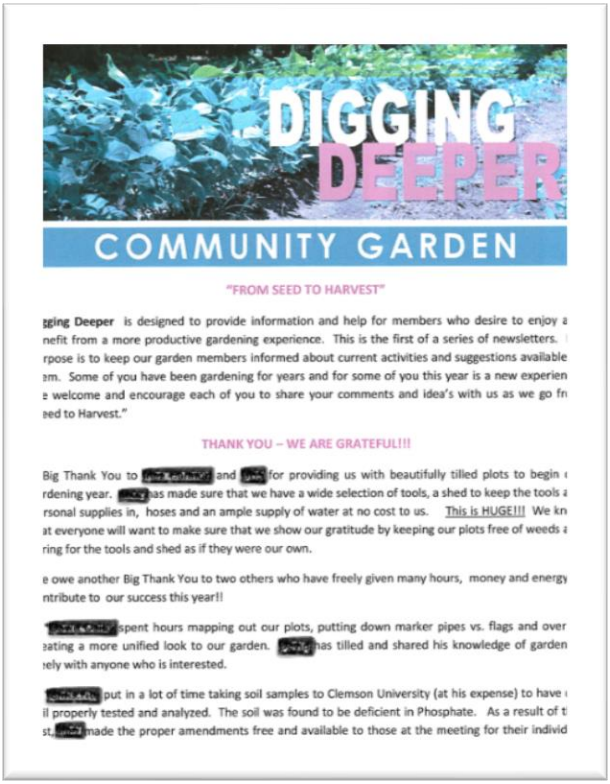
For example, the Livingston Community Garden Group, which had a rating of "4" out of "4" for participation, established their garden with enough space for 50 people in the community to assume an individual plot for no charge. By its fourth year, the garden had expanded from 50 to 78 individual plots. In addition, a group of five active participants had come together voluntarily to form a committee to oversee the day-to-day activity taking place in the garden, as well as to compile and distribute an occasional newsletter (see Figure 2.6).

Elaine, the group's leader and part of whose job it was to oversee the garden administratively, told me:

> You know, I really don't go over there [to the garden] a lot. Um, I drive by there in the mornings…[but]…you know really for the most part, the community members that are participating and volunteering – they're pretty self-sufficient…

The Livingston Community Garden Group is the only one of the groups I examined that met the conditions for a "4" on my participation scale – organized by the leader but maintained mostly by the participants. In consistently maintaining the garden for use each season by members of the Livingston community, the core group of active participants was contributing to the ability of the group to achieve its official goals of providing a place for individuals to grow food who did not have one and promoting preventative health among Livingston residents.

Figure 2.6: The Livingston Community Garden Committee puts together an occasional newsletter with gardening tips and recipes for all of the garden's participants.



DIGGING DEEPER

COMMUNITY GARDEN

"FROM SEED TO HARVEST"

gging Deeper is designed to provide information and help for members who desire to enjoy a nefit from a more productive gardening experience. This is the first of a series of newsletters. rpose is to keep our garden members informed about current activities and suggestions available am. Some of you have been gardening for years and for some of you this year is a new experien e welcome and encourage each of you to share your comments and idea's with us as we go fr eed to Harvest."

THANK YOU – WE ARE GRATEFUL!!!

Big Thank You to [redacted] and [redacted] for providing us with beautifully tilled plots to begin rdening year. [redacted] has made sure that we have a wide selection of tools, a shed to keep the tools rsonal supplies in, hoses and an ample supply of water at no cost to us. This is HUGE!!! We kn at everyone will want to make sure that we show our gratitude by keeping our plots free of weeds ring for the tools and shed as if they were our own.

e owe another Big Thank You to two others who have freely given many hours, money and energy ntribute to our success this year!!

[redacted] spent hours mapping out our plots, putting down marker pipes vs. flags and over eating a more unified look to our garden. [redacted] has tilled and shared his knowledge of garden ely with anyone who is interested.

[redacted] put in a lot of time taking soil samples to Clemson University (at his expense) to have il properly tested and analyzed. The soil was found to be deficient in Phosphate. As a result of t st[redacted] made the proper amendments free and available to those at the meeting for their individ

In contrast to Livingston, the community garden group at Lightyear Technologies had a rating of "2" on participation, meaning that while the leader had consistent help from two to three other people in maintaining the garden, the group needed and struggled to recruit more participants. In a small company conference room, Ian, one of the core participants, directly commented on the lack of participation in the garden in relation to the group's outcomes:

> *Ian*: [I]t [the garden] needs a steady commitment, because like, if…you miss two or three weeks then your garden is going to be growing with weeds and the effort that you put in planting things does not always bear fruit.
> *Sally*: So this [the decline of participation] has happened before?
> *Ian*: It's happening right now if you want to go look at the garden (laughs)… we've got sections that are looking really bad (laughs).

Figure 2.7 shows the Lightyear group's garden on the day I interviewed Ian. Rather than acting as an on-site, stress-relieving activity for employees, the purpose for which it was founded, the garden had become an overgrown eyesore right outside the employee break area.

Figure 2.7: The garden maintained by the group at Lightyear Technologies showed clear signs of neglect in the summer of 2015.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

In this chapter, I examined the differential goal attainment of community garden groups in Greenridge. Given the paucity of research available on local, voluntary groups (with Smith [2000] being the primary exception), I proposed that one way to begin developing theories about their operations and outcomes would be to consider them, theoretically, as formal organizations that perpetually are in a phase of emergence and early growth. Doing so allowed me to apply what we know about the factors that underlie the successful startup of formal

organizations, including social movement organizations, to explore the factors that could be related to the differential ability of local, voluntary groups to achieve their goals.

Specifically, I argued that although environmental conditions such as civic and political context have a role to play in explaining group goal attainment, what should matter most is the degree of success leaders have in navigating and capitalizing on environmental conditions to build their group's internal capacity. I considered four types of internal capacity for which group leaders are responsible – resources, internal group structure, sociopolitical legitimacy, and participation – and analyzed the presence of each type of capacity in relation to the goal attainment of community garden groups in Greenridge.

What I found was surprising. First, while the literature is mixed on whether internal group structure should help or hinder a group's ability to achieve its goals, my findings suggest that for local, voluntary groups, the amount of organizational structure a group has does not matter at all. I found no systematic variation between goal attainment and groups with high or low amounts of structure. One way to explain this finding is that the majority of the groups studied here were extremely small in size, so much so that no real formal structure was needed to manage participants and organize activities. Another explanation for the inability of internal group structure to explain differential goal attainment lies in the implications of the argument I lay out in Chapter 3.

Second, and even more surprising, despite significant research pointing to the contrary, resources and sociopolitical legitimacy also did not help differentiate between voluntary groups that were and were not achieving their goals. Among the community garden groups I studied, I found groups that mobilized enormous amounts of sociopolitical legitimacy and material

resources and yet struggled to stay alive from one season to the next – for example, the Sturgis Neighborhood Garden Group. Moreover, I had cases of community garden groups that were thriving, consistently achieving their operative and official goals, and yet did not have the levels of sociopolitical legitimacy and material resources of some of the ineffective garden groups.

In fact, the only type of group capacity that mattered for whether or not a group was able to achieve its operative and official goals was the amount of participation a leader mobilized. The fact that participation consistently was higher in goal-achieving than non-goal-achieving groups was not unexpected. By definition, a local, voluntary group relies on the willingness of individuals to donate their time and talent to help run the group and execute its work. I explore this finding further in Chapter 4 by considering the strategies used by and characteristics of leaders that affected their ability to mobilize sustained participation.

Yet how to account for why neither resources nor sociopolitical legitimacy differentiated voluntary groups that were achieving their goals from those that were not? To answer this question, we must turn to a different level of analysis. In the next chapter, I move from a consideration of the dynamics of individual community garden groups to the dynamics of the organizational environment in which community garden groups were established and operated in Greenridge in the mid-2000s.

CHAPTER 3: ON LEVEL GROUND
THE RESOURCE-RICH ENVIRONMENT OF COMMUNITY GARDEN GROUPS

"It still amazes me how easy it was, uh, to get the support that I needed…usually when people think about…gardening, they think 'Oh my god!...I've got to get water and seeds and equipment to work and gloves and yada yada'…[getting those materials], that was easy."

Sandra
Founder and Leader
Sturgis Neighborhood Garden Group

In Chapter 2, I found that goal-achieving and non-goal-achieving community garden groups could not be differentiated by looking at the degree to which each group cultivated sociopolitical legitimacy and mobilized material resources. The theories underlying both types of group capacity rely on an assumption of scarcity – that legitimacy and resources are available in a limited amount within a given population. When one voluntary group succeeds in securing credibility or material resources, the amount available to other groups necessarily decreases. In other words, the groups that are most successful in acquiring sociopolitical legitimacy and material resources are those that are most likely to achieve effectiveness.

However, Greenridge's community garden groups were embedded in an organizational environment that challenges this assumption. In this chapter, I draw on data from various national and local documents and all 18 community garden groups selected for study to trace the emergence of the resource-rich organizational

environment of community garden groups in Greenridge beginning in the mid-2000s.[12] In doing so, I show that community garden groups, as a partial solution to diet-related disease and food deserts, enjoyed population-level sociopolitical legitimacy and received broad support among institutional actors and Greenridge's public at large. Consequently, material resources were widely available to any new or existing garden group in Greenridge, rendering the cultivation of both forms of capacity at the group level unable to explain differential effectiveness.

In addition, I argue that sociopolitical legitimacy and resource support for an entire population of local, voluntary groups like community gardens emerges through the convergence of three conditions. First, a wide swath of the public must recognize the issue(s) to be addressed by a voluntary group – in this case, the dramatic rise in diet-related diseases – as a problem worth addressing. Second, the proposed solution to that problem must be non-contentious in nature, meaning that it encounters "little to no organized opposition" (McCarthy and Wolfson 1992:274). Community garden groups are one example of a non-contentious strategy to achieve social change. According to Lawson (2005:292):

> Very few people will stand up and say that a children's garden is a bad thing. Few frown when they see a group of gardeners volunteer their time to make a garden on an otherwise vacant lot. Most people view urban garden programs as symbols of hope and positive action toward individual and social betterment.

[12] I am able to use data from all 18 community garden groups in this chapter as the analysis I present here was not affected by the retrospective nature of the interviews with affiliates of the six failed gardens. In fact, I mostly rely on interviewee accounts of group founding, accounts which were retrospective in nature for interviewees from all 18 garden groups.

Third, in addition to being non-contentious, the solution proposed by the voluntary group must resonate with and appeal to the culture of the target population. Potential participants must have incentive not only to not be opposed to the group but to see value in actively promoting its existence through the provision of endorsements and material resources. In Greenridge, community gardens as a solution to the increasing local incidence of diet-related disease aligned with the city's attempts to develop a national identity as a healthy community, both in terms of its physical environment and its people.

In this chapter, I show how the convergence of these three conditions created an organizational environment in Greenridge where population-level sociopolitical legitimacy and extensive access to material resources led to the rapid establishment of community garden groups beginning in 2010. I begin by describing the characterization of diet-related disease as a public health crisis at the national level, the growing awareness of the presence of food deserts and their relation to low-income communities of color, and the legitimation of community gardens as a non-contentious, grassroots solution to both issues by a number of national institutional actors. I then explain how urban revitalization and changing demographics created a local culture in Greenridge that was receptive to the conversation around community gardens happening across the country. Subsequently, I draw on interviews and document analysis to show how an institutional environment actively endorsing and promoting the establishment of community gardens developed in Greenridge in 2009, resulting in the widespread encouragement of community garden group establishment and the provision of resources to support them.

I conclude with a brief discussion of the implications of this sort of organizational environment for the voluntary groups that operate within it. First, I contend that the organizational environment I describe helps to explain why internal group structure could not account for why some groups were better able to achieve their goals than others. In addition, I suggest that resource-rich environments are useful only for voluntary groups that have the participants to exploit the resources to the benefit of the group's goals. Finally, I posit that the ease with which the leaders of voluntary groups in resource-rich environments are able to build legitimacy and garner resources can be mistaken as an indication of the ease with which participants can be mobilized.

THE NATIONAL LEGITIMATION OF COMMUNITY GARDENS

During the past two decades, public concern mounted around the potential dangers an industrial agriculture and corporate food system posed to our nation's health. Fast-food scandals – such as the 1993 Jack in the Box E. coli outbreak[13] – rocked the country and increased awareness of and interest in the road food travels from the farm to our plates. In addition, books and documentaries such as *Fast Food Nation* (Schlosser 2001), *Food Politics* (Nestle 2002)*, Super Size Me* (Spurlock 2004), *The Omnivore's Dilemma* (Pollan 2007), and *Food, Inc.* (Kenner 2009) caught the public eye and connected a series of dots leading from "big ag" and "corporate" food to the door of the country's rising rates of diet-related diseases, specifically, obesity and diabetes (Alkon and Agyeman 2011; Pollan 2010).

[1313] In 1993, an outbreak of E. coli at several Jack in the Box restaurants in California, Idaho, Washington, and Nevada resulted in the infection of 732 people and the death of at least four individuals (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention 1993; Schlosser 2001).

In 2001, the United States Surgeon General released a call to action that identified obesity as a "highly pressing health problem" of "epidemic proportions" (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services 2001). In the forward to the lengthy report, the Surgeon General at the time, David Satcher, wrote that, "[m]any people believe that dealing with overweight and obesity is a personal responsibility. To some degree, they are right, but it is also a *community responsibility*" (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services 2001:xiii).[14] Trend data from Gallup's annual Health and Healthcare survey from 1999 to 2013 shows a 15-point increase in the percentage of Americans who said that obesity was the "most urgent health problem facing the country at the present time," from 1% in 1999 to 16% in 2012 (Mendes 2012b). Additionally, another Gallup poll found that 81% of Americans said obesity was an "extremely" or "very serious" problem to society in 2012, in comparison to 69% in 2005 and 57% in 2003; in fact, this poll showed that Americans saw obesity as a more serious problem than cigarette or alcohol usage (Mendes 2012a).

At the same time that public awareness and interest was growing around these topics, the country also became attuned to the relatively new idea of a "food desert." Purportedly introduced in the early 1990s in Scotland by a public housing resident to describe areas with little to no access to nutritious food, the idea of a "food desert" gained widespread acceptance in the United States when House Resolution 2419 – the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008 – called for a study and report on the "incidence and prevalence…[of places]…with limited access to affordable and nutritious food, particularly such an area composed of predominantly

[14] Emphasis added.

lower-income neighborhoods and communities."[15] Although food deserts also can exist in rural areas, the common picture of a food desert is a low-income, decaying urban neighborhood where the only available sources of food within walking distance are gas station snack aisles and cheap, fast food restaurants. Given the frequency with which food deserts appear in low-income communities of color and the links that have been made between living in a food desert and being overweight or obese, discussion of the phenomenon and potential solutions took on a social justice and human rights frame (Elsheikh and Barhoum 2013).

As discussed in Chapter 1, interest in community gardens has a long history of rising in popularity during times of crisis, promoted by institutional actors at the national level as a legitimate response to social and economic problems. The latest wave of national interest and growth in community gardens that took place over the 2000s and 2010s was no different. Communities and individuals were seeking viable, local strategies to gain some control over the source of their food and in so doing, address the "public health crisis" of diet-related disease and the inaccessibility of healthy food by low-income communities. Along with farmers' markets and other local alternatives to the commercially-grown produce available in big box supermarkets, community gardens became one of a repertoire of non-contentious, grassroots strategies promoted by institutional actors like the federal governmental, the scientific community, and the media.

[15] https://www.congress.gov/bill/110th-congress/house-bill/2419

Governmental Institutions

The most prominent governmental endorsement of community gardens as a grassroots public health intervention came from Michelle Obama. During her tenure as First Lady, Obama made combating the rise of diet-related diseases and increasing access to healthy, affordable food her platform. One of the strategies she both practiced and promoted was community gardening. In 2009, Obama announced the communal planting of a vegetable garden on the White House grounds, the first since Eleanor Roosevelt grew a victory garden in World War II. The White House Kitchen Garden was planted intentionally within view of the public and became the most visible symbol of her work, both nationally and globally. That same year, Obama also launched the Let's Move Faith and Communities initiative in which she challenged faith-based and community leaders across the country to "host 10,000 community gardens, farmers' markets, or other fresh food access points" (White House Office of Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships 2011a). Obama sold the initiative using the justification that a "vegetable garden is a great way to engage members of your congregation and community around healthy, local food" (White House Office of Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships 2011b).

The White House was not alone in promoting community gardens. Also in 2009, citing "public interest" in the idea, the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) began *The People's Garden* program to encourage federal employees to start and sustain gardens on federal property or in nearby communities and to provide resources for community gardeners. *The People's Garden* website proudly proclaims that "the simple act of planting a garden can unite neighbors in a common effort and inspire locally led solutions to challenges facing our

country – from hunger to climate change" (United States Department of Agriculture n.d.). Since the founding of the garden that launched the initiative outside the USDA's Washington headquarters, more than 2,600 gardens across the country and the globe have been established and/or registered as "People's Gardens" (United States Department of Agriculture n.d.).

In addition to the White House and the USDA, community gardens received significant promotion from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). In 2010, the CDC compiled a webpage of case studies on and resources for starting community gardens as part of their *Healthy Community Design Initiative*. More recently, through their Partners in Community Health (PICH) initiative, the CDC awarded funding to four programs across the country who proposed using community gardens as part of a strategy to increase access to healthy food options in their communities.[16] And finally, the CDC listed community gardens as an evidence-based intervention in their Community Health Improvement Navigator, which purports to be a "one-stop shop that offers expert-vetted tools and resources to support collaborative, impactful [community health] work" (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention 2015).

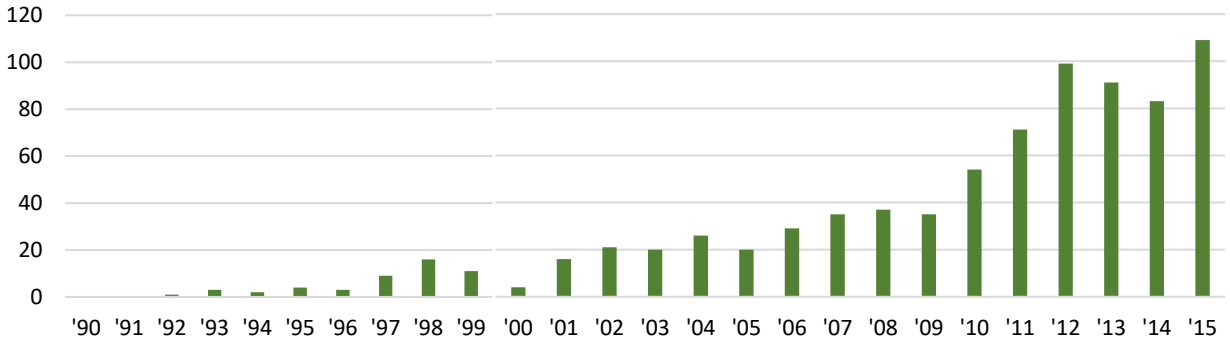
Scientific Community

The scientific community also acted as a legitimating force for the efficacy of community gardens. As is evident in Figure 3.1, in the mid-2000s, community gardens became an increasingly popular subject of examination by academics in a multitude of disciplines seeking

[16] Greenridge was the recipient of a one and a half million dollar PICH grant, a portion of which was designated for the establishment of 10 new community gardens in food deserts across the county.

to study their social outcomes, particularly in relation to public health and neighborhood revitalization. Figure 3.1 shows the number of peer-reviewed, scholarly journal articles from ProQuest Central's multidisciplinary research database that mentioned "community garden" and were published from January 1990 to December 2015.

Figure 3.1. Number of Peer-Reviewed Scholarly Journal Articles Mentioning "Community Garden," Based on a Search of ProQuest Central's Multidisciplinary Research Database, by Year.



Researchers found evidence linking community gardens with increased fruit and vegetable intake (Alaimo et al. 2008; Blair, Giesecke, and Sherman 1991; Flanigan and Varma 2006), increased physical activity (Stein 2008), decreased stress and negativity (Stuart 2005), increased social network participation/decreased isolation (Alaimo et al. 2010; Glover 2003b; Wakefield et al. 2007), increased community organizing and empowerment (Armstrong 2000; Berkowitz 2000; Nettle 2014), and increased property values near garden sites (Voicu and Been 2008).

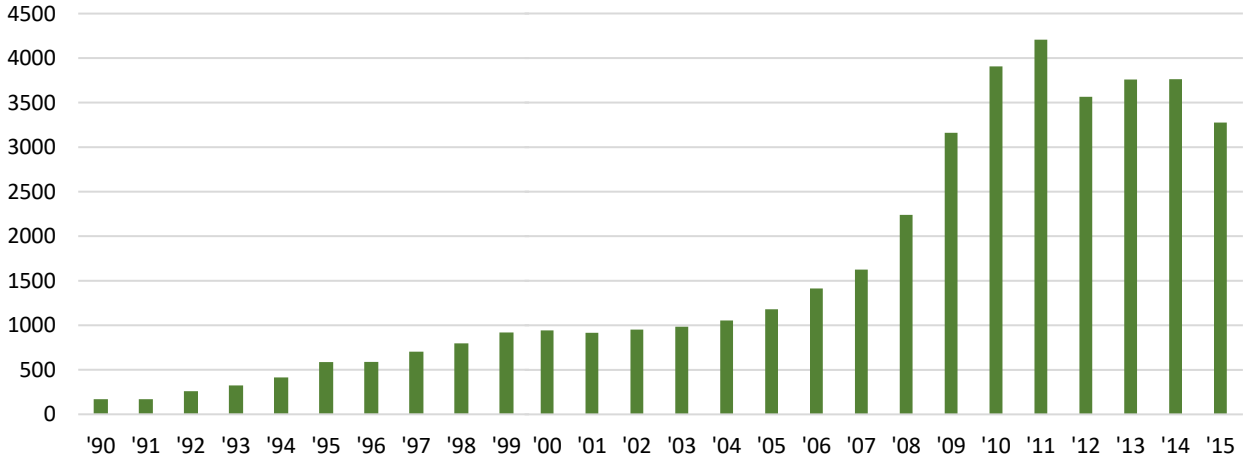
The scientific community's findings provided a body of evidence upon which other institutional actors like the government and media – and local actors across the country – could draw to justify community garden establishment.

Media

The news media also brought community gardens into the nation's consciousness as a strategy of action. Figure 3.2 shows the number of articles from the 587 U.S. newspapers housed in ProQuest's U.S. Newsstream database that mentioned the phrase "community garden" from January 1990 to December 2015.

While community gardening received some attention in the late 1990s and early 2000s, news coverage began to increase in 2005 and 2006 with headlines like "Consider: A community garden could sow good seeds and feed the hungry" (Anthony 2005) and "Growing value of green veggies. Cancer alliance works to promote healthier diet through local garden" (Rodriguez 2006).

Figure 3.2. Number of Newspaper Articles Mentioning "Community Garden," Based on a Search of the Archives of the 587 U.S. Newspapers Housed within ProQuest's U.S. Newsstream Database, by Year.



This coverage played an important role in the legitimation and diffusion of community gardens nationwide. Studies of institutionalization and diffusion have argued that "the more numerous the adopters of a practice, the more widespread its acceptance and the greater its

legitimacy" (Deephouse and Suchman 2008; Strang and Soule 1998). In fact, organizational ecology scholars who focus on "density dependence" arguments consider the number of organizations within a population as an indication of that organizational form's external legitimacy (Hannan and Carroll 1992; Hannan and Freeman 1987). In increasingly covering national and local community garden projects in a positive light, the news media created and reinforced the sense that community garden establishment was widespread, being used by cities and neighborhoods across the country to mobilize action around issues of public health and food deserts.[17]

LOCAL FOUNDATIONS

Lawson (2005:288) describes the establishment of a community garden as "an action with a satisfyingly tangible outcome…an almost knee-jerk response to crisis." Beginning in the 2000s, community gardens became part of a national cultural repertoire of strategies that could be used to lower rates of obesity and diabetes and increase the access of low-income populations to affordable, healthy food. However, Greenridge did not experience a surge in community garden interest and sociopolitical support until 2010; only five new gardens were established in 2009 in comparison to the 11 that were established in 2010 and the 14 that were established in 2011. In fact, 15 of the 18 gardens selected for study in this research were started in 2011 or later.

[17] The growth of interest in and establishment of community gardens can be thought of somewhat like a "consensus movement," defined as "organized movements for change that find widespread support for their goals and little to no organized opposition" (McCarthy and Wolfson 1992:273–74). As such, the fact that community gardens garnered such positive media coverage is not surprising given the history of other consensus movements receiving considerably favorable coverage (McCarthy and Wolfson 1992). See, for example, the city twinning movement (Lofland 1989) and the movement against drunk driving (Edwards and McCarthy 2004b).

Stinchcombe (1997:8) argued that the power of institutionalized ideas comes from the fact that they "embody a value that the people also accept." In other words, while a practice may be legitimated at a national level, its local adoption depends on the degree to which the values it embodies are compatible with the culture of a given environment (Caprar and Neville 2012). In the following section, I describe the creation and expansion of a local culture in Greenridge that reflected national concerns about public health and food inaccessibility and the ability of community gardens to address them. Specifically, I discuss the implementation of a vision for a healthier Greenridge and the corresponding demographic changes in Greenridge's population that ensued.

Vision for a Healthy Greenridge

The substantial growth in community garden establishment in 2010 has its roots in the late 1990s with Greenridge's attempts to transform the reputation of its downtown from the hangout spot of drug addicts and gang members to that of a thriving center of arts, restaurants, and retail. Part of Greenridge's strategy to accomplish this goal included the articulation of a cohesive theme that captured the heart of the town, around which future national images of the city could be organized. A strategic planning company the city hired to help it carve out an identity recommended Greenridge capitalize and expand on its natural assets, suggesting that "[i]n the case of **Green**ridge, [the development of an identity] may mean reinforcing and/or expanding the outstanding landscape '**Green**' image that exists along Main Street and reinforcing it with new design standards and criteria."[18] The idea of branding Greenridge as a

[18] Emphasis is original to the quote, which is from the strategic planning company's 1997 report to the city.

"green," sustainable city was appealing, and not long after, residents began using the catchy phrase "bring the 'green' back to Greenridge" to describe the city's revitalization efforts.

Greenridge focused its initial efforts on creating a 25+ acre city park around a nearby river, which opened in 2004. In addition to directly leading to the return of businesses to downtown to support park-goers, these efforts laid the foundation for a series of public meetings in 2005 in which the City of Greenridge widened its vision for the future. The new vision included Greenridge's desire to cultivate a national reputation as a leading healthy community, both because of the health of its physical environment (as evidenced through beautiful parks) and the health of its people. At the time the vision was expanded, approximately 55% of the adult population age 20 and over in Greenridge County was overweight or obese, and 8% reported having been diagnosed with diabetes.[19] Government, business, and nonprofit leaders agreed on taking a preventative approach, seeking out and supporting projects like the building of more parks and greenways, and the introduction of "heart-healthy" restaurants to the city that would "encourage the individual to adopt a healthier lifestyle."[20]

In short, Greenridge's work to become nationally known as a "green" city through the revitalization of its physical environment and promotion of preventative health strategies

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[19] Rates of overweight/obesity and diabetes is based on self-reported data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System as compiled on a Community Commons Community Health Needs Assessment report for Greenridge. A BMI of 25.0-30.0 is classified as "overweight," with a BMI above 30.0 classified as "obese." I do not cite this source in order to keep the name of the city in which I conducted this research confidential.

[20] These quotations are from a document entitled *Greenridge Vision 2025*, which summarized the work of over 15 individual committees in 2005 to articulate a comprehensive vision for Greenridge that would guide the city's development for the next 15 years.

created the institutional context in which community gardens as a public health intervention could thrive.

Changing Demographics

Over the 2000s, Greenridge's investments in its physical landscape and focus on building a healthy community of residents began attracting an in-migration of middle-class professionals looking for a high quality of life with a low cost of living. From 2000 to 2008, Greenridge County's population grew by 13%, an increase mostly due to newcomers relocating from the Northeast, Florida, and the Midwest. The college-educated of Greenridge County grew from 21% of the total population in 1990 to 26% in 2000 and 32% in 2015, and the median income of the county rose by over $10,000 from 1999 to 2015. In addition, a majority of those people driving the growth were millennials and retirees. Millennials were attracted by Greenridge's thriving downtown and growing startup culture, while retirees were looking to relocate somewhere with a more temperate climate and an abundance of recreational activities.

Demographically, the type of people fueling Greenridge's growth – educated, middle-to upper-class individuals – also were those fueling the surge of interest in community gardens nationally (The National Gardening Association 2014). According to Eliza, the chair of GrowDirt's Board of Directors:

> I would say the demographic or the people who are more interested in this [community gardening] are upper to...middle to upper class, like upper middle to upper class white, um, people with means but they want to be like, you know, feel connected to the land and like think it's an important thing and they feel progressive…

Angela, the 4-H Extension agent for Greenridge County, also had a wide-angle view of those who were starting and participating in community garden groups in Greenridge. Her

understanding of who was participating in the local community gardening scene complemented Eliza's:

> I mean, [local food] it's primarily utilized and, um, accessed by a select group of the community, so primarily upper class, educated, um, a lot of them not from the area, um, and I guess hipsters. I, I hate to use generalized social terms but I don't know what else to say…It's, it's like, um, you know, people that have the education level and have the means to spend the time to think about where their food is coming from, how it's prepared, and, um, and that are really concerned and educated with their general health, um, that kind of thing.

Eliza and Angela's observations align with research that has found that participation in projects like farmers' markets and community gardens tend to be dominated by white, middle-class individuals (Alkon 2012; Alkon and Agyeman 2011; American Community Gardening Association 2014; Guthman 2008b; Slocum 2007) with "similar backgrounds, values, and proclivities, who have come to similar conclusions about how our food system should change" (Alkon and Agyeman 2011:2).[21] In brief, the change in Greenridge's population during the 2000s resulted in a growing base of people for whom, at least demographically, the idea of a community garden was likely to resonate and who had the money and time to participate in the labor-intensive project of building and maintaining one.

[21] There are many examples of community gardens that have been successful in Hispanic/Latino communities (Armstrong 2000; Hondagneu-Sotelo 2014; Saldivar-Tanaka and Krasny 2004). Guthman (2008a:433) suggests the larger participation rates in Latino communities is "likely related to the inability of undocumented immigrants to access state-funded food entitlements," whereas the documented low participation rates of Blacks is related to the coding, both physically and in discourse, of alternative food projects like farmers' markets and community gardens as "white spaces." For example, the "romanticized American agrarian imagery" around "getting your hands dirty" and "digging in the soil" ignores the "explicitly racist ways in which American land has been distributed [and worked] historically…[that have ramifications] today in more subtle cultural codings of small farming" (Guthman 2008b:390).

THE LEGITIMATION OF COMMUNITY GARDENS IN GREENRIDGE

At the same time that Greenridge was experiencing an influx of environmentally-minded middle- to upper-class professionals, government, business, and nonprofit leaders looking to improve Greenridge's environmental health and public health became sold on the idea of community gardens. This happened initially through the efforts of three different individuals – Holly, Chris, and Jane – who were involved with separate coalitions in Greenridge to improve community health and who each became familiar with the growing national discourse around community gardens. Holly, Chris, and Jane all can be thought of as "institutional entrepreneurs" (DiMaggio 1988; Rao, Morrill, and Zald 2000), who, through their coalition-building work, largely were directly responsible for introducing the idea of community gardens as way to address the interrelated issues of health and poverty they saw in the Greenridge community.[22]

Holly is a force of nature contained in the body of a short woman with cropped, brown hair and a no-nonsense attitude. A former professor of business at a local college and human resources consultant, Holly left the corporate world in 2008 to focus on strengthening local food systems in Greenridge's region of the state as the sustainability specialist for a powerful hospital system in the region. In 2009, Holly attended Will Allen's[23] Growing Power conference in Milwaukee and returned determined to try and use her position to replicate Allen's massively

[22] It also would not be inappropriate to think of Holly, Chris, and Jane as "skilled social actors" who, in the language of Fligstein and McAdam (2012:84), "can forge new identities, coalitions, and hierarchies."

[23] Will Allen is a 2008 MacArthur Fellow (a "genius grant" recipient) and current CEO of Growing Power, a nonprofit organization of urban farms based in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Allen is famous worldwide for his innovative, low-cost growing techniques that annually produce more than one million pounds of food on only 300 acres of land (Anon 2014). With a focus on improving the diet and health of the urban poor, Growing Power regularly holds workshops and conferences to teach the building of urban and community food systems.

successful – and by this point, famous – urban farm and community gardening project in Sturgis, the low-income neighborhood surrounding the hospital where she worked. Here is Holly's description of her efforts:

> In 2009 I went to the Growing Power conference in Milwaukee and came back with the idea, "Hey, we could, we could do this." It was September of 2009. [In] 2010, I was working with somebody from [the hospital where she was employed] and another business partner and a couple of other people, and all the sudden we had this big group, and we would have sometimes 20 people meeting, talking about what we could do in Sturgis, how we could develop a small version of this [of Growing Power], and a place where we could teach cooking classes...and so everybody kind of caught the, caught the fever…people from the City, people from the County, architects…

According to Holly, one person who "caught the fever" was Chris, a planner with the Greenridge County Department of Planning and Code Compliance:

> So then Chris started, as part of the County, reaching out to people about the local food system. Because it became apparent that it was going to be, it could be a significant economic boom. And so he started this group, and we would sometimes have 50 people that he would get together...

Chris's interest was piqued by the results of a 2007 study by Virginia Cooperative Extension that estimated if every person in Virginia spent $10 a week on local food, it would inject $1.2 billion back into the Virginia economy (Benson and Bendfeldt 2007). His efforts to reach "out to people about the local food system" resulted in a collaboration with two dozen local, state, and federal partners to conduct a comprehensive assessment of the local food system in Greenridge and the surrounding counties that was presented to the Greenridge County Planning Commission in 2012. The report argued that a robust local food system, which included the existence of community gardens, would lead to a wide range of benefits for the County, including "increased entrepreneurial opportunities," "increased food security," and "increased access to healthy food."

The degree to which Holly and Chris's work resulted in the city of Greenridge's institutional endorsement and promotion of community gardens is evident when looking at the city's ten-year comprehensive plan released in 2009[24] and the neighborhood and community plans generated by the city and county of Greenridge beginning in 2010. The 2009 comprehensive plan was organized around several themes (e.g. transportation, housing, economic development, etc.), each with a committee charged with articulating specific objectives and possible implementation strategies to achieve those objectives. The committee tasked with creating objectives for the theme "healthy living and a pedestrian-friendly environment" listed setting aside "community green space for parks, gardens, etc." as one of its seven goals; one of the implementation strategies suggested for achieving that goal was creating "community gardens in urban areas." The committee justified the inclusion of community gardens as a strategy by citing the efforts of New York City, Boston, Philadelphia, and Seattle to promote and build gardens as a way to create green space and reclaim vacant lots.

Looking at the 14 neighborhood and community plans created between 2010 and 2017, it is apparent that both the city of Greenridge and the county, which also adopted the comprehensive plan, took the committee's suggestion to heart; 12 of the plans officially incorporated community gardens. Table 3.1 provides a sample of how community gardens were described in five of these plans.

[24] The state in which Greenridge is located mandates that municipalities update their comprehensive plans every ten years, with a five-year review between updates.

Table 3.1: Samples of the Incorporation of Community Gardens into Greenridge Neighborhood and Community Plans

Neighborhood/ Community	Year Plan Released	Description of Community Gardens in Plan
Glendale Road	2013	"The efforts of several local organizations…should be combined to create public gardens for the enjoyment of the entire Glendale Road community. Such gardens will offer healthy, local food, leisure activity, and opportunity for community interaction and education."
Sturgis	2010	"The Sturgis Master Plan identifies several additional areas of community gardens…[that could] become a center for 'home grown' produce that could serve the neighborhood or be sold in the Sturgis Village area."
Acadia	2011	"The Acadia community lacks a source of fresh food for residents and visitors…the City [of Greenridge] should encourage community gardens within the neighborhood's vacant lots or undevelopable properties to provide additional food sources, [and] increase aesthetics…"
Riverside	2014	"Expanding residents' ability to grow their own food within the neighborhood will provide a low-cost method for accessing healthy ingredients…[T]his plan proposes using existing facilities to centralize food growing and education in Riverside. With…several local community gardens already established, the community could focus on activating resident participation."
Eureka Mills	2012	"Community gardens provide many benefits to a community. They provide locally grown, fresh food while at the same time fostering a sense of community pride…there are several areas throughout the Eureka Mills community that could serve as potential locations for community gardens."

In 2015, a five-year update on the 2009 comprehensive plan highlighted the strides Greenridge had made in encouraging community garden development:

> Over the course of the past five years the Greenridge County Planning Department along with several non-profit agencies have placed a new level of importance and value on community-based agricultural projects. Community scale gardens provide several benefits to an area besides being a source of local produce by also generating community pride and cooperation where successful. Just a few of the projects that have been developed over the last few years include [a list of 11 community gardens they helped start, three of which are in Table 3.1, above].

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While Chris and Holly promoted community gardens as part of an effort to boost economic development and revitalization, Jane – a prominent nonprofit consultant and the third "institutional entrepreneur" who helped introduce the idea of community gardens to

Greenridge – was leading an even larger coalition of community leaders to combat Greenridge's rates of adult and childhood obesity. With the assistance of a half million dollar grant from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJ), Jane and a local health foundation created a formal coalition of more than 100 representatives of local and state government, business, health care, education, philanthropy, and county residents in 2009. The goal of the coalition, Partners in Care, was to promote and increase access to opportunities for "healthy eating and active living"[25] and was based in a belief in environmental determinism, that changing the physical environment would produce changes in people's behavior.[26]

Over the conference room table in her office, Jane talked to me about how she heard about community gardens as a viable strategy to promote health at national RWJ meetings:

> We went to some of the required [RWJ] grantee convenings, and community gardening was definitely a push, of interest [by RWJ], and we…talked about it...in the context of how do we use community gardens as a means to broader community engagement and dialogue around healthy eating?…That whole question of how do we increase access to healthy food?...And we understood that community gardening could be a definite community development strategy..."

Building on the encouragement from RWJ to propose the idea of community gardens to the residents in the three low-income neighborhoods in which the RWJ grant funded the coalition to work, Partners in Care also set up a nonprofit, GrowDirt, a formal resource for and network of community gardens across the county in 2011. According to Jane:

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[25] This quotation is from the original grant proposal to RWJ written to fund the coalition's work.

[26] The local newspaper quoted the executive director of the local foundation that sponsored the coalition as saying, "Partners in Care focuses on…a whole host of things to help make the healthy choice the easy choice…it's difficult to maintain healthy lifestyles when the surrounding environment does not support healthy choices."

> [Partners in Care] saw the need for support to…community gardening and knowing how-to and what the necessary ingredients were to sustain community gardens…and what supports were needed to help grow this movement in Greenridge.

GrowDirt had institutional legitimacy from the very beginning. Partners in Care launched the fledgling nonprofit under a larger nonprofit organization, Future Greenridge, which had been tasked by the City of Greenridge with the implementation of the city's vision for a healthy community. Future Greenridge had a powerhouse board of directors with local wealthy and well-known individuals who had deep pockets and/or deep ties throughout the community. The board included a beloved local philanthropist, a member of one of the most prestigious boutique law firms in the region, the Chief Operating Officer of a regional architecture company, and a member of the state House of Representatives, among others. With the backing of the Partners in Care coalition and Future Greenridge's board, GrowDirt's efforts to support the establishment and maintenance of community gardens across the county flourished. According to a grant application Partners in Care submitted to the CDC in 2015 for an additional $30,000 to support GrowDirt, over 65 community gardens were established across Greenridge County following GrowDirt's founding in 2011.[27]

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By the time I began fieldwork in the summer of 2015, community gardens had taken on a symbolic character in Greenridge. Having a community garden had become a way to signal

[27] GrowDirt is not the only community garden support organization the founding of which resulted directly in the proliferation of community gardens across an area. Gardening Matters, a nonprofit network and support organization of community garden groups that was established in 2008 in the Twin Cities area of Minnesota, claims that their efforts resulted in the growth of their local community garden group population from 200 to over 600 through the provision of "start up, sustainability, and shared leadership training" (Gardening Matters n.d.).

that one's neighborhood, workspace, or bedroom community (Greenridge had several) understood, supported, and/or was a part of the newly "green" Greenridge that had emerged with the implementation of the vision to reshape the city's downtown and the health of the county's population.

Charles and Nell, the older couple who founded the Bennett Neighborhood Garden, provide a perfect example of the way many people were thinking about community gardens in Greenridge at the time. One early fall evening, they described to me why they pushed for a garden in Bennett in 2012:

> There was a movement of sort in the city, you know, the gardens were important…it was the thing to do…one of the reasons that there is...that [we] started a garden here was that…it became kind of a good idea politically, uh, to say that you had a, you know, that there was a community and that community had a garden…I think it was kind of, well, if you wanted to be with the program and with what was going on in Greenridge, then your community should have a garden.

On the opposite side of the city from Charles and Nell, an influential member of and informal leader in the bedroom community of Oakridge noticed the same thing. Margaret was tapped by a city councilman to run Oakridge's first community garden because of her reputation as an Extension Master Gardener. The Master Gardener program was developed in 1972 by the Washington State Cooperative Extension "in response to a high demand for urban horticulture and gardening advice" (Kellam 2010). Today, Master Gardener programs exist across the country to provide extensive training to volunteers to assist Cooperative Extension

agents in providing reliable gardening information to the public.[28] Margaret was glad to see that Oakridge was keeping pace with its fellow suburbs:

> [M]y initial reaction [to hearing about the work of the Oakridge City Council to establish a community garden] was well, thank goodness…everybody else, all the other municipalities were doing it, so I was very pleased that Oakridge was getting on board.

Previous work in the social movements and organizations literatures has argued that the cultivation of sociopolitical legitimacy is critical to a group's or organization's ability to achieve effectiveness (DiMaggio and Powell 1983; Meyer and Rowan 1977; Walker and McCarthy 2010). This work has examined the ways that individual organizations or movements cultivate sociopolitical legitimacy – for example, by having prestigious people on the board of directors or by seeking positive media coverage. However, in the case of community garden groups in Greenridge in the early 2010s, legitimacy did not need to be actively cultivated by individual groups. As a whole, the population of community garden groups in Greenridge enjoyed a high degree of sociopolitical legitimacy. This was due to the fact that the very idea of having or establishing a community garden group was seen as an expression of alignment with Greenridge's new, emerging identity as a "green," sustainable city.

POPULATION-LEVEL SOCIOPOLITICAL AND RESOURCE MOBILIZATION

The symbolic character community garden groups assumed meant that all types of organizations – businesses, nonprofits, faith-based organizations, neighborhood associations,

[28] A 2009 survey found that there were roughly 95,000 Master Gardeners nationwide who, that year, provided over 5,000,000 hours of volunteer service (The United States Cooperative Extension System: eXtension Master Gardener 2009).

etc. – had the incentive either to start a community garden group or support one. Consequently, mobilizing the resources needed to establish a group was incredibly easy.

The founding of an extension of the Hillview Community Garden is illustrative of the resources anyone who wanted to start a community garden had access to in Greenridge. The Hillview Community Garden was the brainchild of Eli, a tall, middle-aged man who personally experienced childhood hunger and was disturbed by the lack of fresh food he saw in Greenridge's food pantries. Armed with the idea that he could grow fresh food to donate, Eli established Hillview Community Garden as a 501(c)3 in 2011 on five acres on the outskirts of town, with the idea of expanding the group's operations to locations throughout the city. In 2012, Eli, along with the help of Eric, a core volunteer in the first and main Hillview garden, approached InvestCorp, one of the larger investment firms in Greenridge, about donating a piece of land that the firm owned. The land was located in the Eureka Mills neighborhood, an impoverished former mill community that had fallen into decline. Here is Eric's account of he and Eli's visit to InvestCorp to pitch them the idea of building a community garden on their property:

> [We] met with their director of PR or something and said "Will you set up the meeting at InvestCorp, we want them to donate this property," and we were successful. We went to that next meeting, um, at InvestCorp, and they asked a whole bunch of questions, and inside of 30 minutes they had donated, uh, it was a $25,000 piece of property, uh, to, um the Hillview Community Garden…They took care of all of it…and, um, they just wanted to make sure that it was, uh, going to continue, you know, for a good while, and um…I ran it for two seasons on $500…and donations. It ended up being a $100,000 project in donations and volunteer projects and volunteer money.

Following the donation, InvestCorp ran a press release that linked their donation with revitalization work being done in the neighborhood by Greenridge County Council. The release read:

> InvestCorp recently donated two acres of land in the Eureka Mills neighborhood…for the creation of a community garden. The project…is a focal point of the Eureka Mills Community Plan that was approved by Greenridge County Council in May 2012. "InvestCorp was glad to donate land to help further the revitalization process in Eureka Mills," said…[the] president of InvestCorp. "We hope that the community garden will instill pride within Eureka Mills residents and that they will enjoy the fruits of their labor."

A story also ran in the local newspaper, *The Greenridge News*.

This anecdote is particularly illustrative because of the amount of literature that emphasizes securing long-term access to land as one of the key issues that community garden organizers face (Hondagneu-Sotelo 2014; Lawson 2005; Saldivar-Tanaka and Krasny 2004; Schukoske 2000; Smith and Kurtz 2003). Research has shown that the establishment of a community garden often results in the increased value of surrounding properties (Lawson 2005; Voicu and Been 2008). As such, InvestCorp simply could have let Hillview Community Garden use the land for an indefinite period of time as an investment in the future sale of the property. However, the firm deeded the land to Hillview, agreeing to the donation "inside of 30 minutes." While it is possible that Eric exaggerated the short amount of time it took to InvestCorp to offer the property, the simple fact remains that with arguably little effort, Hillview secured two acres of land *for free* in a neighborhood that, while declining, was only two miles from a rapidly expanding downtown where gentrified properties in low-income neighborhoods regularly were bringing hundreds of thousands of dollars at resale.

The Livingston community also benefited from a donation of land for a community garden. Mecklenburg Memorial, a hospital located in a bedroom community of Greenridge, actively cultivated a community garden on a 10-acre piece of property across the street from the hospital's main building. I interviewed Cameron, the hospital's manager of customer and volunteer services at the time and the garden's primary founder, and Elaine, the current hospital staff person in charge of the garden, together one summer morning. They described to me the hospital's motivation for starting a community garden group:

> *Cameron*: I'll be very frank with you. Um, it wasn't because of my love of gardening [laughs] that the garden got started. But our president…had the idea…[I]n meetings he would keep saying, "You know we want to have a community garden, we want to have a community garden."
>
> *Elaine*: And part of all, you know like our hospital system, part of our mission is…prevention…Yes, we treat people and do a good job while people are here in the hospital, but prevention is key, you know, and we want to see our communities become healthy here…so that was the underlying thought – health, good health – and Mecklenburg Memorial wanted…[that] attached to them.

The justifications Elaine presented for why the hospital president wanted the garden – "prevention" and "we want to see our communities become healthy" – mirrored the vision of a healthy community focused on preventative health that the City of Greenridge was promoting in its efforts to revitalize and develop its new national identity.

In addition to allowing the land to be used, Mecklenburg Memorial Hospital dedicated part of Cameron's salaried time to setting up and running the garden administratively. Moreover, according to Cameron, "the hospital bought all the tools, the fertilizer, the watering cans," and Lowe's, a national chain home improvement store, provided the rest. To organize and build the garden, Cameron "contacted some movers and shakers in Livingston" and put

together a garden planning committee, an informal member of which was a Lowe's representative:

> [W]e [the garden planning committee] said, "Okay who, what are the things, what are the elements that we need?"…So then we started calling Lowe's…And gradually…one of those girls [from Lowe's] just became part of our committee and every time we'd need something, she said, "We'll get that for you." You know, "We're going to need some hoses." "We'll get that." "We're going to need a house for the, for the, you know, a little building over there to put all of our stuff in." "We can provide that."

As the founder of another community garden in Greenridge County said about Lowe's donations to their garden, "It's a win-win for them [Lowe's]. It's great for the community. Their [Lowe's] name is on the sign." In fact, Lowe's name was on the large sign outside of the Livingston Community Garden, along with the name of the hospital and four other companies who contributed significant donations.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Previous research in the literature on organizations and social movements clearly has established the links between an individual organization's or movement's levels of sociopolitical legitimacy, material resources, and goal attainment. Simply put, the more sociopolitical legitimacy an organization or movement has, the more likely it is to gain access to or receive resources that can be used to achieve its goals. The explanation lies in a foundational assumption of the literature, that resources are scarce and that emphasis should be placed on the ability of organizations and movements to secure resources as a factor influencing survival and effectiveness. For example, in their article presenting resource mobilization as a perspective, McCarthy and Zald (1977:1224) state that social movement sectors must "compete with other sectors and industries for the resources of the population," and individual

movement organizations must "compete for resources with entertainment, voluntary associations, and organized religion and politics." Stated differently, much of the work in organizational sociology and social movements assumes a competitive organizational environment.

Based on this literature, I sought to explain in this chapter why the levels of sociopolitical legitimacy and material resources of individual groups did not account for their ability to achieve their goals. In tracing the emergence of population-level sociopolitical legitimacy and material support for community garden groups in Greenridge, I identified the conditions under which an assumption of competitiveness and scarcity is not always safe. Specifically, I argued that resource-rich organizational environments are created through the convergence of three conditions: 1) widespread acknowledgment of a social problem; 2) a non-contentious solution; and 3) the alignment of that solution with the cultural values of the population in which the problem exists. When these three conditions are present simultaneously, they create an environment in which the benefits of sociopolitical legitimacy and resources accrue to the entire population of voluntary groups that embody the non-contentious solution. Thus, neither form of capacity at the group level can account for the differential success of group goal attainment.

In addition, I suggest that this sort of environment also can explain, at least partially, why internal group structure could not account for differential group goal attainment. As I reviewed in Chapter 2, some of the literature looking at whether formalization and having a professional staff is beneficial to a group's efforts has found that having more organizational structure helps groups cultivate a better reputation (e.g Smith and Shen 1996) and gain access

to resources that otherwise would not be available (e.g. Bloemraad and Gleeson 2012; Minkoff 1993). In other words, having a formal structure is useful in that it enables individual groups to cultivate more sociopolitical legitimacy and mobilize more resources. However, community garden groups in Greenridge did not need such structure in order to build their capacity in these areas by virtue of the institutionally-supportive and resource-rich environment in which they operated. This argument explains how, for example, the Livingston Community Garden Group, which was the most structured of all the groups I examined in Chapter 2, could be equally as successful at achieving its goals as the St. Eugene's Community Garden Group, which had virtually no structure to it at all.

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Having explained why neither a group's level of sociopolitical legitimacy nor material resources could account for differential group goal attainment, we are still left with somewhat of a puzzle. It would seem that even if neither could differentiate between groups that were and were not achieving their goals, at the very least, a group that had both types of capacity to a large degree should not struggle to survive. And yet, we saw in Chapter 2 that some groups with both forms of capacity were struggling to meet their operative goals and stay active, much less make progress towards their official goals (e.g. the Sturgis Neighborhood Garden Group). How can we explain this?

Contrary to expectation, I suggest that resource-rich environments do not always lead to stronger, more capable voluntary groups. Rather, they allow leaders to form groups quickly without ensuring the degree to which target participants will commit to helping with group activities, or whether they, as leaders, have the time and skill to mobilize and sustain

participation in the event that participant response is not as strong as expected. Unlike formal for-profit and nonprofit organizations that have paid staff to carry out their work, voluntary groups are completely reliant on the willingness of individuals to donate their time. Resource-rich environments are useful only to the extent that leaders can mobilize participants to exploit those resources to the benefit of the group.

However, in such environments, it can be easy for leaders to assume that the lack of difficulty with which they are able to mobilize sociopolitical legitimacy and material resources is indicative of the future willingness of individuals to donate their time to group activities. Yet, as Schwartz and Paul (1992:211) argue in their work on consensus movements, the mobilization of institutional support and the support of one's target participant population are "fundamentally different processes," and it is easy to mistake success at one as an indication of the likelihood of success at the other.

In short, while we might expect that having an abundance of sociopolitical support and material resources can lead only to better group outcomes, I suggest that this environment enables groups to form that, in environments of resource scarcity and competitiveness, never would have gotten off the ground without more investigation of whether or not the group had enough commitment from participants.

The question of how leaders mobilized and sustained participation in order to transform the material resources they had into the achievement of their desired goals is the subject of the next chapter.

CHAPTER 4: "THE CRAFT OF GETTING COMMITMENTS"[29]

"Everybody wants to go to heaven, but nobody wants to die."

Jeremiah
Core Participant and Community Leader
Bennett Neighborhood Garden Group

As described in Chapter 3, the idea of community gardens as a way to address the rising incidence of diet-related diseases and the existence of food deserts in Greenridge had an incredible amount of institutional support at the time of this study, both in the form of endorsements and the provision of material resources. Moreover, the idea resonated with the values of the individuals moving into Greenridge in response to the city's revitalization projects and focus on building a healthy environment populated with healthy residents.

One afternoon over coffee, Kathleen, a Master Gardener who often was consulted by individuals seeking to start a community garden group, shared her observations with me about Greenridge's recent growth in community garden establishment:

> It just seemed like people were finding that it [community gardening] was becoming more successful and more trendy…[and] to that end, maybe a lot of decisions were made quickly without much thought, like the minister [the founder of the Brookdale Community Garden Group] that came to me with no idea of who was going to run it [his garden]…It sounds like a very, very good idea until you get into all the specifics of it, and without having any forethought…it's

[29] In his work on leadership and social movements, Ganz (2010:554) writes, "The key to social movement action is the craft of getting commitments. And it is a leadership skill people find most difficult to master."

> easy to just say "Yeah, we'll put in some raised beds, and we'll grow just tons of tomatoes, and we'll give them to X, Y, and Z food bank."

I heard from interviewees again and again – particularly founders, leaders, and core participants – how the idea of building and having a community garden generated many expressions of verbal support from their target participants, in addition to the broader institutional sponsorship and material donations I showed were readily available in the wider Greenridge community. Taking those verbal expressions of support as indications of future commitment, leaders established groups only to find that when it came time to actually work the garden and participate in group activities, few of those who had expressed excitement about the idea could be found. In the words of Jeremiah, a core participant in the Bennett Neighborhood Garden Group, "Everybody wants to go to heaven, but nobody wants to die" – i.e. everybody wants to have a garden, but nobody wants to maintain it.

The experiences of Laura, Sarah, and Michelle, founders and/or core participants of community garden groups that struggled with participation, illustrate this problem well. When talking to me about the lack of participation at the Mount Pilgrim Community Garden, Laura said:

> [I] kind of got the feeling ultimately was that [Mount Pilgrim's] identity, which is very community-minded, was going to feel better about having a community garden. So we wanted one because it made us feel good about ourselves, but nobody really wanted to take care of it…I have hand written lists, like of the initial sign up list of who was at that first meeting…and I could go through that with you and tell you how many of these people actually ever showed up to do any work, because it was a tiny percentage (laughs).

Sarah, a core participant in the community garden group at Human Teach Medical School told me:

> Yeah, so I do think…everyone thinks it's a great idea, that they really like it, or like the idea of it. Um, and that it's just a cool thing, [a] unique aspect of the school. But yeah, just not a lot of people are involved in it. So they like the idea of it but aren't necessarily motivated to be involved.

And in the case of the now defunct community garden group at ID Sales Corporation, it was less about "feeling good" in having a community garden or thinking it was "cool" and more about the fun of planting and starting a new project. According to Michelle:

> It always started out really good at the beginning of the season…the planting started…and everybody was really eager to plant because it's fun to plant, it's fun to see it start to grow. But what would happen is once the vegetables started coming in, it starts getting hot and so for you to go down there on your lunch hour and sweat to death and come back to try and sit at your desk for the rest of the day, it's miserable. So the momentum always fell off…I guess it just really, um, it doesn't become quite as, because it's your, it's your volunteer thing, it's not your first priority…[and] there was no, um, obligation that made people, uh, be responsible…"

As Michelle pointed out, participating in a community garden – whether at work, at church, or in a neighborhood – is a "volunteer thing." Participants in community gardens or other voluntary groups have the ability to choose whether or not they want to commit their time to something for which they will not be compensated. In an environment where an entire population of local, voluntary groups like community gardens enjoys sociopolitical legitimacy and extensive access to material resources, but the motivation of an individual group's target participants to join in the work of the group is low, how does a leader attract and sustain participation?

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Substantial work in social movements, nonprofit and voluntary studies, and political sociology has been devoted to the subject of recruitment: the strategies and tactics that

movements, nonprofit organizations, and groups utilize to mobilize participation.[30] These strategies include offering incentives (Klandermans and Oegema 1987; Knoke 1990; Olson 1965), framing the cause or work in a way that resonates with target participants (Benford and Snow 2000; Snow et al. 1986), and creating a collective identity around involvement (Polletta and Jasper 2001; Taylor and Whittier 1992). However, much of this work has framed the question from the perspective of what *organizations* or *social movement groups* do to recruit participants rather than what *leaders* do to get people involved.

Focusing on leaders is particularly important in the study of local, voluntary groups, as many are small enough that the work group cannot be analyzed separately from the work of the leader(s).[31] In addition, there have been several recent calls, particularly in the social movements literature, to theorize and investigate more fully the ways that leadership affects movement and group outcomes (e.g. Aminzade, Goldstone, and Perry 2005; Andrews et al. 2010; Baggetta et al. 2011; Baggetta, Han, and Andrews 2013; Barker, Johnson, and Lavalette 2001; Goldstone 2001; Han 2014; Morris and Staggenborg 2004; Nepstad and Bob 2006; Nesbit et al. 2016). Morris and Staggenborg (2004) provide a succinct summary of the logic behind these arguments: "[L]eaders carry out a complex set of activities that are crucial to outcomes because, regardless of structural conditions, there exist a variety of choices to be made…[and]

[30] In this chapter, I do not consider much of the literature on the recruitment and retaining of employees in for-profit, work organizations. This is because the strategies utilized by the leaders of voluntary organizations and groups to mobilize and sustain volunteer engagement differ from those employed by the leaders of for-profit organizations, perhaps most significantly in that voluntary group leaders cannot offer financial incentives in exchange for participation (Knoke and Prensky 1984; Nesbit et al. 2016; Smith 2000).

[31] Lofland (1993:151–52) refers to these sorts of groups as "mom and pop shops," describing them as groups where "a local couple, a man, or a woman played a central role in conceiving, creating, and administering a…group. The group…had clearly come into existence and persisted primarily (or only) because of the focusing central couple or person."

some choices are more effective than others." In short, for a social movement, nonprofit organization, or voluntary group to operate, someone (or many someones) has to decide how to organize the group's work, make use of resources, and recruit participants. Making these sorts of decisions takes skill and knowledge, particularly regarding how to turn the interest of potential participants into action (Han 2014). According to Ganz (2010:4), "The key to social movement action is the craft of getting commitments. And it is a leadership skill people find most difficult to master."

In this chapter, I utilize data from all 18 community garden groups to consider how the founders and leaders of community garden groups mobilized participants and encouraged their commitment to the group. I begin by painting contrasting portraits of two garden groups, one with active participation and one that lacked a strong participant base and was struggling to stay alive at the time I conducted this study. As the garden groups I describe had similar levels of sociopolitical legitimacy, material resources, and institutional backing, the comparison illustrates the difference in group goal attainment that can be made through the success or failure of a leader to mobilize participation.

Next, I outline a "pathway to an active participant base," beginning by showing that leaders of groups with active participation constantly engaged in the recruitment of volunteers and regularly invited people to join in the group's work. In fact, this one factor – whether or not a leader engaged in continuous, active recruitment – can account for the struggle of nine of the fourteen non-goal-achieving or failed garden groups to gain participants. I then consider how the localized cultural and symbolic capital of leaders (Nepstad and Bob 2006) affected their ability to successfully mobilize participants. In doing so, I bring renewed attention to how

leaders interact with and are seen by their constituents as an important factor in recruitment. Such a consideration is especially relevant when looking at local, voluntary groups due to the nature of their small, target participant bases – e.g. a neighborhood, church, nonprofit, or school – that often have their own particular sets of values and norms. Finally, I examine the necessity of making participants feel successful and ensuring that their time with the group is worthwhile, something researchers have shown is related to the satisfaction and retention of volunteers (e.g Hager and Brudney 2004).

In the last sections of this chapter, I focus on the role of collective identity in participant recruitment and retention and consider alternative explanations that could account for differences in group participation rates. I show how leaders of the four goal-achieving community garden groups with active participant bases cultivated or utilized an existing sense of collective identity around the group in order to help participants connect more fully with each other and their work. I follow this with a brief discussion of how other possible factors that could explain differential success in recruitment cannot account for the variation among community garden group participation rates in this study.

WHAT DOES A GARDEN LOOK LIKE WITH ACTIVE VERSUS INACTIVE PARTICIPANTS?

A Garden with Active Participants

When you walk up to the edge of the Livingston Community Garden, you look out and see rows upon rows of garden beds full of plants. Each bed is individually marked with a black number written on a square, white piece of corrugated board that has been stuck in the ground on metal stilts. Some of the beds have colorful signs that indicate who maintains them. Others

are surrounded by knee-high, white, picket fences or bamboo poles. A few gardeners have erected American flags, pinwheels, or other decorations to add beauty to their plots.

The garden was started in 2012 by Cameron, a local hospital manager of customer and volunteer services, as an outreach to Livingston, the bedroom community of Greenridge where the hospital is located. The dual mission of the garden is to: 1) provide a place for people to garden who do not have a place to garden at their home, and 2) promote preventative health in the Livingston community by providing support and a location for people to grow their own food. When the idea was first proposed, the planning committee that Cameron formed to implement the garden thought that they would not have more than 15 people interested in having a plot. According to Cameron:

> [T]hey [the planning committee] said, "Let's do 15 plots…we'll never get it [15 plots]." [But Cameron said], "[T]here will be more people, I know there will be more people who will want to have a garden plot…" So they said, "Okay, we'll do 30." Well, we did 30…[and] 30 wasn't enough so we went to 50 [plots] the first year.

When I interviewed Cameron in 2015, the garden was in its fourth year and had expanded to 78 plots, with some participants maintaining more than one plot.

The Livingston Community Garden is a perfect example of a garden group with an active participant base. Each of the three times I visited the garden during the summer of 2015, multiple people were tending to their plots, and it was not uncommon to see folks gathering in the shade of the parking lot to chat. While Elaine, the current hospital staff member in charge of the garden, does the administrative work to prepare the garden for planting each spring and assign plots to community members, the garden participants are the ones who truly run the space and maintain the garden over time. During our interview, Elaine admitted:

> You know, I really don't go over there [to the garden] a lot. Um, I drive by there in the mornings…[but]…you know really for the most part, the community members that are participating and volunteering – they're pretty self-sufficient…and they're pretty responsible….and so I don't really have any huge issues…You know they keep, you know community members find needs. There was like a, somebody knew somebody who had a hose company, and now we have these super duty hoses that are out there. And when something breaks, they call me, and then you know, we get it replaced or fixed. And they all kinda take a little responsibility, and then also this year we had one of our gardeners who's a beekeeper. And he was like, "Gosh, it'd be really great to have bees so they can fertilize the plants better." So now we have a bee, bees out there at the garden so they can fertilize the plants and what not.

While Elaine's description of the way group participants took responsibility for their needs and maintained the garden shows active engagement, perhaps the most telling indication of their active involvement was the formation of a garden committee three years into the garden's existence. A group of five participants asked Elaine for the authority "to mow people's gardens that don't take care of them to get the weeds out" and "make suggestions on how to prepare things and get things going." In addition, one of the committee members took it upon herself to start a periodic newsletter to keep participants informed of new developments, recipes for seasonal produce, and helpful gardening tips. The grassroots formation of a committee shows both participants' dedication to keeping the garden clean and the sense of community and ownership that has formed among regular participants over the garden's lifespan.

A Garden with Inactive Participants

Approximately 15 miles down the road from the Livingston Community Garden is the Oakridge Community Garden. Unlike the neatly marked plots and cheerfully painted signs that greeted me at Livingston, when I looked out from the sidewalk in front of Oakridge in the middle of July 2015, all I saw was a tangle of weeds. A month earlier in June, the sidewalk vista

was quite different: row after row of young plants shooting upwards with a bright, red, metal bench anchoring a flower bed at the front of the garden. The damage Mother Nature can do during one month of neglect is staggering. In the words of one of the garden's core volunteers: "the weeds just took over." The Oakridge Community Garden is an exemplary case of how an abundance of material resources and institutional support cannot make up for the lack of an active volunteer base.

Founded in 2012, the Oakridge Community Garden was the brainchild of George, an Oakridge City Councilman who was inspired after reading a newspaper article about a new community garden in Greenridge. The garden is located off a side street in downtown on city property and was designed purposefully to be communally maintained by volunteers, who would donate the food they grew to hungry people in the community. According to George, "[T]oo many people in our town…they've got a place for a garden at home," so recruiting volunteers to grow food for local food pantries "made a lot more sense" than establishing a garden where city residents could rent individual plots. For a volunteer base, George looked to a group of regulars at the local senior center, which was only a couple of miles down the road from the garden's location.

George's idea for the management structure of the garden was similar to that of how Elaine runs the Livingston Community Garden. Just as Elaine and the hospital she works for only take care of the administrative side of getting the garden set up every year, George did not see himself or the City of Oakridge as being very involved in the daily running of the Oakridge Community Garden. When describing how he communicated this idea to the volunteers, he

said: “We’re [the City of Oakridge] going to get it [the garden] started. If y’all want to continue it, you have it. And nobody’s going to be standing over you to watch it, y’all. This is yours.”

The first leader of the garden, Margaret, described the garden’s beginning positively: “It was very exciting. The mayor was there [at the groundbreaking]…a couple of councilmen were there, um, I think we had a little press coverage…everyone was full of energy, very enthusiastic.” The City of Oakridge had tilled the land, the garden group had received $2,000 from a local organization for startup costs, and the nearby Lowe’s had donated all of the plants, a shed stocked with tools, and an extensive irrigation system. However, after one season, Margaret passed the leadership baton to someone else. According to Tom, the director of the senior center:

> *Tom*: You never have enough volunteers. Everybody starts out and it's wonderful. But then all of the sudden you have “[I] can't make this day, can't do this, I'm not happy with what you're doing, I don't like the way you do this”, and it tends to dwindle down to your core…[Margaret] got frustrated with the volunteer base of it.
> *Sally*: Did she give you any specific examples?
> *Tom*: Numbers. Lack of numbers. It ended up really dwindling down to I’d say, and I’m gonna say 5 bodies, 4 people…
> *Tom*: I’ve [pause] been driving by with my wife and she looks over when it didn’t get weeded because of no volunteers, and it looked like a damn jungle.

Each of the four times I was at the garden in 2015, the only people who were there were myself and the person I was meeting there for an interview. The second leader following Margaret rarely was able to be at the garden due to her husband’s chronic illness, and the two senior citizens who formed the primary base of participants simply could not maintain it alone. Bernie, one of the senior citizens, told me he stopped working because:

> [I]t's hard to get a good core of people. So, last year I basically took over going down there and watering the whole garden. It was too much for me. A couple of dizzy spells there, and I said, "I'm not going back." It was too big of a garden…And Jane [the other main participant] gets discouraged. She saw the weeds coming up. So she kinda stopped going…I was there the other day…I see some of the little peppers are rotting on the plants.

In sum, despite having easy access to all of the material resources and institutional support needed to maintain a thriving garden (in the form of an endorsement from the city and regular assistance from the city's Parks and Recreation Department), the Oakridge Community Garden Group has struggled. In the words of Tom: "[W]e've spiked, we've dipped, we've spiked, we're down in this dip again…two or three people are trying to keep it going…so I figured this is going to be the last year."

THE PATHWAY TO BUILDING ACTIVE PARTICIPATION

Why was the Livingston Community Garden Group able to attract, sustain, and even grow participation in their garden, while the Oakridge Community Garden Group struggled to keep even two to three volunteers? In the following sections, I show how the leaders of the four effective gardens were able to capture the excitement around the idea of having a community garden and create active bases of participation. First, leaders of effective groups engaged in continuous, active recruitment – constantly promoting the work of the group and inviting people to join, in addition to remaining in regular contact with current participants. As can be seen in grouping Ⓓ in Figure 4.1, six of the eight garden groups that lacked a strong participant base and four of the six failed garden groups (noted with a *) did not engage in continuous, active recruitment.

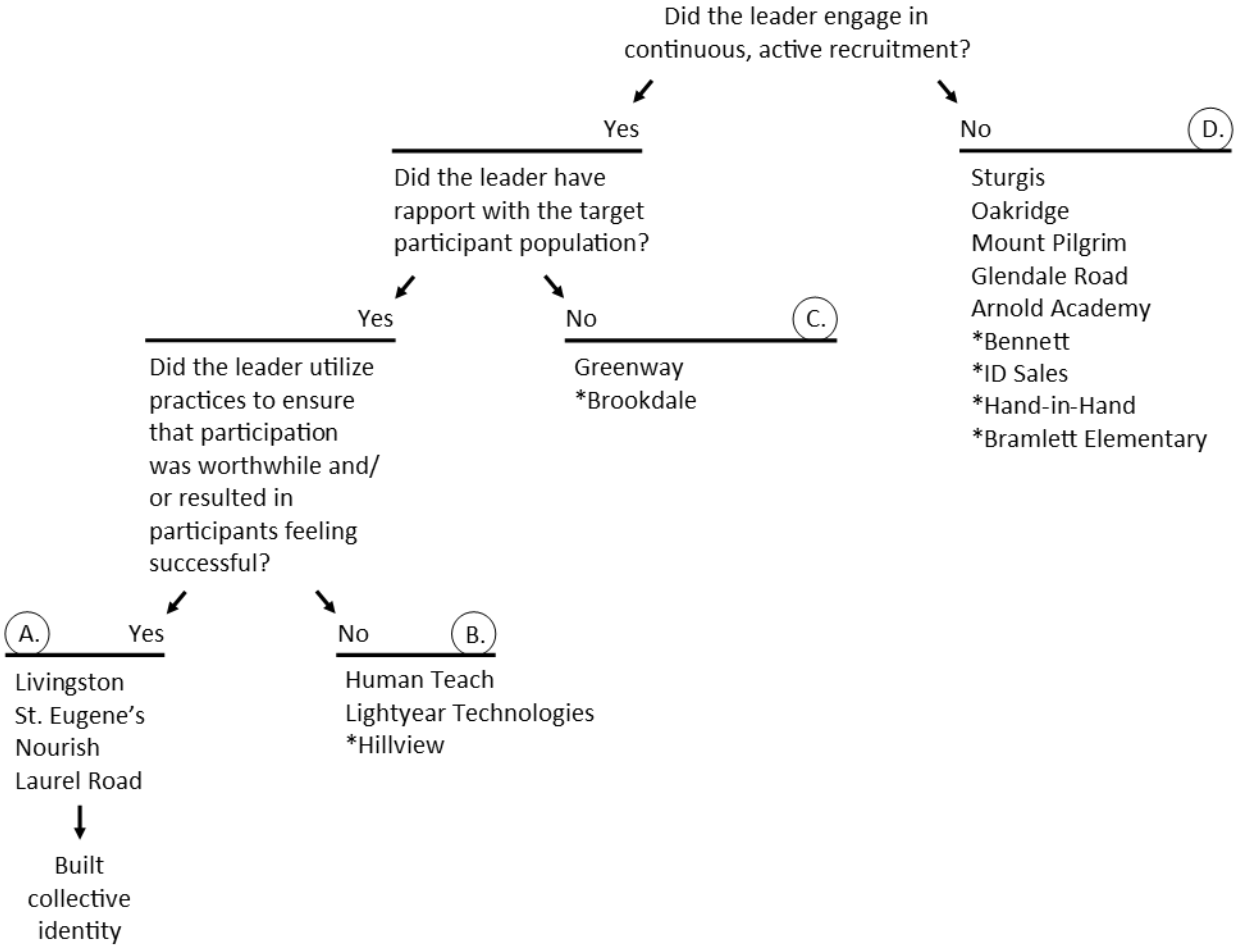
Second, the leaders of community garden groups with active participants had rapport among their target population. Later in this chapter, I examine how having rapport meant

having appropriate localized cultural capital and being respected (e.g. having symbolic capital), or at the very least, *liked* by potential participants. As can be seen in grouping Ⓒ in Figure 4.1, a lack of rapport among the target participant population accounted for the inability of the Greenway Garden Group to establish a strong participant base and the failure of the Brookdale Garden Group.

Third, the leaders of groups with active participants ensured that people felt like they were successful at their work with the group and that the time they had spent with the group was worthwhile. Leaders did this in two ways – first, by providing training and support to enable the successful accomplishment of tasks, and second, by making sure that participants felt they had contributed in a meaningful way to the group's cause. A failure to help participants feel successful and ensure their work was meaningful resulted in the struggle of the Human Teach Community Garden Group to recruit participants and the ultimate failure of the Hillview Community Garden Group (see grouping Ⓑ in Figure 4.1).

Finally, I show how the four community garden groups with active participants (grouping □ in Figure 4.1) developed or utilized group collective identity to create a sense of belonging and encourage sustained participation. In the next section, I begin at the top of this "pathway" and consider the differences between the groups that actively recruited participants and those that took a more passive approach to participant engagement.

Figure 4.1: Pathway to Building Active Participation.



ENGAGING IN CONTINUOUS, ACTIVE RECRUITMENT

In this study, I distinguish between active and passive recruitment. Leaders who actively recruited consistently promoted the work of the group and invited people to join. Moreover, to combat the high rate of turnover that characterizes the volunteer sector (Jamison 2003; Musick and Wilson 2008; Walker and McCarthy 2010), they constantly engaged in recruitment, never just having one interest meeting or stopping because they had "enough" volunteers. In contrast, leaders who engaged in passive recruitment made information about their group available to their target participant population (for example, through flyers or social media

posts) and then passively waited for interested individuals to approach. Some of the leaders who took a passive recruitment approach also stopped seeking participants once an initial period of recruitment had ended.

In her work studying why some civic associations are better than others at recruiting and retaining activists, Han (2014:130) discusses the recruitment philosophy of, in her words, "If we build it, they will come." The assumption behind this philosophy is that the process of mobilization is primarily about "activating people's latent interest" in the cause of the association (Han 2014:131).[32] Some community garden group leaders who used passive strategies relied wholly on this assumption in their approach to motivating people to participate. Rather than seeking to actively invite people to volunteer, they took the approach of posting an advertisement and hoping that seeing it would "activate a latent interest" in target participants who already had a proclivity towards gardening.

A comparison of two of the three faith-based community gardens groups in the study – the one at St. Eugene's Catholic Church and the one at Mount Pilgrim Presbyterian – will illustrate the difference in participation that resulted from leaders actively pursuing target participants versus passively waiting for individuals to show interest.

***

[32] In her review of mobilization as the activation of latent interests, Han (2014) relies primarily on two studies of political involvement by Hutchings (2003) and Schier (2000). The way in which I use the idea as a heuristic for distinguishing between assumptions behind the active and passive approaches to recruitment in local, voluntary groups is more along the lines of Hutchings (2003).

The mission of the St. Eugene Catholic Church Community Garden Group was to provide fresh food for those who needed it in the surrounding poor neighborhood and to supplement the canned and boxed food handed out each day at the church's food pantry. One of the two leaders of the St. Eugene's community garden, Brooke, pursued multiple avenues for participant recruitment both within and outside of the church. Within St. Eugene's, Brooke advertised the garden in the weekly bulletin, had a blurb on the church website, presented at welcoming events for new church members, and sent out occasional emails over the church-wide email listserv. In addition, Brooke remained in regular, almost weekly, contact via email with those who expressed interest in either working in the garden or keeping up with what the garden group was doing on the church grounds. Her weekly emails were conversational in nature, listing off what needed to get done the next volunteer day and often describing the status of plants around the church. Below is a partial excerpt of one of her emails from February 26, 2017 (emphasis on text from original email):

> Hello Everyone~
>
> Trees are budding, God's giving us another Greenridge Spring - yay.
> Have you seen the lorapetalum in front of the sanctuary? One is blooming gorgeously, the other is pouting… The tiny baby plum trees in front of the old school are flowering, and soon the great big cherry trees by the Mary statue should be covered in blossoms.
>
> **If the weather suits you, & it works for your schedule, come on over and we can do some pre-spring stuff over there 8:30-10AM**.
>
> **pull out the weeds in front of the sanctuary (there aren't very many)*
> **mulch the front of the Mary statue*
> **mulch around our baby trees*
> **tidy up the veg garden area*
> **mow the grass channels alongside veg garden (we now have a (mature) lawnmower)*

> If you'd like to be taken off the email list, just let me know :)
>
> Peace be with your spirit~
> ~Brooke

Since first making contact with Brooke for this project two years ago, I have been receiving these emails Thursday or Friday of every week. They have acted as a consistent reminder of the group's need for volunteers and the standing invitation I have to go work there on Saturday mornings. Moreover, the friendly, warm nature of the writing has prevented the emails from becoming annoying or seeming like clutter in my inbox.

In addition, Brooke saw the mission of her group as not unique to those who liked to garden or unique to St. Eugene's members. In our interview, she talked about selling "come help at the garden…[to] different audiences," saying, "sometimes it [her pitch] goes out in writing. Sometimes I speak it." Below is an excerpt from the information sheet that Brooke made to tell people about the community garden group:

> Although it's hard work, it's amazingly good for one's soul! You can pray while you work, bond with other parishioners, be in fresh air, get buff, be with your family/take a break from your family, and offer your labor to God…We have huge potential for nurturing serenity and grace on our grounds – come be a part of it!

In just a few sentences, Brooke listed eight different reasons for participating in the community garden group, none of which were specific to those with an interest in gardening. Moreover, Brooke presented the work of the garden at community groups in Greenridge that she thought might find the group of interest, and she attended local community meetups in the area related to gardening and urban farming to link with other community gardeners and potentially recruit more participants.

One of the keys to Brooke's approach is that she never stopped recruiting or thinking about the need for participants. Brooke sought opportunities to get people involved in the garden group year-round, knowing that not everyone who showed interest in participating would be available or willing to join in for every group work day or activity. Her active approach to participant mobilization paid off. At the time of this study, the St. Eugene Catholic Church Community Garden Group had an active, rotating base of at least 10 to 20 participants who, along with a few core members, kept the church's food pantry in fresh vegetables year-round.

Contrast Brooke's approach to recruitment with that of the leaders of the Mount Pilgrim Presbyterian Community Garden Group. Although started in 2012 without a specific purpose other than thinking a garden would be a neat addition to the church, the mission of the Mount Pilgrim group evolved over time into something very similar to that of St. Eugene's, growing fresh produce to be handed out from the church's food pantry and delivered to a local crisis ministry. Unlike St. Eugene's, however, the leaders of the community garden never actively recruited participants either in or outside of the church. Participants were recruited only via irregular advertising in the church bulletin and an oral announcement made twice a year at the end of Sunday church service about an interest meeting for those who wanted to work in the community garden that season. After each interest meeting, people were not recruited again until the beginning of the next season.

Laura, the initial leader of the garden, described to me the effectiveness of these recruitment strategies:

> [T]hey basically put an announcement in the bulletin that they wanted to start a community garden and would people that were interested come to a meeting. So I went to the meeting and there were probably a dozen people there…and I

could go through that [a list of attendees] with you and tell you many of these people actually ever showed up to do any work because it was a tiny percentage (laughs).

The literature shows that one of the most consistent factors behind participation is being invited or asked to do so (Andreoni and Rao 2011; Bryant et al. 2003; Klandermans 1997; Klandermans and Oegema 1987; Musick and Wilson 2008). The experience of Mary, a late-20s female member of Mount Pilgrim who was very involved in the church in other ways, but was not involved in the garden group, told me that she didn't join in because she wasn't explicitly invited:

Sally: [S]o you were a member of [Mount Pilgrim at the time of] the interest meeting?
Mary: Yeah, which I thought about going to.
Sally: Did you go?
Mary: I didn't (laughs).
Sally: Why didn't you go?
Mary: Um, I think at that point I was working two jobs and I was like "I don't have time to…volunteer during the week."
Sally: Yeah…if you hadn't been working two jobs…is that type of activity something that interests you or…
Mary: Yeah, um, I think particularly because I would like to know more about gardening and doing it with fellow churchgoers who I'd want to develop relationships with is also appealing, um, yeah, I think completely.
Sally: If I was to ask you why in the two years [since you were working two jobs] you haven't gone [to work in the garden]…I mean this summer, you were pregnant, right?
Mary: Mmhmm, but I could have gardened while I was pregnant. I think…yeah, I think maybe this year is more I don't really…I just wasn't invited to do it.

Despite having an interest in gardening, and what's more, gardening in community with others at Mount Pilgrim, Mary never got involved with the group. In short, her "latent interest" in the

community garden was not activated by seeing the bulletin announcements or hearing about the group twice a year after Sunday service.

Following the above exchange, her husband, Charles, chimed in, and his answer illustrates why being asked to participate is important:

> [Y]ou just kind of feel like, "[W]ell looks like everything is going fine so they must have it taken care of,'' and so, um, I think with you know…I'm already helping out at the church by teaching Sunday school or leading worship or like doing whatever, then it kind of feels like, ''Well I'm not really going to add another thing and if...if they don't really, really need the help."

Charles and Mary were both active volunteers in the Mount Pilgrim community and would have been willing to participate in the group. However, neither was going to make room in their busy schedules when it did not seem like their time or talents were needed.

Leaders of community gardens with active participant bases recognized that even for people who already have an interest in gardening, much less those who do not, interest alone is not always enough to prompt participation when so many other things clamor for time and attention. As Vala and O'Brien (2007:79) note, "recruitment, even of the so-inclined, is far from automatic…[and] grabbing a person's attention usually requires effort." People need to be actively pursued – regularly invited to participate and reminded of opportunities for them to join in the group's work. Moreover, leaders of groups with high participation never stop recruiting, constantly seeking new blood to fill in the spots left vacant by the high turnover of volunteers.

RAPPORT AMONG THE TARGET PARTICIPANT BASE

In addition to actively recruiting participants, leaders of goal-achieving groups with strong participant bases built or leveraged existing rapport among their target participant

population. By rapport, I mean that leaders of goal-achieving groups were considered legitimate by potential participants, deserving of respect and trust. These leaders had localized cultural capital (Nepstad and Bob 2006) that allowed them to identify with, and build symbolic capital among, members of their target participant population. According to Goodwin et al (2004:419), successful leaders craft "a way of living that resonates with their followers." In other words, successful leaders craft the ability to identify with their followers if identification is not automatic and then leverage that foundation into earning their followers' respect and trust.

In the next section, I illustrate how a lack of localized cultural capital can hinder a leader's ability to recruit participants by describing the struggles of Henry, the leader of the Greenway Garden Group, to relate to the residents of the neighborhood he was trying to engage.[33] Then, using a comparison of the leaders of the St. Eugene's and Bennett Neighborhood community garden groups, I show how localized cultural capital only creates the foundation for, but does not automatically lead to, the development of the symbolic capital necessary for mobilizing participants.

A Lack of Localized Cultural Capital

Cultural capital is both the cognitive understanding and the physical embodiment of the knowledge and ways of being of a particular group (Bourdieu 1986). Nepstad and Bob (2006) argue that leaders of social movements need "localized cultural capital," or deep, community-specific knowledge of values and experiences of local practices and ways of interacting in order

[33] In addition to being at the root of Henry's difficulty in recruiting participants, a lack of localized cultural capital also was the cause of the eventual failure and abandonment of the Brookdale Garden Group by its leader only a handful growing seasons after it was started (see grouping Ⓒ in Figure 4.1).

to effectively galvanize people to action.[34] The same is true of leaders of voluntary groups who are attempting to mobilize participants. In this study, a leader's "localized cultural capital" was often dependent upon their race and social class and how it matched, or did not match, the race and social class of their target participant population.

Take the case of the Greenway Garden Group, which was founded by Henry, a white, Christian, corporate executive in Greenridge who became interested in sustainability and "creation care" – the care and stewardship of God's creation – in the mid-2000s after finishing his MBA. After a few years spent learning about creation care and facilitating Sunday school conversations about sustainability at his church, Henry felt the need to do something more concrete with greater impact. In 2012, he founded the nonprofit organization Greenway, of which the Greenway Garden Group is a part, to demonstrate to others and particularly low-income individuals, how to "break out of poverty…[by]…living more simply and sustainably." The main focus of the nonprofit is a sustainability demonstration house and community garden, which Henry located in Milltown, a nearby poor, historically Black neighborhood.

While Henry occasionally was able to mobilize groups of volunteers affiliated with his church, Second Baptist, to come work at the community garden and help build the demonstration house, he had difficulty engaging his true target participant population, the residents of Milltown. This was despite early success at bringing in a plethora of outside

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[34] Another, similar, concept is that of "cultural competency," a term widely used in the medical and mental health fields to refer to "the possession of cultural knowledge and respect for different cultural perspectives…also having skills and being able to use them effectively in cross-cultural situations" (Brach and Fraserirector 2000:183).

Borne out of the mental health profession in the late 1980s (Cross et al. 1989), cultural competency is now seen as critical for the effective delivery of care (Anderson et al. 2003; Orlandi 1995; Sue 2006; Tirado 1996).

resources, occupying a prominent location in the neighborhood, and gaining the formal approval of the Milltown Neighborhood Association. Interviewee accounts suggested that Henry lacked understanding of, and experience working with, low-income populations of color, which affected his ability to successfully engage Milltown residents in the work of the Greenway Garden Group.

For example, according to Katie, an idealistic, young, White woman who was employed part-time by Greenway and lived in the demonstration house in Milltown, Henry had offended many in his efforts to build neighborhood interest in the organization:

> *Katie*: Um, he [Henry] has a lot of issues like, talking with people in the community, because he's not comfortable talking with Black people, and that's kind of a hard thing when you work in a Black neighborhood.
>
> *Sally*: What do you mean he's not comfortable talking with Black people? Is that something you've observed?
>
> *Katie*: Yeah, it's something I've observed, um, because he goes out in the community, and…he [has] said some very offensive things to a number of people. Um, he's accidentally offended just about everybody that I know [in the neighborhood]…
>
> *Sally*: So in the neighborhood, what types of things would he say to people he just met?
>
> *Katie*: Um, sometimes he would, he would make assumptions like that people who had children together were married and make people feel very awkward about that and, uh, he would talk to kids and assume that they had like both parents and things like that or that the people they were with were like their siblings or their parents, um, whereas a lot of the time, it's like half siblings or step, you know. Family structure is just a lot more fluid [in this neighborhood]. Um, and those kind of, um, observances or the fact their lifestyle is not going to be the same as yours were not normally kept [to himself], and they just made a lot of awkward situations where people...were like "No [this is not okay]."

Moreover, Henry envisioned Greenway as being sustained through efforts of participants who would come help on "volunteer days" – emphasis on the word "volunteer." A recent Facebook posting advertising one of these days read: "Volunteer here at Greenway on the last Saturday of each month. It's a regular thing! Pitch in, make new friends. Join us on Saturday, October 28th." However, according to Patricia, a young, Black woman who lived in and ran the demonstration house along with Katie and who grew up in the neighborhood, the word "volunteer" does not have the same meaning in Milltown as it does at Second Baptist:

> Being from this community, volunteerism isn't something that's just like really advocated or promoted unless you're in trouble. Like your like, "Oh I have to volunteer because I'm in trouble." Like that's how it was when I was a kid. But growing up in this community, it wasn't something that, you know, our parents would be like, "Oh here you go, do some service you know, go volunteer."

Henry's lack of localized cultural capital – in other words, his lack of understanding of the ways in which the lives and norms of Milltown residents did not mirror his own experience – created a disconnect between him and the people he was trying to reach. In addition, it did not help that Henry was heavily associated with Second Baptist, which, although geographically located less than a tenth of a mile outside of the bounds of the Milltown neighborhood, was seen by residents as an entirely different part of the world. Patricia described Second Baptist's reputation in Milltown as being where the "rich, White people…[with] wealth and power" went. Yet, when I asked Katie who Greenway's primary volunteers were, she told me:

> A lot of the people that we have had, it's pretty consistent, are Second Baptist, um, either are members or somehow affiliated with Second Baptist families that are there and know us. We've kind of grown out of Second Baptist, in a way, you know, Henry started with Second Baptist. His organization before Greenway was his…environmental group at Second Baptist church. So there's a lot of people there, and they are more affluent. They are White. They are not from Milltown at all. Most of them have never been to Milltown, um, [and] they'll get lost

> coming here. Crossing the river [that separates Second Baptist from the Milltown neighborhood] is a big deal for them.

The lack of participants from Milltown did not go unnoticed. Marla, a friend of Patricia's who occasionally helped Patricia and Katie in the community garden, described her frustration with the lack of neighborhood participation while sitting with me on a porch one hot, August afternoon:

> I think the most I've been frustrated about was, um…It's more of, I want to see more people involved and...because working with three people in this yard, and you're trying to get this to, you're trying to build, ah, not just a garden but something that's going to help them [neighborhood residents] out, then you need to get the people involved…

From Marla's perspective, if the community garden was for the neighborhood, to help residents learn how to grow their own food and be more sustainable, then it should have people from the neighborhood working in it.

Martin, the pastor of a popular, local church in Milltown spoke to me about his impressions of Greenway and Henry's lack of success in cultivating community engagement. His comments reveal his opinion on the source of Greenway's struggles in the neighborhood:

> Sometimes there can be a, a disconnect, right, between people who have, between the haves and the have-nots, okay? The haves... want to help the have-nots, [but the haves] still got to remember that there's a bridge that needs to be built… I feel like he [Henry] needs to spend more time building the bridge to the people he's trying to touch. You see what I'm saying?...You can have the vision, you can have the resources, you could have all of that, but unless that bridge is built for you to get out to touch, to hear, to feel, then you just have good stuff but no bodies.

In sum, Henry had a vision of how to help the residents of the Milltown neighborhood become more self-sufficient and sustainable, the material resources to make his vision a reality, and significant sociopolitical legitimacy in the wider Greenridge community, including the

backing of a large church community that wanted to see him succeed. In the end, however, Henry did not have that "deep knowledge" of the Milltown neighborhood that would have allowed him to connect with residents and gain their trust and respect, partially due to his privileged, social location as a middle-to-upper-class, White male.[35]

Symbolic Capital

Having cultural capital specific to a target population creates the foundation for the building of symbolic capital that a leader can leverage to mobilize participants.[36] Symbolic capital refers to social prestige and respect and can come from a variety of sources, including occupational status, personal and/or professional achievements, biographical experiences, and personal qualities.

Voluntary group leaders with symbolic capital are well-regarded by others and can use their elevated status to motivate individuals to join their group. Comparing Claude, the founder of the St. Eugene's Community Garden Group, with Jeremiah, co-leader of the Bennett Neighborhood Garden Group, will illustrate the necessity of leveraging localized cultural capital into symbolic capital when mobilizing participation from small communities that often have their own unique cultures (e.g. neighborhoods, nonprofit organizations, churches).

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[35] It is worth noting that Henry had a different account of why the Greenway Garden Group was not attracting participants from the Milltown Neighborhood. He told me during our interview that people were not participating because the physical garden itself was still being built. However, my observations over multiple visits to the site and from multiple interviews with others involved with the project suggest that his ability to connect with and motivate participants was at the core of the lack of participation.

[36] In fact, Bourdieu (1986) argued that cultural capital – along with economic and social capital – does not have any value until it becomes converted to symbolic capital. In other words, symbolic capital is simply the form the other capitals take when they become recognized and legitimated.

Claude, a 90-year-old Black man, has been a member of, or been known at, St. Eugene's Catholic Church and its surrounding neighborhood since 1938. The neighborhood surrounding St. Eugene's is considered a "special emphasis" area by the City of Greenridge due to a high concentration of low-income residents, elevated crime rates, and blighted infrastructure. In my interview with him, Claude told me that although he no longer lived in the neighborhood, he wanted to establish a community garden "to pay back…I wanted to give the community something. In, in around here, it, it's a lot of poor people, you know, that don't have much…especially as far as fresh vegetables, you know…" When designing the garden, Claude intentionally created it without a fence so that, in his words, "most anybody that come down the street, they, if they see a tomato or something in the garden, they [can] just walk up there and get it." In addition, he plants things that are, in the words of one of the garden's core volunteers, "typical for the Black community" that surrounds the church, including okra and turnip greens.

Claude has and utilizes that deep, localized knowledge of St. Eugene's and the neighborhood around it that you can get only by spending eight decades becoming familiar with a place and its people. He also has a great deal of symbolic capital in the neighborhood and in the wider Greenridge community. Claude is a World War II veteran who spent 21 years in the Navy as a galley cook. He teaches free cooking classes in the community, and people in the church and neighborhood are well aware that he knows his way around both a kitchen and a garden. According to the co-founder of the community garden, Brooke, Claude "has more energy and resolve than most people half his age," and in addition to his neighborhood and church work, acts as volunteer groundskeeper for the Greenridge Free Medical Clinic. In 2013,

Claude was honored with a prestigious award from a well-known organization in Greenridge that annually recognizes people who are making a difference in their communities. In the nomination form Brooke submitted on his behalf, she wrote that Claude is "the soul of Christian kindness, as well as a great mentor and example of truly living well in one's later years."

While Brooke does a majority of participant recruitment, she relies heavily on Claude's reputation and the incredible amount of work he does as a 90-plus-year-old to motivate people to come help. In many of the weekly emails she sends out detailing what needs to be done at the garden, Brooke mentions the work that Claude did that week by himself when no one was watching. See a sample from one of her emails, below (emphasis on text from original email):

> Hello All~
>
> Well, our 91.25 year old Garden Godfather has done it again…
> Claude completely removed all the okra and eggplant stalks and hauled them over to the waste pile on B Street. By himself. Sigh.
> He's about to head out on a road trip to Connecticut with friends this weekend, so I guess he wanted to see the job done before he left. How can we ***ever*** keep up with this guy?!

When I received this email, I thought to myself, "Claude is over 90 years old and yet still gets out to work in a garden in order to grow food for others who are less fortunate than he is. What have I done for others this week? Can't I spare an hour to run over there and help?" Susan, an occasional volunteer with the group, felt similarly. Over dinner at the local Whole Foods one September evening, Susan told me that helping Claude was one of the reasons she kept participating with the group:

> [The church] is so open and welcome and loving…and that's the way I feel with Claude. [He will say] "Welcome to the garden. Come and help me. How can we make it work today?"

Informal observations and conversations with participants over the two-year period of my investigation confirmed that Susan and I were not the only ones who reacted to Claude's age and dedication to the garden group by wanting to help. Particularly on days when Brooke let people know that the work Claude intended to do in the garden involved heavy lifting (for example, tilling the soil or planting new crops), multiple individuals would respond to her email request for assistance. Figure 4.2 shows four of the six people, including me, who responded to Brooke's email request for help on August 22, 2015 to "pull up the cardboard, till the whole garden, and plant our cold weather stuff."

Figure 4.2: Four of the six volunteers who helped Claude till and prepare the St. Eugene's Community Garden for fall planting.[37]

In her email to the garden group the following week, Brooke wrote:

Garden Update-

[37] In this photo, I am the person sitting on the ground with the white t-shirt and dark jeans.

> Last Saturday Claude was blessed with help from Susan - tiller extraordinaire, Matt - weed whacker and garden trench refresher, as well as Karen, Marge, Tiffany, and Sally as cardboard uplifters, weed-pullers/haulers and veg planters.

In comparison to Claude's reputation and the way Brooke used his rapport within the community to draw in participants, Jeremiah, the co-leader of the Bennett Neighborhood Garden Group, was not able to use his knowledge of the Bennett neighborhood to earn the trust and respect of his fellow residents. From a macro perspective, the two neighborhoods, the one surrounding St. Eugene's and Bennett are extremely similar; Bennett also is classified as a "special emphasis" area by the City of Greenridge and has a history of being a predominantly Black, low-income community. Jeremiah, a lower-middle-class, Black male in his fifties is the Bennett Neighborhood Association president and has struggled for years to bring revitalization to the streets around his home. He became president of the neighborhood association "by default, I guess [because] nobody else wanted to, to be it." Jeremiah told me that he accepted the position because he was "just about seeing the neighborhood have some kind of association, some kind of hand in determining…[its]…future."

Although he lacks the eighty years of knowledge Claude has of the neighborhood around St. Eugene's, Jeremiah has lived in Bennett for around 25 years, plenty of time to get to know the neighborhood and its people and develop at least some localized cultural capital. However, Jeremiah has never been able to transform his knowledge of the community and his leadership position in the neighborhood association into symbolic capital. Sitting on the tailgate of his truck one late summer afternoon after a neighborhood association meeting, Jeremiah described to me how he is still considered an outsider in the neighborhood, despite having lived there for over two decades:

Jeremiah: I've been here [in Bennett] now maybe 25 years, but the people who were actually born here and raised here, they still view me as an outsider.

Sally: Really? How is it that they treat you like an outsider? Give me an example, if you can.

Jeremiah: (Laughs) Um, I'm going to give you one example that happened last week. The young lady that's in the dashiki [who attended the neighborhood association meeting with us], we were, me and her, and a couple of more people just sitting around talking, and they were talking about…getting rid of this house [pointing up the street to a known drug dealer's house], and they start talking about how things used to be in Bennett, and how people used to relate to each other in Bennett. And I made some kind of comment and then they say, uh, "Oh, you're not..." How she put it? "You're not O.G," or something like that, "old gang" or something like that…I said "What does that mean?" She said "You're not originally from Bennett, you just moved here." You know what I mean (laughs), so...

According to what Jeremiah has heard, in the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s, Bennett was "a neighborhood full of liquor houses, dope houses, you know." The symbolic capital needed to mobilize participation in Bennett comes from having an understanding of what the neighborhood had been like before the City of Greenridge began redevelopment efforts to turn the area around. As such, even though Jeremiah had a decades-long history in Bennett, had multiple friends in the neighborhood, and was recognized by the City of Greenridge as the neighborhood's leader due to his position as the neighborhood association president, he never would be considered fully "legitimate" due to the fact that he showed up after revitalization of the neighborhood began. You can hear the resignation and frustration in his voice in the following passage from our interview:

Jeremiah: It's like beating your head up against a brick wall, you know. You heard the old saying you can take a horse to water but you can't make him drink? (Laughs)

Sally: Yeah, yeah, I've heard that.

Jeremiah: I've been taking these horses to water long enough, and I'm finally convinced that they don't want to drink, you know what I mean?

Jeremiah had the foundational, localized cultural capital to become president of the neighborhood association and lead his fellow residents in discussions of the problems in the community at neighborhood association meetings, but he did not have the symbolic capital to fully convince people to overcome the last hurdle of giving him their time and effort for community projects like a community garden. In 2015, the Bennett Neighborhood Community Garden officially died.

ENSURING PARTICIPATION IS WORTHWHILE

In addition to engaging in active recruitment and leveraging localized cultural capital into symbolic capital among target participants, the leaders of community garden groups that had strong participant bases ensured that people felt their time working with the group was well spent. Research in the social movements and nonprofit and voluntary studies literatures has shown that people weigh the costs and benefits of participating in voluntary groups (Chinman and Wandersman 1999; Klandermans 1997; McAdam 1986, 1988; Musick and Wilson 2008; Olson 1965). One way to tip the scale towards participation is to make people feel as if they are getting something out of the experience, either by helping people gain a sense of efficacy through their contribution to the group's work or by offering a selective incentive from which participants can derive direct benefit (Klandermans 1997; Klandermans and Oegema 1987; McAdam 1986; Olson 1965).

Part of ensuring that participants feel their time with a group is worthwhile entails providing the appropriate training, supervision, or help to enable a successful experience.

Training and supervision has been shown to be related to the retention of volunteers over time (Boezeman and Ellemers 2008; Cuskelly et al. 2006; Hager and Brudney 2004). In garden groups with individual plots, like that of Livingston, this meant helping participants have access to the resources and guidance to cultivate a thriving garden. In the case of groups that operated a communally-run garden, as did Nourish, this meant supervising and supporting participants in completing their tasks correctly.

Below, I draw comparisons between the Nourish, Human Teach, Livingston, and Lightyear Technologies community garden groups to illustrate the importance to participation rates of ensuring that participants' time was well-spent and led to feelings of success.

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Agatha is the executive director of the Nourish Community Soup Kitchen and Food Bank, the nonprofit under which the Nourish Community Garden Group is housed. The group was established in 1998 in partnership with the local Master Gardener group to supplement the stores of the attached soup kitchen with fresh vegetables. At the time of our interview, the soup kitchen was cooking approximately 150 meals a day for service in its cafeteria and another 650 meals a day for delivery to afterschool programs across Greenridge County. The garden – which has 18 raised beds, several in-ground rows, and a hydroponic greenhouse – sits behind the soup kitchen and is cultivated year-round.

Recruiting enough participants to maintain the 2,000+ square-foot garden is time-consuming, and Agatha took two approaches. First, she recruited a single individual or two to

become the primary caretaker[38] of the garden under her direction. Being primary caretaker meant that the individual came by multiple times a week to do basic maintenance tasks and keep up with the planting schedule. Agatha made sure that each of those individuals she recruited got major personal benefit from their work. For example, Tracy took over the role for almost a year from 2013 to 2014. She described to me in a phone interview one evening how she ended up volunteering with the Nourish Community Garden Group for so long:

> I was trying to decide what I wanted to do for grad school, and I wanted to, to get more involved in some sort of volunteering, but also something community-oriented, but also related to landscape…I wanted some volunteer experience to put on my application, but also to figure out if this [going to grad school in landscape architecture] was the right move.

Tracy spent her time with the Nourish Community Garden Group improving the way the group grew vegetables and helping the group begin to fully utilize the hydroponic greenhouse that it had received through a major grant the previous year. In sum, while Agatha got a needed assistant to help her manage the garden and oversee other participants, Tracy got to try out landscaping as a profession and boost her graduate school application.

When Tracy left, an unemployed, middle-aged man named Anthony took over. Anthony approached Agatha about working the garden with the goal of using volunteering to turn his life around. In addition to the fact that Agatha would leave him alone in the garden to "find peace and serenity" to pray, Anthony volunteered for months because of the food benefits:

> They put out a bunch of food for the, for the people out front [who wait outside the soup kitchen]…like the other day they had crab cakes and lobster cakes and stuff. And, and they'll put out Raman noodles and boxes of cereal…And I get the

[38] "Primary caretaker" is the term I am using to describe the level of commitment that Agatha was looking for from a volunteer. However, Agatha did not have a specific title for the role.

> first, I get the first dibs, you know. I, I don't have to do much shopping. So basically, I'm kind of working for food.

What is telling about these examples is that Agatha worked with both Tracy and Anthony to provide tailored selective incentives, to make sure they each got something that they specifically needed out of their time working with the group.

In addition to having a keen sense of how to use selective incentives to make participation worthwhile, Agatha also understood the necessity of ensuring people who participated would leave feeling that they had meaningfully contributed to the mission of the group. Agatha never wanted to have people show up to the garden only to have very little or no work to do. During our interview, she described to me how she would make the decision of whether or not she needed to hold a volunteer workday:

> [I]f there's not something that's major league that I can put...I don't want to have 20 people show up down here and there's only an hour's worth of work for them to do. If I don't have a major thing to do…at least three hours' worth of work for a lot of people...[then I'm not going to have a volunter work day].

Agatha recognized the importance of ensuring that participants felt they had truly helped the group supply fresh vegetables to the soup kitchen. Showing up prepared to give your time and really make a difference, only to find that you are needed for merely an hour because so many other people also volunteered, can harm participant morale and the desire to return.

Now compare Agatha's approach to that of Rose, the leader of the Human Teach Community Garden Group. The Human Teach garden group is run by students at a medical school embedded within a local hospital system. Rose founded the garden in 2013 with the hopes it would: 1) be a way for medical students to de-stress from their studies; 2) promote community cohesion among the students and faculty; and 3) provide a setting in which

students could educate the wider community about the importance of eating a balanced diet. Before the first community work day, Rose actively recruited participants; she held interest meetings, set up a booth at the student activity fair, gave group presentations, and personally encouraged faculty members and classmates she knew to come join.

Her recruitment work paid off: Rose told me that 32 people showed up to help on the day of the garden's first planting. However, having seen the size of the garden and knowing that it was quite small, I asked her, "Was everybody, all 30 people, were they participating or were some people standing around?" She responded that people were "just hanging out" and that the planting "was fast, [it took] like half an hour." After all of the promotion that Rose did to get people excited about being involved in the garden, so many people showed up that the person to plant ratio was 1:2 or less. This meant that each person got to put around two plants into the ground, which, from experience, took probably less than two minutes per plant. This fact did not go unnoticed – a student who did not participate in the group later told me that "it's not the biggest garden in the whole world…you can't fit that many people in there working."

Moreover, Rose expected that, in addition to community work days, the garden would be tended day-to-day by students who needed an activity to de-stress from their studies. However, she did not distribute information about the plants that grew in the garden and how to tend and harvest them. When we talked, she admitted that the lack of knowledge might have been part of her recruitment struggles:

> I would like for more people to be involved…I think people know about the garden and they walk past it and they think it's cool, but it's like they don't even know that's a basil plant…or what can I use this [basil] for? Um, so I think just like educating, like either via our like, our Facebook group or emails [would be a good idea].

Now in its third year, the group struggles to recruit participants, so much so that its existence is not assured from one year to the next. The head of the medical school told me that if not enough students "were interested in it, would I be out there making sure the garden survived? The answer would be no…and [I also would not] have my grounds people…take it over."

Across town at Lightyear Technologies, Inc., Peter, the founder and leader of the company's community garden group, also did not ensure that participation was worthwhile or provide participants with enough training or support to make them feel confident about working in the garden. In an air-conditioned conference room off the lobby of the company's main building, Andrea, one of the garden group's first members, told me why she stopped participating after only one season:

> The main reason was there were several select people, and I say four, because that was about all there was that worked their days…but then everybody wanted to partake of what fruits we had labored. And it's not that I'm a selfish person by any means…but if you've only got four people doing the work, why should 21 people prosper? And I just got very turned off, and I didn't want anything else to do with it…[T]here wasn't enough return on the investment of time…Four bell pepper plants…[are] not going to produce enough bell pepper to make 30 people feel like, "How come I spent every day pulling weeds? This was worth my investment." Does that make sense?

According to Michelle, an occasional participant who I interviewed at the same time as Andrea, "[A]fter it [the garden] started, you know, producing some produce and stuff…an email [would] go out to the group and say, you know, 'Come get what you, you know, want,' and people would come and get what they wanted." Andrea stopped participating because she was frustrated by this way of offering the garden's harvest to everybody who signed up to be a part of the group, regardless of whether or not they did their part to keep the garden maintained.

While Michelle was not as bothered as Andrea was by the practice of sharing the garden's harvest, the frequency of her involvement over time was shaped by an early negative experience caused by a lack of gardening knowledge. At one point during our interview, she described her hesitancy to me about going to work in the garden alone during the workday:

> [When] it [the garden] started, it was great because a lot of, you know, everybody was excited about it. Now it's kind of lacking some interest, and um, I think it's a lot like me. I don't want to go out there and do something like pull up, I pulled up something that wasn't supposed to be pulled up, you know, and then somebody says something to me, and I'm like "Oh, I didn't know, sorry," you know?...it made me feel bad…[and] now I kind of feel iffy of what I touch because I don't want to pull up something wrong, you know?

Like Rose of the Human Teach group, Peter expected individuals like Michelle and Andrea who had signed up for the group to go work in the garden as a break from the office. However, he did not provide enough information or training for individuals who lacked the gardening skills to be comfortable working there alone. By the summer of 2015 when I conducted interviews, the number of participants in the garden group had dwindled considerably. Ian, one of the group's core members, told me about the decrease in participation, including his own lack of motivation to work in the garden:

> [A]fter the second year I think I've really gotten kind of burnt out a little bit because I thought like I was doing a lot of work and it didn't seem like there was another 2 or 3 committed people at the same time, so like, it's a more of a half-hearted commitment.

In comparison to the failure of Rose and Peter to ensure participation was worthwhile and provide their target participants with the information needed to be successful, the leader of the Livingston Community Garden Group anticipated that many of the people who would request spots in their garden each year would not be knowledgeable enough about gardening to be successful in their efforts. To combat the lack of knowledge, the founder and leader,

Cameron, required that each person who signed up for a garden plot take a free, one-hour class prior to planting with John, a local Master Gardener who sat in on the group's initial planning committee. In response to asking what he taught during the class, John replied:

> It was things like, you know, you have to keep the weeds out of the garden…You can't use these products…Cause people put awful stuff in gardens and don't know what they're doing. They'll buy lawn weed killer and put it on a garden and it won't grow anything for five years, you know…I also gave them a list of [plant] varieties that grow well in this area.

According to Cameron, "if anybody had any questions, he [John] told them when he had his information meeting, here's my phone number…you call me." In addition to giving members of the garden his personal phone number, John would go hang out at the garden for a couple of hours every Saturday morning to be available to folks who had questions about their plants. The resources and experience John provided made the Livingston Community Garden Group unique and was one reason why it did so well. In an area like Greenridge County where most people have a least some patch of land on which they can grow plants, you do not need to participate in a community garden group to get access to arable land. One of the attractions of the Livingston Community Garden Group was that people who were new to gardening or had not had gardening success previously had free access to a gardening expert to help them succeed.

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Thus far, I have taken readers along a pathway to active participation. Using examples from the 18 community garden groups studied in this research, I have shown that strong bases of participation were formed by leaders who engaged in continuous, active recruitment; built or leveraged existing rapport among their target participant base through the cultivation of

localized cultural and symbolic capital; and worked to ensure that participants felt their time with the group was worthwhile and resulted in success. Having progressed along this pathway, we are left with the four community garden groups whose leaders did manage to build and sustain participation: Livingston, St. Eugene's, Nourish, and Laurel Road Elementary. In the next section, I consider how the leaders of these groups cultivated a collective identity and sense of belonging in order to help participants form relationships with each other and an attachment to the group, increasing the likelihood of sustained engagement.

COLLECTIVE IDENTITY AND SUSTAINED PARTICIPATION

According to Snow (2001:2213), collective identity is "a shared sense of one-ness or we-ness anchored in real or imagined shared attributes and experiences." Research in the social movements and volunteering literatures has found that creating opportunities for participants to build relationships and experience the "one-ness or we-ness" is critically important to sustained participation (Ganz 2010; Han 2014; Klein, Becker, and Meyer 2009; Polletta and Jasper 2001). The mechanism by which creating community helps sustain participation is that even when commitment to the actual volunteer activity flags, participants will be motivated to continue working in order to maintain their relationships within and identity as part of the group. Below are two examples of how the leaders of the four community garden groups in grouping Ⓐ in Figure 4.1 built collective identity.

Building Collective Identity at St. Eugene's

Brooke, one of the two leaders of the St. Eugene's Catholic Church Community Garden Group, used a variety of strategies to build collective identity and community among the

rotating base of participants who sustained the group and made sure the church's food pantry had fresh vegetables.

Each week, Brooke sent out newsy, conversational emails that not only invited people to join her at the community garden on Saturday mornings, but also made one feel part of a larger community of gardeners in Greenridge County.[39] Even though I stopped collecting data for this study months ago, I remain on Brooke's email list to get information about local plant sales, growing tips, plant swaps, garden tours, and other gardening volunteer opportunities. These emails make me feel "in the know" and connected to the Greenridge gardening scene. I can use the news I learn through the email list in conversation with others in ways that help me publicly maintain my identity as a gardening enthusiast.

Brooke also utilized the email list to help participants connect and build relationships with each other. She sent out major life updates for group members (e.g. moves, weddings, births, etc.) and prayer requests for those in the group who are sick or going through a difficult time. Research in the volunteering literature supports this strategy; Farmer and Fedor (1999:355) found that "feeling the organization cares about one's well-being" is important to building a volunteer's sense of involvement and satisfaction.

Finally, Brooke created space for garden participants to get to know each other outside of the physical garden setting by organizing get-togethers at her home or the home of another participant. She would invite everyone on her garden email list, even those she may not have

[39] See Stirling, Kilpatrick, and Orpin (2011) who found that a volunteer newsletter was positively linked with volunteer retention.

seen participate in the group in months. Figure 4.3 shows the invitation for the group's "Fall Fellowship Feast" held in October 2017. The text of the invitation reads: "You are enthusiastically invited to a Fall Fellowship Feast at Susan's [street address] on Friday, October 14 at Six o'clock in the evening. Susan will serve hearty fall soup and focaccia. Bring an appetizer or dessert if you choose. Please RSVP to Susan [email]."

Figure 4.3: An invitation to the St. Eugene's Community Garden Group 2017 "Fall Fellowship Feast."

Overall, the work Brooke did to build collective identity and community among the garden group participants paid off. For example, the host of the "Fall Fellowship Feast" from Figure 4.3 was Susan, an occasional participant in the group who easily could have justified not participating due to the many other obligations filling her schedule. During our interview, Susan

told me how she squeezed her participation in the group in between all of her other responsibilities, including accompanying her husband on weekly, long car trips around the state to referee soccer games. When I asked her why she continued to participate, despite having to fit it in between other activities, she told me, "the companionship, the camaraderie of socializing with someone else in the garden…" This was evident in the fact that Susan took the time and effort to host the entire group at her home for a social dinner even though she only was able to participate in the work of the group every now and then.

Building Collective Identity at Laurel Road Elementary

In contrast to the strategies utilized by Brooke at St. Eugene's, Ana, the leader of the Laurel Road Elementary School Garden group built collective identity by creating a popular school club. Ana took over leadership of the community garden at Laurel Road Elementary when the school lost funding for the position of the science teacher who started the group just the year before. She decided to transform what was called the "garden club" by the previous leader into a full-blown initiative to promote the school "becoming green." She even changed the name of the group to the "Green Thumbs,"[40] complete with a logo and t-shirts. In her classroom one afternoon, Ana told me about her approach:

> I wanted the kids to educate themselves and educate others, and so we had a partnership with the kids and they understood their role as educators, and we had classes about…ways that we can be green, ways that we can help the environment and then they would go on the [school's morning] talk show every Tuesday…[T]hey were able to give information, some of the things that they had learned and things that the kids could do…I wanted the whole school to be involved…[The previous teacher] she had about maybe 20 kids involved…Well…I was getting over 100 applications…Once we were established, I mean everybody

[40] "Green Thumbs" is a pseudonym for the actual name Ana devised for the club.

> knew who we were, and they wanted to be a part of it because they would see us there every week on the news, and I think that was really important…We had shirts that we would wear, um, the Green Thumbs shirts.

Ana did multiple things to build students' collective identity with the group. First, Ana clearly defined the boundaries of the group in a number of ways. According to Taylor and Whittier (1992:111), "boundary markers are…central to the formation of collective identity because they promote a heightened awareness of a group's commonalities and frame interaction between members of the in-group and the out-group." By setting up a yearly application process, at the end of which not every student who applied was accepted, Ana ritualized becoming a part of the group, clearly demarcating who was "in" and who was "out" from the very beginning. In branding the group through the use of a logo (see Figure 4.4) and t-shirts, Ana gave students the ability to not only feel they were part of the group, but also to show others in a very material way.

In addition, by having the students act as the experts in the school on being "green" and placing them in the role of educators – particularly through their regular appearances on the school's weekly morning show – Ana created the opportunity for them to publicly espouse the group's ideology, and in so doing, reinforce their own commitment to being "green" and their identification as part of the group.

Figure 4.4: Laurel Road Elementary School Green Thumb Club logo: "Laurel Road is Living Healthy…RecYcling…Taking care of our community…Helping our environment…Earth friendly!

The degree to which Ana's strategies of creating collective identity were successful in building and retaining student interest showed in the rate at which students applied to be in the group at least two years in row:

> *Sally*: What percentage of [students] would you say returned [each year to be a part of the club]?
> *Ana*: Oh, I would say…[overall, excluding those who left for middle school each year] 60% stayed with me at least one more year, and it was a large number of kids that stayed throughout four, four or five years.

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In describing how the leaders of the St. Eugene's and Laurel Road Elementary Community Garden Groups cultivated collective identity and community among their participants, I point to how having a strong, active participant base is related not only to the continuous efforts of leaders to recruit participants, but to sustain their engagement with the group. These examples illustrate how leaders utilized identity and community to transform the interest of participants into commitment. Participating becomes not just about acting on

curiosity or even a high level of interest in a group's work; rather, it becomes a way to maintain friendships and reaffirm one's identity.

ALTERNATIVE EXPLANATIONS FOR GROUP PARTICIPANTS

The body of research on rates of participation in social movements, civic associations, political organizations, and voluntary groups contains three alternative explanations for why some community garden groups had more participation than others. In this section, I briefly review and dismiss the relevance of each to the argument I make in this chapter.

First, perhaps some groups had more financial or material resources than others to offer tangible incentives for participation (Klandermans 2004; McCarthy and Zald 1977). Examples of potential incentives include giving away free gardening supplies and seeds to participants, or regularly providing food at group meetings and workdays. If participation was positively related to the amount of resources a group had, then based on my assessment of internal group capacity in Chapter 2, groups that rated a "2" on resources should have had a higher participation rating than groups that rated a "1." However, of the four community garden groups with high participation, two had acquired significant grants and donations above and beyond what it took to operate on a daily basis (Nourish and St. Eugene's), while the other two had everything they needed to operate, but not significantly more (Livingston and Laurel Road). Moreover, to the extent that incentives did help leaders mobilize participation, it was not material ones that truly mattered. Rather leaders utilized "soft" selective (Klandermans and Oegema 1987) and solidary incentives to ensure people derived personal benefit from their participation and/or incentivized participation by appealing to peoples' desire to meaningfully contribute to a collective cause. In sum, the amount of material resources a group possessed

cannot account for the pattern of differential participation among community garden groups in this study.

A second alternative explanation lies in differences in group organizational structure. According to Smith (1992), local, voluntary groups generally are characterized by a sense of intimacy and trust, which can be undermined by the sense of formality which often accompanies a hierarchy of authority, the existence of paid staff, and/or the requirements of 501(c) legal status. Other research suggests that the more formal structure a voluntary group or social movement has, the more time the group or movement may spend managing operations and complying with funding and reporting requirements than building relationships with and recruiting potential participants (Bloemraad and Gleeson 2012; Cress 1997; Piven and Cloward 1977). In short, perhaps low-participation groups had more organizational structure than high-participation groups. However, this explanation is not supported by the data. As I detail in Chapter 2, some of the community garden groups with high participation had little to no structure, while others (e.g. Livingston) had much more.

Third and finally, differential participation might have been the result of differences among the types of people groups were trying to recruit. Scholarship has shown that educational attainment, income, and age are all positively related to volunteering (Musick and Wilson 2008; Tschirhart 2006). Each of these factors is associated with having the civic skills, knowledge of issues, and resources (e.g. transportation, expendable income) that make participation easier. Race also matters; Whites are more likely than Blacks, Hispanics/Latinos, and Asian Americans to volunteer (Musick and Wilson 2008). In addition, some people are more "biographically available" than others in terms of their freedom from responsibility and other

constraints that can make participating difficult or costly (McAdam 1986). Perhaps these sorts of individual characteristics existed at higher rates in the target participant populations of some groups than others.

However, to the extent possible within community garden group types (e.g. neighborhood, workspace, church, etc.), I selected groups for study that had demographically similar population profiles. For example, all three of the neighborhood community garden groups in this study were located in low-income neighborhoods, and two of these neighborhoods were majority minority. As another example, all three of the school garden groups I selected were located in schools that in 2015 received a State Department of Education School Report Card Rating of "Excellent"[41] and had a school-wide poverty index of at least 40%.[42]

In sum, due to the way I set up the study and my findings from other analyses of the data, none of these alternative explanations take away from the main claim I make in this chapter regarding the importance of a leader's ability to mobilize participation.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

In this chapter, I explored the ways that leaders of community garden groups with active bases of participation went about "the craft of getting commitments." Specifically, I showed

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[41] State and federal laws require the public schools in the state in which Greenridge is located to release "report cards" to the public each year that include a "state accountability rating" from the State Department of Education. The possible ratings a school could have received on its report card in 2015 were: Excellent, Good, Average, Below Average, and At Risk. Schools were rated based on their progress towards meeting state performance standards in testing, academic progress, and graduation.

[42] In the state in which Greenridge is located, the poverty index for public schools is determined by the percentage of students participating in Medicaid, SNAP, TANF, and/or are homeless, foster, or migrant students.

how these leaders engaged in continuous, active recruitment; cultivated or capitalized on existing rapport with potential participants; and ensured that participants felt like they were successful and that their time with the group was well-spent. At each step on this "pathway to an active participant base," I demonstrated how the leaders of groups who did not do these things struggled to recruit and retain participation, leading in some cases to eventual group collapse.

The leaders of groups with high participation rates did not assume that enthusiasm about the idea of a community garden was indicative of the likelihood that people would actually give of their time. Amid the cacophony of responsibilities and requests for time that crowd everyday life, leaders who successfully built their group's participant base realized that individuals needed to have their initial interest reaffirmed and their desire to support the group bolstered. These leaders were there to regularly cut through the din and convince people that the work of the group was important, that their interest in the group was legitimate, and that the group needed them, specifically, to come help. Once people decided to participate, the leaders of groups with strong participation guaranteed that individuals felt needed when they showed up, and through the provision of training and support, that participants' work left them with a feeling of success and accomplishment. Leaders also worked to cultivate and leverage collective identity and community among participants in order to transform their interest in the group from one of topical curiosity to commitment, borne out of relationships with other participants and personal identification with the group's work.

In explicitly focusing my exploration of differential participation on the ways that the *leaders* of community garden groups engaged participants (rather than how the *group* engaged

participants), I highlighted the degree to which the actions of leaders in local, voluntary groups often are inseparable from group outcomes. Even in environments of substantial ideological and material support for a group's cause, a leader's lack of knowledge of and skill in how to transform a verbal endorsement into sustained participation can lead a group to struggle and ultimately fail.

In addition to placing focus on leaders' knowledge of and skill in participant mobilization, I also pointed to the importance of considering the effect of leaders' personal characteristics on participation rates, including ascriptive attributes such as race (Dovi 2002; Mansbridge 1999). Research on the background of leaders has focused most often on their educational or economic capital (Friedmann et al. 1988; Morris and Staggenborg 2004; Smith 2000). Both social movements and voluntary sector literature has found that leaders tend to be more highly educated and from more economically privileged backgrounds than the people they are trying to mobilize.

While educational and economic capital can help a leader choose among mobilization strategies or lead a meeting on group operations, they are useful only if a leader has a base of people to organize. In this chapter, I built on the suggestion of Nepstad and Bob (2006) that scholars should attend more closely to leaders' "localized cultural capital" – the knowledge of local values, idioms, and practices – and symbolic capital when examining the recruitment and participation outcomes of movements and groups. In other words, we need to pay more attention to how leaders relate to and are seen by their target participants as a factor in the success of their mobilization efforts. As Nepstad and Bob (2006:18) so aptly state: "[L]eadership

is relational, and leaders do not succeed…by themselves. They are helped and hindered, their stature and influence raised or lowered, through their interactions with followers…"

In addition, my findings here add to those of recent research by Walker and McCarthy (2010:336) who sought to identify the sources of organizational legitimacy most beneficial to community-based organizations (CBOs). They found that sociopolitical legitimacy mattered little to CBOs, while local or pragmatic legitimacy (Suchman 1995) – developed via community representation and fundraising – significantly increased the likelihood of organizational survival. To their findings, I add the importance of considering how the development of a group's local legitimacy is shaped by the localized cultural and symbolic capital exercised by its leaders.

Studies of social movements, nonprofits, and civic associations tend to emphasize the significance of sociopolitical legitimacy, being accepted by institutional actors and other key power players in the environment in which an organization operates. However, I show that in the case of local, voluntary groups, the leader's legitimacy in the eyes of their target participant population is also critically important. Local, voluntary groups are small enough that the reputation of the leader cannot be analyzed separately from the reputation of the group. Moreover, such groups, by definition, have small target participant bases. Their leaders are not engaging in mass recruiting through speeches and other public appearances, relying solely on charisma and/or the appearance of familiarity with local culture and values. Rather, local, voluntary group leaders are intimately embedded within the environments of their target participants, where cultural faux pas and a lack of understanding of community history and dynamics can create barriers to recruitment, and ultimately goal attainment.

Overall, this chapter contributes to a growing body of research on the importance of leadership in determining the effectiveness of social movements, civic associations, and community-based organizations (e.g. Andrews et al. 2010; Ganz 2009; Han 2014). In the conclusion, I review both theoretical and practical implications of considering the quality and role of leaders in future studies.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION

Steve: [S]ometimes we ask…why does it work?
Sally: What's your answer?
Steve: Because a lot of people put a lot of love in it…And, and you have to have that dedication to it.

Steve
Core Participant
St. Eugene's Catholic Church Community Garden Group

Yeah, it sounds good, you know? "Community garden! It's a wonderful thing!" But the old secret [to making it work] is a bigger base [of participants] and a good leader…And it's hard to lead it, because it's an unpaid job.

Bernie
Core Participant
Oakridge Community Garden Group

The sentiments expressed in these two quotes from community garden group core participants reach at the heart of the findings of this dissertation. In settings where the verbal and material support for a voluntary group is high because the idea "sounds good," what matters most for goal attainment is having a "good leader" who can mobilize people to "put a lot of love in" and "have that dedication to" the group and its work. Verbal endorsements and the provision of resources can go only so far without people on the ground who can take advantage of them.

Local, voluntary groups like those formed around the establishment and maintenance of community gardens comprise the backbone of civic activity across the United States. In this

dissertation, I sought to contribute to scholars' growing understanding of these groups by examining the factors behind why some succeed in accomplishing their goals while others struggle to do so. In the following sections, I briefly outline the arc of the study and consider the contributions of my findings for scholarship and practice. I conclude by suggesting avenues for future research.

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Drawing on literature from organizational sociology, social movements, and nonprofit and voluntary studies, I began this study with the perspective that the most important contributing factors to goal attainment could be identified by applying theory from work on the successful emergence of formal organizations. More specifically, I suggested that a helpful framework for thinking about the effectiveness of local, voluntary groups would be to consider them as perpetually emerging formal organizations. The very nature of local, voluntary groups compels them to constantly be mobilizing resources, recruiting "labor" or participation, and reorganizing work flows based on participant turnover. Moreover, accomplishment of these tasks often falls to the group's founder or leader, and in the words of Smith (1997a:276), "one ineffective leader can easily kill a GA [grassroots association]" or voluntary group.

Supplementing theory from organizational sociology with additional work from the social movements field, I identified the success of leaders in cultivating group capacity as being vitally important, specifically in the areas of material resources, internal group structure, sociopolitical legitimacy, and participation. In Chapter 2, I undertook a systematic examination of the degree to which each of these types of capacity were present in the 12 active community garden groups I selected for study, focusing on how their existence was patterned in relation to

group goal attainment. In brief, I found that neither material resources, internal group structure, nor sociopolitical legitimacy accounted for the differences between groups that were and were not achieving their goals. The only type of capacity that varied systematically with goal attainment was participation.

The deep examination of these findings undertaken in Chapters 3 and 4 both challenges and extends current theories in organizational sociology, social movements, and nonprofit and voluntary studies. This research also informs practice on ways that those who seek to fund and encourage the establishment of voluntary groups in their communities can best support those groups in achieving their goals.

CONTRIBUTIONS TO SCHOLARSHIP AND PRACTICE

This dissertation extends theories in organizational sociology, social movements, and nonprofit and voluntary research in a number of ways, including the current approach of using these literatures to inform our understanding of the dynamics of local, voluntary groups.

First, I argue that goal attainment is an appropriate measure of the effectiveness of local, voluntary groups. In the past three decades, research in the study of organizational effectiveness largely has moved away from single, unidimensional measures such as goal attainment to more complex, multidimensional models of effectiveness. However, the types of organizations studied that led to this shift were large, formal, for-profit and nonprofit entities. I suggest that the various multidimensional models developed and used by scholars should be reassessed for their applicability to smaller, less formal groups and associations, particularly in light of increasing calls for a greater understanding of this field (Smith 2000).

Second, underlying the general theory that sociopolitical legitimacy can lead to the acquisition of needed resources and, ultimately, to the achievement of goals, is the foundational assumption that organizations and movements operate in competitive environments in which resources are scarce. In this kind of environment, being seen as legitimate by powerful institutional actors and other key players is commonly accepted as a way to increase the likelihood of winning out over competitors in the struggle for limited resources. However, in examining the organizational environment of Greenridge's community garden groups in the mid-2000s, I identified three general conditions under which this accepted theory loses its explanatory power: 1) the widespread acknowledgement of a social problem, 2) the existence of a non-contentious solution, and 3) the alignment of that solution with the cultural values of the population in which the problem is present.

In Chapter 3, I showed that when these three conditions converge, the combination of sociopolitical legitimacy and resource mobilization is not sufficient to explain why some local, voluntary groups are better able than others to achieve their goals. I detail at the beginning of Chapter 4 how multiple groups were established based on the excitement and support expressed by people about the *idea* of participating in a community garden, but how, when it came time to actually *work* the garden, none of those individuals could be found. I argue that only when a group has a leader with the knowledge and skill to mobilize a participant base to exploit favorable conditions does the significant amount of sociopolitical legitimacy and resource availability in the environment contribute to the likelihood of group goal attainment. In his study of the United Farm Workers movement in the 1960s, Ganz (2000:1005) found that "'resourcefulness' can sometimes compensate for a lack of resources." In this dissertation, I

argue that the reverse also can be true: a resource-rich environment can sometimes *not* compensate for a leader's lack of skill and mobilization ability.

This matters because it supports recent work that brings leadership and leader development to the forefront of analysis in social movements and the study of civic associations (Andrews et al. 2010; Baggetta et al. 2011, 2013; Han 2014; Han et al. 2011; Nepstad and Bob 2006; Nesbit et al. 2016; Reger and Staggenborg 2006). An increasing number of scholars have turned their attention to the quality and role of leaders in determining the direction and success of social movements and civic associations. For example, Han et al. (2011) found that Sierra Club chapters with more "skilled and committed" leaders had increased levels of political presence. In a study of four chapters of the National Women's Organization, Reger and Staggenborg (2006) argued that social movement organizations that built and sustained mobilization over many years were able to do so because of a combination of leadership quality and structures that ensured leadership continuity and interaction.

Chapter 4 contributes to this scholarship in two ways. First, I reinforce the importance of leadership skill and knowledge of participant mobilization in the ability of groups to achieve their goals by tracing a "pathway to an active participant base." I found that leaders of the four high-participation, goal-achieving, community garden groups did three things. They actively and continuously recruited participants, not relying on passive recruitment strategies to activate the interest of sympathetic bystanders. They ensured that participation was worthwhile and facilitated participant success at group tasks by providing training and support. Finally, the leaders of these four groups built collective identity and community around their groups in order to transform participant interest into commitment.

Second, I showed that in addition to a leader's skill and knowledge of how to recruit, their ability to do so successfully also hinged on their localized cultural capital and the symbolic capital they had among target participants. It is well-established in the literature that, in the words of Nepstad and Bob (2006:2), "leadership is fundamentally a relational status" (Diani and McAdam 2003; Ganz 2010; Han 2014; Han et al. 2011; Morris and Staggenborg 2004). In Chapter 4, I brought renewed attention to the personal characteristics of leaders that shape the way they interact with and are able to build rapport among potential participants. Previous scholarship in this area has emphasized the importance of a leader's educational and economic capital in organizing a social movement, rightly identifying that possession of these personal assets is useful for the types of tasks leaders undertake. However, I demonstrated that even leaders that had these forms of capital, but lacked local knowledge of their target participants' values, customs, and ways of interacting, struggled to build the relationships that would facilitate recruitment.

Moreover, I demonstrated how even leaders who had localized cultural capital were not always able to leverage their knowledge and experience to gain the trust and respect of those they sought mobilize, or in other words, to build their symbolic capital among potential participants. Given that the leader of a local, voluntary group often is almost inseparable from the work of the group itself, people must respect and be willing to work with and/or take direction from the person who is seeking to recruit them. Broadbent (2003) found in a qualitative comparative analysis of the incidence of environmental protests in eight, small Japanese communities that the "final necessary ingredient [for having a protest] was a protest leader from within the community, who enjoyed high status there…" (225). Even local,

voluntary leaders who are from the communities they are trying to mobilize need some degree of symbolic capital in order to be successful. Put another way, the effectiveness of a leader's mobilization strategies and tactics are partially contingent on how legitimate they are considered to be in the eyes of their target participant population.

Overall, this dissertation contributes to our growing understanding of the local, voluntary groups that largely have been off the radar of scholars interested in understanding and mapping the voluntary sector. Perhaps the most well-known scholar of voluntary groups and associations in sociology, David H. Smith, has done the most to build a body of literature around the study of what Michael O'Neill, in his foreword to Smith's (2000) book, *Grassroots Associations*, calls "the real voluntary or nonprofit sector." By examining the factors that contribute to local, voluntary groups achieving their goals, this study contributes to our knowledge of how the cumulative impact (Smith 1997a) of these groups is accomplished.

Implications for Practitioners

The findings of this dissertation have implications for those who seek to establish local, voluntary groups and those who wish to support their efforts. First, the founders of groups should not assume that verbal or material expressions of support are indicative of peoples' willingness to give of their time. I heard repeatedly throughout the course of this research how founders originally felt confident about the idea of a community garden because they pitched it to their respective communities – whether a neighborhood, church, company, or a city council – and received encouragement and validation. Based on the positive feedback, founders proceeded to build a community garden only to find that those people who encouraged its establishment were not willing to work it. The seeming lack of relation between verbal support

from potential participants and subsequent donation of time raises the question of what types of indicators those who seek to establish and support local, voluntary groups should look to when trying determine the likelihood of future participant commitment.

Second, the finding that a leader's ability to recruit participants was key to group goal-achievement has implications for the types of training and support that grassroots leaders need to be effective. Recent research has pointed to the importance of developing leader capacity, particularly in regards to recruitment, *within* civic associations (e.g. Han 2014). What about those leaders who need to develop their capacity and are not embedded within an existing group that can provide experience and training? Various cities and states have local programs that provide grassroots leadership development. However, in their study of the most common of these, community-based leadership education (CBLE) programs operating out of university Extension offices and Chambers of Commerce across the country, Willis and Stoecker (2013) found that strategies for recruitment and retention of volunteers were not among the primary areas of capacity that CBLE coordinators sought to build among grassroots leaders. Rather, Willis and Stoecker (2013) found that these coordinators focused more on building leaders' knowledge of their community, networking skills, and team-building abilities.

In fact, the local CBLE program offered by the Greenridge United Way, which several of my interviewees mentioned attending[43], provides "training and peer support…in the areas of problem-solving, successfully managing and leading a neighborhood association, planning and

[43] I did not choose to interview these people because they attended the Greenridge United Way's CBLE program. However, the CBLE program came up several times over the course of my research as interviewees mentioned that they had taken part in the program.

goal-setting, available resources, and effective communication skills," but not in the area of mobilization and retention of participants. I also found this to be true of the community gardening trainings I attended over my two years in the field. GrowDirt, the local community gardening network and support nonprofit, offered classes on "fall vegetable gardening," "perennial herbs," "food fermentation," "soil fertility," and "composting," but no classes on how to get people in your community involved in the work of the group.

The findings of this dissertation suggest that the training provided by cities, nonprofits, and others who seek to support local voluntarism must incorporate information on how to recruit and retain participants. Only once a local, voluntary group has gotten off the ground with an initial base of participation, can the transformational work of turning participants into leaders through their experiences within the group begin.

LIMITATIONS AND DIRECTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

The contributions and practical implications I have outlined here should be considered in light of the case study of this dissertation: community garden groups. To what extent does research conducted on community garden groups speak to the dynamics of other local, voluntary groups? First, I firmly believe that the broad finding in Chapter 4 –the ability of a leader to mobilize and sustain participation is key in determining group goal attainment – is generalizable to most local, voluntary groups. This is because, by definition, such groups are completely reliant on the willingness of individuals to donate their time, and moreover, often are small enough that the efforts of the leader cannot be separated from the work of the group as a whole. However, not all types of voluntary groups enjoy the broad support that community gardens did in Greenridge during the time of this study. The efforts of community garden group

leaders in Greenridge often were aimed at transforming existing interest in the group into actual participation. As such, the "pathway to an active participant base" that I outlined in Chapter 4 may look different for the leaders of voluntary groups that first have to do significant work to build interest in their group before convincing people to give of their time. Future research should consider how the participant recruitment and retention process is shaped by the degree to which a group's goals receive widespread institutional and popular support.

In addition, while studies have looked at the way that experiences within civic associations shape a leader's skill and capacity (e.g. Han 2014), future research ought to explore the experiences outside of previous civic or voluntary work that shape someone's capacity to lead. Willis and Stoecker (2013) found that many of the grassroots community-based organizations they studied relied on the skills their leaders brought with them from their formal work experiences. However, scholarship has shown that the skills required to lead a formal organization are very different from those required to lead a voluntary group or association (Knoke and Prensky 1984; Nesbit et al. 2016; Smith 2000). What other experiences shape a person's ability to recruit and retain volunteers and successfully manage a voluntary group?

Scholarship also would benefit from further exploration of the effect of population-wide sociopolitical legitimacy and material resource availability on the emergence and spread of organizations and voluntary groups. One potentially fruitful case for this research could be that of the maker movement, "the increase in do-it-yourself and do-it-together projects" (van Holm 2017:164) that has spawned a rapidly growing number of local, national, and international community workshops – or "makerspaces" – for those wishing to design, create, engineer, and prototype for pleasure or profit. Similar to the multisector endorsement of community garden

establishment, makerspaces have increasingly been promoted and materially supported by large corporations, national and international governing bodies, the news and popular press, and the general public (see (Aldrich 2014; Anderson 2012; Browder, Aldrich, and Bradley 2017; Dougherty 2012; van Holm 2017) for reviews).

Furthermore, future work should explore and test the three conditions that I identified in Chapter 3 which led to the emergence of population-level sociopolitical legitimacy and material resource availability for community garden groups in Greenridge in the mid-2000s. Arguably, the resources and time that went to supporting the establishment of community garden groups, many of which never garnered enough participation to truly get off the ground, could have gone to other projects. For example, Greenridge currently is the midst of an affordable housing crisis; the focus placed on community gardens in many of Greenridge's neighborhood and community plans could have been put towards proposals of affordable housing options. How is the voluntary sector of a community shaped by the convergence of popular national discourse with local values? These are longitudinal questions that this dissertation could not begin to address, but which should be considered by future research.

Finally, some scholars have begun to consider the advantages to community-based organizations and voluntary groups of seeking legitimacy and resources from their constituents in addition to institutional endorsement and support (Terrana 2017; Walker and McCarthy 2010). This study adds to that literature by showing how, in local, voluntary groups, a leader's local legitimacy among potential participants is as important, if not more important, than their credibility among individuals and institutions external to their target community. A fruitful avenue for future research would be examining the added benefit of cultivating internal

legitimacy for groups, associations, and organizations that seek political and structural change rather than the local changes in thinking, culture, or practice pursued by local, voluntary groups.

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When telling me why he decided to establish an offshoot of the Hillview Community Garden Group in the low-income neighborhood in which he lived, Eric described his thought process:

> "Hey, we found this property, we want to do a garden," because I thought that "Oh man, this is low hanging fruit. We can do a community garden like that [snaps his fingers]; it's going to be easy." Nope.

This study reveals how, even in a context of incredible support and encouragement, establishing and running an effective voluntary group is not an easy undertaking. For a group to reach its goals, it needs a leader who has the knowledge of how to move people to action, the time and dedication to do so continuously, and the cultural and symbolic capital to gain the trust and respect of those they wish to recruit. In addition to supporting voluntary groups through the provision of funding and other material resources that go directly towards the social change being pursued, individuals, governments, and organizations that wish to build and sustain the voluntary sector should consider investing in building the skills and capacity of leaders.

APPENDIX A: METHODOLOGICAL APPENDIX

In this appendix, I provide more details about various parts of the research and analysis process. The information here supplements that provided in Chapter 1.

SELECTION AND DESCRIPTION OF CASE STUDIES

As described in Chapter 1, I selected 18 community garden groups as case studies from the 54 garden groups that existed in Greenridge in the spring of 2015. While I sought to maximize variation in goal attainment by selecting on garden "vibrancy" (see Chapter 1 for a description of this term), I also selected groups based on a classification scheme used by GrowDirt to organize the kinds of garden groups present in Greenridge based on the nature of the community that founded them: faith-based, community, neighborhood, nonprofit, school/youth, and workspace.

Table A.1 contains detailed information about GrowDirt's categorization of these group types. It is important to note that these descriptions are broad characterizations. For example, not all workspace gardens sent their garden's harvest home with employees; the ID Sales Community Garden Group (a workspace garden group) sent their harvest to a nearby food bank and the local Meals on Wheels.

From each of the six categories in Table A.1, I selected three garden groups of different "vibrancies" (one "vibrant," one "struggling," and one "failed" group) based on the degree to which their external environments (e.g. geographic/demographic) were similar (Perkins et al. 1990; Small et al. 2008; Swaroop and Morenoff 2006; Taylor 1996; Wilson 1997). While this strategy worked well as an overall approach to case selection, as I got to better know the community garden scene in Greenridge, other factors influenced the selection process. First, I

considered when each garden group was founded; some of the groups on GrowDirt's list were newly established, the soil just freshly tilled and planted for the first time. Studying the effectiveness of a group that had barely begun did not make sense. As such, when deciding which vibrant and struggling garden groups to select, I looked first to the older groups on GrowDirt's list. The newest groups I ended up selecting were established in 2013, making them two years old at the time of selection.

Second, given the rapid increase of community garden group establishment in Greenridge in the late 2000s and the accompanying interest by academics and journalists in the area, I took into consideration whether each garden group previously had been studied. In 2014, the summer before I conducted the majority of my interviews, Terri, a researcher from a nearby university, had conducted a community garden study in Greenridge with a similar methodological design: a comparative case study across garden types using in-depth interviews as the primary method of data collection. In order to avoid over-studying and interview fatigue among respondents who had participated in that project, when possible, I avoided selecting the gardens Terri had studied.

The third major factor I considered was willingness to participate in the study. I called the contacts for many of the community garden groups on GrowDirt's list during the selection process in order to verify details or get more information about the group before making a decision. There were at least three groups that I did not select specifically because it was obvious from phone conversations that studying these groups would prove extremely difficult due to either the leader being unwilling to provide access or the conflict that surrounded the group's history. In the latter case, the death of one group and its host organization created such

antagonism between members that the few people I talked to about it were extremely hesitant to refer me to anyone else and often confirmed multiple times that our discussion would be held strictly confidential. However, because the local controversy surrounding this group and its host organization was so well known, I was able to gather enough of a sense of what happened there that I do not consider it a major outlier or a threat to the validity of the results presented in this study.

Table A.1: GrowDirt's Garden Type Descriptions

Garden Group Type	Participants and Funding	Primary Goal(s)	Harvest Use
Faith-based	Religious organizations, such as churches and synagogues or faith-based nonprofit organizations – and their members	To provide fresh produce for members of the religious organization or those in need in the local community	Harvest goes to members of the religious organization or those in need in the local community – through soup kitchens, homeless shelters, or food banks
Community	Anybody who signs up	Growing food, herbs, and flowers for the benefit of the community.	Harvest goes to those involved and sometimes to organizations in the community that provide food to those in need
Neighborhood	Neighborhood residents broadly defined as people who live in the geographic area surrounding the garden	To provide access to land to garden and to create a heightened sense of community and place	Harvest goes to members of the garden and sometimes to neighborhood residents who aren't involved
Nonprofit	Volunteers at the organization and/or those in need for whom the harvest of the garden is intended	To provide a reliable source of fresh produce for individuals, families and communities in need	Harvest goes to those who volunteer in the garden and/or to those in need in the community either directly (as in food goes from the garden straight into the hands of the family in need) or indirectly through an organization that provides food to those in need
School/Youth	Schools, teachers, and volunteers from educationally-focused organizations – primarily schools and afterschool programs	Educational purposes – for example, learning about the importance of healthy food, where food comes from, or the basics of how to maintain a garden	Harvest is utilized by the school or program cafeteria or food service, sent home with students, or consumed on-the-spot as part of an educational demonstration
Workspace	The employees of primarily large businesses	To provide employees with access to land and gardening know-how – often as a way to encourage employee health	Harvest goes to those employees who maintain the garden

DATA COLLECTION METHODS

Use of Pseudonyms

Gloria is a former core participant in the Glendale Road Community Garden Group whose personality and approach to gardening clashed with that of the group's founder and leader, Carol. Throughout our interview, she repeatedly sought verification that the information and opinions she was sharing would be held strictly confidential. Below is an example:

> *Gloria*: And she [Carol], her gardening was, I'm sorry. Don't you dare repeat this.
> *Sally*: I can't. That's why you signed the [informed consent] form.
> *Gloria*: Her gardening is in ***pots***.
> *Sally*: Okay…

While the revelation of Carol's fondness for growing plants in containers rather than in the ground does not seem that scandalous to an outsider, Gloria was very focused on knowing that I would keep her opinion of Carol's gardening techniques confidential.

I debated at the beginning of this study whether I needed to offer the protection of anonymity to my interviewees, both in disguising their names and the location in which this research took place. I debated the question Duneier (2000:348) posed in his study of "sidewalk life" in New York City: by offering anonymity, was I seeking to protect myself or my study participants? After all, community gardening isn't exactly what most people would consider a sensitive topic. And yet, even though it is a mid-sized city, Greenridge still has the feel of a Southern small town, where everybody knows everybody else and appearance and reputation is still of utmost importance.

In the end, I was concerned my participants would not share their true opinions of the garden groups under study, or the actions of leaders and participants in those groups, without

assurance that I would disguise their identity. Upon reflection, my emphasis on anonymity at the beginning of each interview was key to learning information that, in some cases, became critical in my analysis.

Interviews with Key Informants

The primary data for this dissertation came from 102 semi-structured, in-depth interviews with individuals who were associated with the 18 garden groups selected for study or who occupied a social or institutional position in Greenridge such that they had a broad, community-level perspective on the proliferation of community garden group establishment in Greenridge that began in 2010.

For each of the 18 garden groups, I sought to gain various perspectives on group operation and goal attainment by interviewing a founder, leader, core participant, occasional participant, non-participant constituent, and community leader. Table A.2 shows the number of people I interviewed for each community garden group by the type of perspective they provided (identified as "respondent types").

For eight of the garden groups, I was able to locate and interview a person representing all six perspectives (these groups are marked with a ^ in Table A.2). In many cases, due to lack of participation in the group, one or two individuals represented the founder, leader, and/or core and occasional participants. In addition, identifying and locating potential interviewees for the failed gardens was especially difficult; many individuals had moved in the time between when the group failed and when I began looking to interview participants. For example, in the case of Hand-in-Hand, a nonprofit garden group that was alive from 2011 to 2013, it took me

over a year of repeated internet searching, phone calls, and never-returned voicemails to locate the founder; I eventually made contact and set up an interview via Facebook messenger.

Even for cases where I could locate a respondent of each type for an interview, I sometimes chose not to do so. As the study progressed, it became easier to assess when the time and effort to find an additional interviewee was not going to add a new perspective to what I already knew about a particular group. And sometimes, because of the connections between individuals involved in the community gardening scene, a person I was interviewing about one garden would make comments about another garden I was studying, and I could utilize their comments as representative of a perspective on the other garden. This primarily happened when I was interviewing community leaders who were aware of and could comment on multiple gardens within their leadership jurisdiction.

Table A.2: Respondent Types Obtained for Each Community Garden Group

	Founder	Leader	Core Participant	Occasional Participant	Non-Participant Constituent	Community Leader	Total
Oakridge Community Garden Group^	1*	2	1	4	1	2	11
Livingston Community Garden Group	2	1	2	2	0	1	8
Hillview Community Garden Group	1*	1	1	0	1	0	4
St. Eugene's Catholic Church Community Garden Group^	2*	--	1	1	1	1	6
Mount Pilgrim Presbyterian Community Garden Group^	1	1	1	1	2	1	7
Brookdale Presbyterian Community Garden Group	1*	--	0	1	1	1	4
Glendale Road Neighborhood Garden Group^	1*	--	1	1	1	2	6
Sturgis Neighborhood Garden Group^	1*	--	1	1	1	1	5
Bennett Neighborhood Garden Group^	1*	--	1	1	1	1	5
Nourish Community Garden Group	1*	1	2	0	0	1	5
Greenway Garden Group^	1	2	1	1	1	1	7
Hand-in-Hand Community Garden Group	1	1	0	0	0	0	2
Laurel Road Elementary School Garden Group	1*	1	0	0	0	0	2
Arnold Academy School Garden Group	1	1	0	0	1	1	4
Bramlett Elementary School Garden Group	1*	--	0	0	0	0	1
Human Teach Community Garden Group	1	2	1	0	1	1	6
Lightyear Technologies Community Garden Group^	1*	--	1	2	1	1	6
ID Sales Corporation Community Garden Group	1*	--	1	0	1	1	4

Key:
The numbers in each cell represent the number of individuals interviewed.
^ = one of the eight groups for which I was able to interview a person representing each of the six perspectives
* = the person interviewed was the founder *and* current leader of the group
-- = interview not needed to fill that perspective

In Table A.3, below, I show the total number of interviews I conducted for each respondent type (founder, core participant, etc.), as well as the gender and race of interviewees.[44] In addition, Table A.4 shows a breakdown of the respondent types by race and gender.

Table A.3: Characteristics of Interviewees

	N (%)
Respondent Type	
Founder	20 (19.6)
Leader	13 (12.7)
Core Participant	15 (14.7)
Occasional Participant	15 (14.7)
Non-Participant Constituent	14 (13.7)
Community Leaders Tied to Garden Groups	16 (15.7)
Leaders in Community Gardening in Greenridge	8 (7.8)
Greenridge Community Leaders	1 (1)
Total:	102 (100%)
Gender	
Female	65 (63.7)
Male	37 (36.3)
Total:	102 (100%)
Race	
Black	21 (20.6)
White	80 (78.4)
Hispanic/Latina	1 (1)
Total:	102 (100%)

[44] I assessed both the gender and race of respondents based on their physical appearance.

Table A.4: Respondent Types, by Race and Gender

Respondent Type	Male N (%)	White N (%)	Total N (100%)
Founder	9 (45%)	16 (80%)	20
Leader	1 (8%)	11 (84.6%)	13
Core Participant	8 (53.3%)	13 (86.7%)	15
Occasional Participant	2 (13.3%)	11 (73.3%)	15
Non-Participant Constituent	5 (35.7%)	10 (71.4%)	14
Community Leaders Tied to Garden Groups	10 (62.5%)	11 (68.8%)	16
Leaders in Community Gardening in Greenridge	2 (25%)	8 (100%)	8
Greenridge Community Leaders	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1

A couple of things from Tables A.3 and A.4 are worth noting. The first is that approximately 64% of the people I interviewed were women. This percentage reflects the observations of Holly, the sustainability specialist for a local hospital system and a leader in community gardening in Greenridge, who told me that she saw “way more women involved in this than men." Both Holly’s observations and the fact that I ended up, unintentionally, interviewing many more women than men corroborates past research that has found women initiate and lead community gardens at greater rates than men (Hynes 1996; Parry, Glover, and Kimberly 2005).

In addition, approximately 78% of interviewees were White. Again, this observation is corroborated by past research which has found that participation in non-commercial, non-industrial food markets (commonly called “alternative food markets”) like community gardens or farmers’ markets, tends to be dominated by White, middle-class individuals (Alkon 2012; Alkon and Agyeman 2011; Guthman 2008b, 2011; Hinrichs and Kremer 2002).

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I conducted semi-structured interviews with study participants directly associated with community garden groups using interview guides that corresponded with the respondent type (founder, core participant, etc.) from May 2015 to November 2016. Depending on the interviewee's role and the length of their affiliation with the garden group in question, I asked questions about the interviewee's background and previous experience with gardening; the garden group's founding; characteristics of the community/neighborhood/workspace/ church/school in which the group was located; how the interviewee came to participate in the group in question; the interviewee's understanding of the group's mission or purpose; and the interviewee's opinions on the group's effectiveness. In addition, in the spirit of semi-structured interviews with open-ended questions, I left ample space and time for interviewees to bring up topics of interest and observations that they found relevant to helping me understand their experiences in, opinions on, and interactions with the community garden group in question and, more broadly, within their community. A full list of questions organized by topic and motivating research interest can be found in Appendix D.

My eight interviews with leaders in the community gardening scene in Greenridge were less structured than those with individuals directly associated with the garden groups I selected for study. I began interviews with these eight individuals as I did with my other interviews, asking them first about their history in Greenridge and previous gardening experience, alone or in community. However, each interview then took a different direction based on each person's unique role in relation to Greenridge's community gardening scene.

The majority of the interviews took place in-person at the location of the interviewee's choosing. I conducted interviews in people's homes, on benches outside of community gardens,

in offices, in community centers, in coffee shops, and in parks, among other locations. Less than ten interviews took place over the phone.

With the exception of one interview where the individual requested that I not record our conversation, I used a digital recorder to capture each interview in its entirety with the permission of the interviewee. Interviews lasted from 20 minutes at the short end to over two hours at the long end, with most averaging around an hour and fifteen minutes. I had the majority of interviews transcribed verbatim for analysis. For interviews where I felt it would be helpful to physically hear the conversation again, I personally listened to the audio recording and did the transcription myself.

Site Visits

Over the course of the study period, I visited each community garden site at least once to document garden features of interest and the physical areas surrounding the gardens. Features of interest included the number of garden beds (or rows), the availability and accessibility of water (including the existence of an irrigation system), the existence of a shed or other place to store tools, availability and accessibility of restrooms, and the existence of a fence surrounding all or part of the garden. Knowing this sort of information helped me during interviews, for example, when respondents would describe their time in the garden or the features of their garden that had been funded by grants. In addition, this kind of information helped me understand the degree to which the people who ran the garden had knowledge of how to garden (e.g. was the garden's location partially or fully shaded) and how easy it was for them to maintain the garden based on its setup (e.g. raised beds are easier to care for than in-ground rows of plants).

Regarding the physical areas surrounding the gardens, I looked for different things depending on the garden type in question. When visiting neighborhood gardens, for example, I took notes on the kind and condition of the houses in the neighborhood, the existence of sidewalks, and the presence of people out and about. In contrast, when visiting a workspace garden, I noted where the garden was located in relation to the office building, how accessible the garden was to employees, and whether there was any indication of the garden's existence via flyers or photos in the lobby or hallways where I walked. Taking notes on the physical areas surrounding the gardens allowed me to better understand how each garden fit into its community.

In addition, visiting each garden at least once – in most cases, two or more times – allowed me to observe the results of any activity that was, or was not, taking place. As Carol, the founder and leader of the neighborhood-based Glendale Road Neighborhood Garden Group, told me one hot summer afternoon, "[A garden] it's something that's very visible and so you really can't…you just can't let it go. You can't, uh, ignore it so much." Even a week of neglect is very apparent to the untrained eye; without water and tending, the sweltering summer heat in Greenridge will result in a wealth of weeds and drooping or dead vegetables and flowers in the span of a few days.

Each time I visited a site, I took photos to document the state of the garden at the time of my visit. During analysis, I frequently returned to these photos to verify details from my notes or to mentally place myself back in the setting when reading interview transcripts.

Content Analysis

At the end of every interview, I asked respondents if there were any formal documents associated with their garden group that they had access to and would be willing to share. I suggested lists of garden rules, a list of members, and a mission statement as possibilities. I also asked respondents if they had access to any documents, flyers, or emails used to tell people in the community about their garden. These questions usually resulted in one of two answers based on the type of respondent: 1) either a clear "no" from core and occasional participants, non-constituent participants, and community leaders, or 2) a "yes" from founders and leaders. Many of the founders and leaders I interviewed kept digital or print files of a variety of documents relating to the establishment and maintenance of their garden, and all of those I interviewed were willing to share their files.

I was given documents in various forms – binders of information, multiple manila folders strapped together with a rubber band, USB drives containing everything from PowerPoint presentations to tax documents, and hundreds of emails that respondents dug up from their inboxes and forwarded me. If not already digitized, I scanned and stored documents for in-depth analysis. In addition to providing written documentation of mission statements, participation rates, and justification for funds, these documents allowed me to see where founders and leaders looked for information and inspiration about how to set up and run their community gardens. Often, the files given to me included brochures from the local extension office, cutouts of newspaper articles describing theirs or other community gardens, and printed copies of blogs and websites that gave advice on community garden establishment and maintenance.

Leaders in the community gardening scene in Greenridge also shared documents with me, primarily applications written for grants and reports submitted to funders. A number of these documents were particularly significant in helping me understand how institutional actors in Greenridge understood and framed the establishment of community gardens, both for themselves and the general public.

In addition to those given to me by interviewees, I assembled a number of documents via internet search. These documents included city and county plans for neighborhoods and communities; public reports from the local government on the state of the local food system in Greenridge; blog posts written by Wyatt during his tenure as director of GrowDirt; magazine articles highlighting various local community garden efforts; public reports from various organizations about their efforts to increase the health of their communities; Youtube videos of local community gardeners who were given awards for their work; and social media posts by community garden groups and those supporting them, among other materials. I also downloaded digital copies of over 50 articles from the local newspaper, *The Greenridge News*, based on a search for the phrase "community garden" from 2000 to 2015. These additional materials helped me form a much larger understanding of the growth of and discourse surrounding what I have been calling "the community gardening scene" I found in Greenridge when I began my fieldwork in 2015.

ANALYSIS

Given the design of this research as a comparative case study of community gardens, throughout the coding and memo-writing process, I continually compared the narratives of the gardens to each other to look for clues as to what made some gardens more effective than

others. Eventually, I found the only way to distill the amount of information I had into something manageable was to create charts with the garden group names on the vertical and the themes or garden attributes I was exploring at that time on the horizontal. I then would proceed to mark whether each theme or attribute was present within a particular group's narrative and to what extent. Figure A.1 is an example of what one of these charts looked like during analysis; it contains my attempts to explore how the community garden groups differed in their degree of internal structure:

Figure A.1: Example Comparative Analysis Chart

	Explicit Rules of Behavior	Hierarchy of Authority	Written Mission Statement	Incorporated	Paid Staff	Total
Laurel Road	0	0	0	0	1	1
Sturgis	0	0	0	0	0	0
Oakridge	0	0	1	0	0	1
Hillview	0	1	1	1	1	4
Brookdale	0	0	1	0	0	1
Bennett	0	0	0	0	0	0
ID Sales	0	0	0	0	0	0
Bramlett	0	0	0	0	1	1
Mt. Pilgrim	1	0	0	0	0	1
Greenway	0	1	1	1	1	4
Glendale Rd.	0	0	0	0	0	0
Human Teach	0	1	1	0	1	3
Lightyear	0	1	0	0	0	1
Arnold Academy	0	0	0	0	1	1
Livingston	1	1	0	0	1	3
St. Eugene's	0	0	0	0	0	0
Nourish	0	1	0	0	1	2
Hand-in-Hand	0	1	0	0	1	2

I used Microsoft Excel to create these charts, and the red triangles that can be seen in the upper, right-hand corners of some of the cells are embedded comments about how that particular theme or attribute applied (or to what degree it applied) to a garden group. Once I

completed a chart, I would look for patterns on how themes/attributes hung together and how they were distributed across the garden groups. Eventually, these charts became the basis for the scales and indexes I used to assess group capacity and goal attainment in Chapter 2.

APPENDIX B: COMMUNITY GARDEN GROUP PROFILES

Oakridge Community Garden Group

community, communal garden plots

Original Garden Status as Determined by GrowDirt at the Time of Selection	*Year Founded*	*Host Organization*	*Has/Had Access to Tax-Exempt Status*
Vibrant	2012	Oakridge's Parks and Recreation Department	Yes

How founded and by whom?

Originally the idea of an Oakridge city councilman who was inspired when reading a newspaper article about a new community garden in Greenridge. Oakridge is a bedroom community of Greenridge. The city councilman proposed the idea to the City Council, got their approval, and set up other infrastructure necessary to have a garden on city land.

Mission/Official Goals

1) To provide fresh food for hungry people in the community
2) To increase the quality of life in the community by providing people another way to become connected to/involved in the community

Target Participants and Constituents

Target Participants: The entire city of Oakridge. Anyone from the town (or even outside of it) was welcome to come participate.

Target Constituents: Hungry people in Oakridge who got food at local food banks

Demographics of Community with which Group was Affiliated - Oakridge City Demographics

Total Population:
19,219

Age:
Under 18: 33%
18-64: 56%
65 and over: 11%

Median Household Income:
$55,910

Race/Ethnicity:
White: 76.1%
Black: 19.6%
Asian: 2.0%
Other race/2 or more: 2.7%
Hispanic: 10.7%

Description of Participants

In 2012, when the garden was founded, it had about 10 to 12 people consistently handling the maintenance. That number dwindled quickly to about 5 to 10, with a core group of 3 people doing most of the work.

Livingston Community Garden Group

community, individual garden plots

Original Garden Status as Determined by GrowDirt at the Time of Selection	*Year Founded*	*Host Organization*	*Has/Had Access to Tax-Exempt Status*
Struggling	2012	A local branch of a major hospital system in Greenridge	Yes

How founded and by whom?

The president of a local branch of a large hospital pushed for a community garden group for months until the manager of customer volunteer services for the branch said she would take it on. The manager brought together a committee of community leaders and people she knew had resources to start a garden. This committee founded the garden group.

Mission/Official Goals

1) To provide a place to garden for people who do not have a place to garden at their home

2) To promote preventative health in the community

Target Participants and Constituents

Target Participants: Anyone in Livingston, the bedroom community of Greenridge in which the garden was located; however, anyone who was interested, regardless of whether or not they were from that community, could have a plot

Target Constituents: Those individuals who maintained plots in the garden

Demographics of Community with which Group was Affiliated - Livingston City Demographics

Total Population:
26,626

Age:
Under 18: 26.8%
18-64: 62.7%
65 and over: 10.5%

Median Household Income:
$44,111

Race/Ethnicity:
White: 72.5%
Black: 18.7%
Asian: 2.5%
Other race/2 or more: 6.3%
Hispanic: 17.4%

Description of Participants

The garden group was organized and run administratively by a local hospital's manager of customer and volunteer services. It began in 2012 with 50 plots and had expanded to 78 when I conducted interviews in 2015. Approximately 20 people were active members of the garden, meaning that they maintained their plots throughout the spring and summer season; many people had more than one plot. In 2015, four to five members formed a garden committee to communicate information about the garden back to the administrative leader.

Hillview Community Garden Group

community, communal garden plots

Original Garden Status as Determined by GrowDirt at the Time of Selection	*Year Founded - Year Died*	*Host Organization*	*Has/Had Access to Tax-Exempt Status*
Dead	2011 – 2015	None – the group was an entirely independent entity	Yes

How founded and by whom?

The group was the brainchild of two neighbors who were growing food in their backyards to give away to food pantries in the area. Their gardens got so big that they looked for a bigger place and were given the use, rent-free, of a 5-acre plot of land. One of the two neighbors eventually took it over, and the official establishment and growth of the group into a flourishing nonprofit became his full-time job.

Mission/Official Goals

1) To fight hunger in the community by giving food that is both grown on the organization's farm and rescued from restaurants, grocery stores, and farms to organizations that feed the needy in Greenridge County
2) Teach people how to grow their own food

Target Participants and Constituents

Target Participants: Anyone who was willing to come help – in or outside of Greenridge County or the state

Target Constituents: Hungry people in Greenridge County

Demographics of Community with which Group was Affiliated – Greenridge County Demographics

Total Population:
314,107,084

Age:
Under 18: 26.3%
18-64: 60.0%
65 and over: 13.8%

Median Household Income:
$49,968

Race/Ethnicity:
White: 73.8%
Black: 12.6%
Asian: 5.0%
Other race/2 or more: 6.3%
Hispanic: 8.6%

Description of Participants

The garden's nonprofit had four to five people who volunteered full-time (40 hours per week) to run the organization. The actual garden itself was maintained by people from Greenridge County and all over the country – between 2,500 and 3,000 total from 2011 to 2015. On an average Saturday, the garden would have 20 to 40 volunteers, with several people coming throughout the week as they were able.

St. Eugene Catholic Church Community Garden Group

faith-based, communal garden plots

Original Garden Status as Determined by GrowDirt at the Time of Selection	*Year Founded*	*Host Organization*	*Has/Had Access to Tax-Exempt Status*
Vibrant	2007	A mid-sized church in Greenridge	Yes

How founded and by whom?

The group was founded by a long-time parishioner who saw potential to grow food for those who needed it in an empty space by one of the church's driveways. He recruited a group of women at the church who had an informal gardening club to help him get the group going and maintain the community garden.

Mission/Official Goals

1) To provide fresh food for those who needed it and lived in the neighborhood in which the garden was located

2) To supplement the canned and boxed food handed out each day at the church's food pantry

Target Participants and Constituents

Target Participants: Anyone in the church community or neighborhood who was willing to help

Target Constituents: People who needed access to fresh food in the neighborhood in which the garden was located, and those who were served by the church's food pantry

Demographics of Community with which Group was Affiliated – St. Eugene Demographics

Total Number of Families:
900

Total Number of Members:
1,100

Race/Ethnicity:
White: 55.5%
Black: 30.9%
Hispanic: 13.6%

Age:
N/A

Median Household Income:
N/A

Description of Participants

The garden was maintained by the founder, another leader, and 10 regular volunteers from the church congregation who came and went from week to week as they were available. Other church members helped occasionally, typically only once or twice a year.

Mount Pilgrim Presbyterian Community Garden Group

faith-based, individual garden plots before changing to communal garden plots

Original Garden Status as Determined by GrowDirt at the Time of Selection	*Year Founded*	*Host Organization*	*Has/Had Access to Tax-Exempt Status*
Struggling	2012	A mid-sized church in a bedroom community of Greenridge	Yes

How founded and by whom?

The group was the idea of the pastor, who had a long-time interest in community gardens and thought it would be a good idea for the church to have one. The pastor claimed that church members showed significant interest in and wanted the garden, but every other interviewee described the founding as something that happened because the pastor wanted a community garden.

Mission/Official Goals

The group was not started with a specific mission, although, over time, part of the purpose of the group became to produce food for those who needed it, in and outside of the church community.

Target Participants and Constituents

Target Participants: Church members

Target Constituents: Changed each year, but in general, people in and outside of the church who were in need of food

Demographics of Community with which Group was Affiliated – Mount Pilgrim Presbyterian Demographics

Total Number of Families:
124
Total Number of Members:
367

Race/Ethnicity:
White: 96%
Minority: 4%

Age:
Children under 12 and "Teens": 35%
20s/30s/40s/50s: 53.8%
60 and over: 11.2%

Median Household Income:
N/A

Description of Participants

In 2012, the year it was founded, the garden group had nine to ten church participants, meaning people took ownership of an individual raised bed. By 2015, the then-leader had transformed the garden into one that was communally-maintained, and most of the participants had disappeared. The exodus left the leader to do the vast majority of the maintenance.

Brookdale Presbyterian Community Garden Group

faith-based, individual garden plots

Original Garden Status as Determined by GrowDirt at the Time of Selection	*Year Founded - Year Died*	*Host Organization*	*Has/Had Access to Tax-Exempt Status*
Dead	2011-2013	A very small church (under 50 members) in an outlying area of Greenridge	Yes

How founded and by whom?

The group was founded by the church's pastor who wanted to make use of a vacant plot of land owned by and next to the church. The pastor thought a community garden group would be a good way to connect with the Hispanic/Latino community surrounding the church.

Mission/Official Goals

1) Strengthen the community by providing a safe place for residents to grow fresh vegetables
2) Decrease the food bill of participants
3) Embrace the diversity of the neighborhood
4) Provide educational opportunities for local schools
5) Encourage intergenerational interaction

Target Participants and Constituents

Target Participants: Residents of the outlying area of Greenridge in which in the church was located

Target Constituents: Residents of the outlying area of Greenridge in which in the church was located

Demographics of Community with which Group was Affiliated – Brookdale Presbyterian Demographics

Information unavailable. The pastor of the church – who also founded the garden – said the church was about 20 to 30 older adults, majority white, when he left. When I interviewed the pastor, the church had been inactive for at least a year.

Description of Participants

The garden primarily was maintained by the church pastor (the founder) and one church member. In addition, there was one woman from the geographic area surrounding the garden whose nephew took ownership of a single raised bed.

Glendale Road Neighborhood Garden Group

neighborhood, individual garden plots with communally gardened spaces

Original Garden Status as Determined by GrowDirt at the Time of Selection	*Year Founded*	*Host Organization*	*Has/Had Access to Tax-Exempt Status*
Vibrant	2013	A neighborhood association in one of Greenridge's mill villages	Yes

How founded and by whom?

The group was founded by the leader of one of two neighborhood associations in the mill village. This individual heard about community gardens being founded in other places in Greenridge and thought her neighborhood should have one.

Mission/Official Goals

1) To provide people in the neighborhood an opportunity to connect with each other/bring people together

2) To be a symbol promoting the cohesiveness of the neighborhood

3) To provide food for people who need it

Target Participants and Constituents

Target Participants: Residents of the mill village in which the garden was located

Target Constituents: Those who worked in the garden and people who were served by the food pantry run out of the church on whose property the garden was located

Demographics of Community with which Group was Affiliated – Glendale Road Neighborhood Demographics

Age:
- Under 18: 24.7%
- 18-64: 55.6%
- 65 and over: 19.7%

Median Household Income:
- $26,769

Race/Ethnicity:
- White: 78.6%
- Black: 20.8%
- Asian: 0%
- Other race/2 or more: 0%
- Hispanic: 11.2%

Description of Participants

The founder/leader did the vast majority of the garden maintenance with occasional assistance from three to five other people in the neighborhood. The founder/leader struggled to get these additional people to help, and they only really offered assistance when the founder/leader expressed a need.

Sturgis Neighborhood Garden Group

neighborhood, communal garden plots

Original Garden Status as Determined by GrowDirt at the Time of Selection	*Year Founded*	*Host Organization*	*Has/Had Access to Tax-Exempt Status*
Struggling	2011	Greenridge County's Parks and Recreation Department	Yes

How founded and by whom?

The group was the idea of a former resident of the community who returned to Greenridge after many years spent working out-of-state. This individual was depressed to see her former neighborhood in decline and donated property she still owned for the establishment of a community garden in league with her local city council representative and the Greenridge County Parks and Recreation Department.

Mission/Official Goals

1) To encourage neighborhood revitalization and community engagement

2) To help build a social support network in the neighborhood

3) To provide fresh produce to a neighborhood that was located within a healthy food desert

4) To encourage an active and healthy lifestyle

5) To provide a place for people to grow food who did not have a place available

Target Participants and Constituents

Target Participants: Seniors, young adults, and youth who lived in the neighborhood

Target Constituents: Neighborhood residents and those who worked in the garden

Demographics of Community with which Group was Affiliated – Sturgis Neighborhood Demographics

Age:
- Under 18: 18%
- 18-64: 67%
- 65 and over: 15%

Median Household Income:
- $26,640

Race/Ethnicity:
- White: 28.9%
- Black: 68.8%
- Asian: 0%
- Other race/2 or more: 2.2%
- Hispanic: 0%

Description of Participants

The group was organized administratively by the founder/leader, who also occasionally worked physically to maintain the garden. The founder/leader struggled each year to find someone to take over the maintenance of the garden, and if she was unsuccessful in doing so, the garden was not planted for that season.

Bennett Neighborhood Garden Group

neighborhood, communal garden plots

Original Garden Status as Determined by GrowDirt at the Time of Selection	*Year Founded - Year Died*	*Host Organization*	*Has/Had Access to Tax-Exempt Status*
Dead	2012-2015	Bennett Neighborhood Association	Yes

How founded and by whom?

An elderly resident and his wife who were relatively new to the neighborhood and were interested in trying to revitalize the community suggested the idea of a community garden group at several neighborhood association meetings. The idea never took off until a man with ties to the Greenridge County Redevelopment and Recreation associations became president of the neighborhood association. The new president was able to get Greenridge County to donate the unused land on which the community garden was eventually built.

Mission/Official Goals

1) To provide fresh vegetables for the community

Target Participants and Constituents

Target Participants: Neighborhood residents

Target Constituents: Neighborhood residents

Demographics of Community with which Group was Affiliated – Bennett Neighborhood Demographics

Age:
- Under 18: 30%
- 18-64: 63%
- 65 and over: 8%

Median Household Income:
- $19,118

Race/Ethnicity:
- White: 30%
- Black: 70%
- Asian: 0%
- Other race/2 or more: .6%
- Hispanic: 7.3%

Description of Participants

The only people who participated in the group were the two elderly individuals who founded it and the neighborhood association president.

Nourish Community Garden Group

nonprofit, communal garden plots

Original Garden Status as Determined by GrowDirt at the Time of Selection	*Year Founded*	*Host Organization*	*Has/Had Access to Tax-Exempt Status*
Vibrant	1998	Nourish Community Soup Kitchen and Food Bank	Yes

How founded and by whom?

The Greenridge County Master Gardeners Association* started the garden group at the Nourish Community Soup Kitchen and Food Bank in league with a local hospital system to both: 1) provide more fresh food to Nourish, and 2) provide a place for local Master Gardeners to volunteer the required hours to maintain association membership. As can be seen below, the mission changed by the time I did fieldwork in 2015.

Mission/Official Goals

1) To provide vegetables to enhance the meals made in the soup kitchen

2) To act as a way for people, both students at the culinary school and the general public, to see where food comes from

Target Participants and Constituents

Target Participants: Anyone in Greenridge County, or outside of it, who wanted to come work in the garden

Target Constituents: People who ate at the soup kitchen, students in the afterschool programs served by the soup kitchen, or people who had Nourish's culinary school cater their event

Demographics of Community with which Group was Affiliated – Southside Neighborhood Demographics

Age:
- Under 18: 3.2%
- 18-64: 83.6%
- 65 and over: 13.2%

Median Household Income:
- $20,231

Race/Ethnicity:
- White: 48.2%
- Black: 48.4%
- Asian: 0%
- Other race/2 or more: 0%

Description of Participants

The garden was run administratively and maintained by the Greenridge County Master Gardeners (MGs) from its founding in 1998 until 2012. After 2012, the Executive Director of Nourish was in charge of the garden, recruiting one additional person each year to oversee the garden day-to-day and manage a rotating cast of community members and volunteer groups.

*The Master Gardener program was developed to build a core group of volunteers knowledgeable in horticulture to assist Cooperative Extension agents around the country in providing reliable gardening information to the public. Most states have a Master Gardener program that is offered through a land-grant university. People who complete the program are known as "Master Gardeners."

Greenway Garden Group

nonprofit, communal garden plots

Original Garden Status as Determined by GrowDirt at the Time of Selection	*Year Founded*	*Host Organization*	*Has/Had Access to Tax-Exempt Status*
Struggling	2012	Greenway House	Yes

How founded and by whom?

The group was started by a Christian corporate executive in Greenridge who became interested in sustainability and "creation care" – or the care and stewardship of God's creation. After running a Sunday school program at his church for years, he felt called to do something more concrete than just telling people about sustainability and facilitating conversations. He founded Greenway House and the Greenway Garden Group in the poor, historically Black Milltown neighborhood as a way to show people, particularly low-income individuals, how to live more sustainably.

Mission/Official Goals

1) To be a demonstration site for educating people on a variety of ways to grow their own food and live more sustainably

Target Participants and Constituents

Target Participants: Anyone in Greenridge County, or outside of it, who wanted to come work in the garden

Target Constituents: Residents of low-income communities in Greenridge, particularly those residents of the neighborhood in which the garden was located

Demographics of Community with which Group was Affiliated – Milltown Neighborhood Demographics

Age:
- Under 18: 16.7%
- 18-64: 66.6%
- 65 and over: 16%

Median Household Income:
- $19,704

Race/Ethnicity:
- White: 7.2%
- Black: 84.8%
- Asian: 1%
- Other race/2 or more: 7.2%
- Hispanic: 7.5%

Description of Participants

The garden primarily was maintained by the three people employed by Greenway House, two of whom lived on-site. One of these employees was responsible for recruiting additional volunteers. This person had not been very successful; when Greenway did advertise a volunteer workday where they tried to recruit individuals from the neighborhood and a nearby church, they never had a turnout of more than three to five people.

Hand-in-Hand Community Garden Group

nonprofit, communal garden plots

Original Garden Status as Determined by GrowDirt at the Time of Selection	*Year Founded - Year Died*	*Host Organization*	*Has/Had Access to Tax-Exempt Status*
Dead	2011-2013	A local chapter of a well-recognized national nonprofit organization	Yes

How founded and by whom?

The group was founded as part of a larger grant secured by a local nonprofit to establish a mentoring program for teens aged 14 to 17. The group was one of seven to eight activities the teens and their mentors could do together that would introduce the teens to new skills and ideas.

Mission/Official Goals

1) To act as a community service project that teens and their mentors could do together
2) To help the participating teens take ownership over their health by growing food they could eat
3) To help the participating teens take ownership over their lives by being able to sell their harvest and earn money

Target Participants and Constituents

Target Participants: Teens in the nonprofit's youth mentoring program and residents of the surrounding neighborhood

Target Constituents: Teens in the nonprofit's youth mentoring program, residents of the surrounding neighborhood, and specifically residents at the senior living facility across the street from the garden

Demographics of Community with which Group was Affiliated – Westside Neighborhood Demographics

Age:
- Under 18: 20.6%
- 18-64: 61.2%
- 65 and over: 18.2%

Race/Ethnicity:
- White: 4.6%
- Black: 91.2%
- Asian: 0%
- Other race/2 or more: 4.2%

Median Household Income:
- $14,219

Description of Participants

The manager of the youth mentoring program primarily maintained the garden along with help from a volunteer Master Gardener*. The teens and their mentors would take turns, on a schedule, coming to water the garden during the week. About half of the 120 teens in the program were involved in the garden when it was founded in 2011. That number diminished greatly over time until the garden died in 2013.

*See the bottom of p.81 for a description of the Master Gardener program.

Laurel Road Elementary School Garden Group

school, communal garden plots

Original Garden Status as Determined by GrowDirt at the Time of Selection	*Year Founded*	*Host Organization*	*Has/Had Access to Tax-Exempt Status*
Vibrant	2011	Laurel Road Elementary School	Yes

How founded and by whom?

The group was started by a teacher who taught all of the school's science labs. The same year she started the group, the school lost funding for her position, and she retired. The garden group was taken over immediately by another science teacher who made it the center of a club (the "Green Thumbs") oriented around recycling and learning how to take care of the environment.

Mission/Official Goals

1) To teach students how to "live healthy…recycle…take care of the community…help the environment…[and be] earth friendly" (This was the official mission statement of the Green Thumbs group.)

Target Participants and Constituents

Target Participants: Students (and their parents) who were a part of the Green Thumbs Club

Target Constituents: Students who were a part of the Green Thumbs Club and teachers who wanted to use the garden beds for instruction

Demographics of Community with which Group was Affiliated – Laurel Road Elementary Demographics

School Poverty Index[45]:
57.9%

State Department of Education School Report Card Rating[46]:
Excellent

Race/Ethnicity:
White: 37.4%
Black: 36.8%
Other race/2 or more: 7.4%
Hispanic: 18.3%

Description of Participants

The garden was maintained by the teacher who started and led the Green Thumbs Club with the assistance of a host of parent volunteers who signed up for days to come work in the garden.

[45] In the state in which Greenridge is located, the poverty index for public schools is determined by the percentage of students participating in Medicaid, SNAP, TANF, and/or are homeless, foster, or migrant students.

[46] The possible grades that a school could receive on its state report card include: Excellent, Good, Average, Below Average, and At-Risk. Schools are given a grade based on their progress towards meeting state performance standards in testing.

Arnold Academy School Garden Group

school, communal garden plots

Original Garden Status as Determined by GrowDirt at the Time of Selection	*Year Founded*	*Host Organization*	*Has/Had Access to Tax-Exempt Status*
Struggling	2011	Arnold Academy	Yes

How founded and by whom?

The group was founded by the school's first director of programs right after the school was built (the school opened in the fall of 2010). The director of programs wanted to create an outdoor learning environment that would create real-world opportunities for students to apply their classroom knowledge.

Mission/Official Goals

1) To teach students how the physical world works

2) To help students become more connected to the outside world

Target Participants and Constituents

Target Participants: Parents of students who attended the school and community groups looking for volunteer opportunities

Target Constituents: Students at Arnold Academy

Demographics of Community with which Group was Affiliated – Arnold Academy Demographics

School Poverty Index:
60.8%

State Department of Education
School Report Card Rating:
Excellent

Race/Ethnicity:
White: 30%
Black: 52%
Other race/2 or more: 11.6%
Hispanic: 6.5%

Description of Participants

During the summer months, the school's director of programs maintained the garden (or failed to) singlehandedly. During the academic year, the director of programs required each class in the school to give her 45 minutes of work once a year. What did not get done by the classes was completed by the Director of Programs, by outside volunteers who she recruited to help her, or by a "yard" man that she occasionally paid.

Bramlett Elementary School Garden Group

school, communal garden plots

Original Garden Status as Determined by GrowDirt at the Time of Selection	*Year Founded - Year Died*	*Host Organization*	*Has/Had Access to Tax-Exempt Status*
Dead	2010-2013	Bramlett Elementary School	Yes

How founded and by whom?

The principal at Bramlett Elementary was contacted by someone from a local nonprofit dedicated to educating the Greenridge community about the benefits of eating local and organic food. This nonprofit wanted to start a garden group at the school, one of many it was starting at schools around Greenridge County at the time. The nonprofit's initiative partially was funded by the local cooperative extension agency with the aim of reducing the incidence of childhood obesity and diabetes by changing eating habits. The nonprofit built the raised beds and provided training to the person at the school who would run the garden.

Mission/Official Goals

1) To help children learn about good nutrition and improve their eating habits

2) To encourage children to protect and be good stewards of the environment

Target Participants and Constituents

Target Participants: None – the afterschool director managed the majority of the garden by herself

Target Constituents: Students in the afterschool program at Bramlett, grades K4-8th

Demographics of Community with which Group was Affiliated – Bramlett Elementary Demographics

School Poverty Index:
44.6%

State Department of Education
School Report Card Rating:
Excellent

Race/Ethnicity:
White: 35.4%
Black: 49.7%
Other race/2 or more: 11.3%
Hispanic: 3.6%

Description of Participants

The garden was maintained almost entirely by the afterschool director.

Human Teach Community Garden Group

workspace, communal garden plots

Original Garden Status as Determined by GrowDirt at the Time of Selection	*Year Founded*	*Host Organization*	*Has/Had Access to Tax-Exempt Status*
Vibrant	2013	A medical school housed within a hospital system in Greenridge County	Yes

How founded and by whom?

Human Teach is a medical school in Greenridge County that was founded in 2012. The garden group on campus was the brainchild of a medical student in the school's first cohort who read an article about a hospital that partially was feeding its patients from a rooftop garden. This article, combined with the self-reported unhealthy food in the hospital cafeteria, inspired the student to pitch the idea of a community garden to the school's dean, who helped her get support to build it from the hospital's facilities services department.

Mission/Official Goals

1) To be a way for students to de-stress from studying and working in the hospital
2) To promote community cohesion among the students and faculty by unifying them with a common goal
3) To provide an opportunity for the medical students to explore and practice the principles behind nutrition and exercise that they teach to their patients

Target Participants and Constituents

Target Participants: Students and faculty at the medical school

Target Constituents: Originally supposed to be "needy communities" in Greenridge County, but instead was narrowed to anyone who wanted to partake, particularly medical students, faculty, and hospital staff

Demographics of Community with which Group was Affiliated – Human Teach Demographics

Information unavailable

Description of Participants

The garden primarily was maintained by the student garden group faculty advisor and three to four student leaders who changed each year as each progressed through school. A handful of other students and faculty assisted sporadically, mainly when the garden had a planting day each season. During interviews, the faculty and student leaders expressed their struggle to recruit consistent participation.

Lightyear Technologies Community Garden Group

workspace, communal garden plots

Original Garden Status as Determined by GrowDirt at the Time of Selection	*Year Founded*	*Host Organization*	*Has/Had Access to Tax-Exempt Status*
Struggling	2012	Headquarters of a large, multinational corporation	No

How founded and by whom?

The group was started by the facilities manager who wanted to build it in order to gain points towards earning a LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) Gold certification for the headquarters building from the United States Green Building Council.

Mission/Official Goals

1) To promote and teach healthy living to the employees
2) To provide another opportunity for employees to come together and get to know people they otherwise would not interact with at the company
3) To be an on-site, stress-relieving/therapeutic activity for employees

Target Participants and Constituents

Target Participants: Any Lightyear Technologies employee

Target Constituents: Any Lightyear Technologies employee

Demographics of Community with which Group was Affiliated – Lightyear Technologies Demographics

Information unavailable

Description of Participants

The garden was maintained by 25 to 30 people its first year. However, according to the founder, that number was down to 10 in 2015 when I conducted interviews, with other participants both past and present reporting only about two to three active participants.

ID Sales Corporation Community Garden Group

workspace, communal garden plots

Original Garden Status as Determined by GrowDirt at the Time of Selection	*Year Founded - Year Died*	*Host Organization*	*Has/Had Access to Tax-Exempt Status*
Dead	2012-2014	Headquarters of a large, international corporation	No

How founded and by whom?

The group was the idea of the director of human resources and the director of facilities. They sent a company-wide email to recruit people who would be interested in working a community garden, the harvest of which would be donated to food banks. Those who were interested formed a committee which planned, planted, and maintained the garden.

Mission/Official Goals

1) To be another volunteer opportunity for company employees who were looking for ways to give back to the community

2) To produce food for needy people in Greenridge County

Target Participants and Constituents

Target Participants: Any ID Sales Corporation employee

Target Constituents: Hungry people in Greenridge County

Demographics of Community with which Group was Affiliated – ID Sales Corporation Demographics

Age:
- Under 30: 29.7%
- 30-54: 60.7%
- 55 and over: 9.6%

Gender:
- Male: 49.4%
- Female: 50.6%

Race/Ethnicity:
- White: 90.4%
- Black: 4.5%
- Asian: 1.6%
- Other race/2 or more: 0.89%
- Hispanic: 2.7%

Description of Participants

Ten to twelve people responded to the original interest email sent by the company's director of facilities. These people were from different departments in the company (e.g. sales, merchandise, etc.). However, only the three people from the facilities department ended up truly maintaining the garden.

APPENDIX C: DETAILS ON ANALYSIS OF GARDEN GROUP INTERNAL CAPACITY IN COMPARISON TO OVERALL GOAL ATTAINMENT

This appendix contains a detailed explanation of the reasons behind each rating of the degree of internal capacity present in the 12 active community garden groups presented in Table 2.4 and discussed in Chapter 2. The first two pages of this appendix are simply a reproduction of Table 2.3 in Chapter 2, presented here for reference when interpreting the assignment of ratings.

Resources *(scale: 0-2)*	0 = The garden group **did not have** all the material resources it needed to maintain a healthy community garden. The garden did not acquire any external grants, nor was it the recipient of significant donations. 1 = The garden group **had** all of the material resources it needed to maintain a healthy community garden. The garden did not acquire any external grants, nor was it the recipient of significant donations. 2 = The garden group **had** all of the material resources it needed to maintain a healthy community garden. In addition, garden leaders successfully acquired grants for non-necessary garden projects and/or were the recipients of significant donations outside of startup donations of wood, soil, and seeds.
Internal Group Structure *(5-item index)*	› had explicitly written rules of behavior for participants (e.g. a list of guidelines for participation) › had somewhat of a hierarchy of authority (e.g. the authority structure was more complicated than leader versus everyone else) › had a formal mission statement › was incorporated, in itself, as a 501(c)3 (i.e. wasn't just associated with a larger organization that had 501(c)3 status) › had one or more paid staff whose job included helping manage and run the group
Sociopolitical Legitimacy *(5-item index)*	› was covered in local media (newspapers, magazines, blog posts, etc.) › was featured as a site visit on the annual local urban farm and garden tour › had received honorary awards for its work › was affiliated officially with GrowDirt (was listed on GrowDirt's website) › was mentioned by other interviewees in this study

Participation *(scale 0-4)*	The physical community garden was… 0 = maintained almost entirely by the leader(s) alone. 1 = maintained by the leader(s) with inconsistent help from other participants the leader struggled to recruit. 2 = maintained by the leader(s) with consistent help from two to three other people; however, the leader(s) had expectations for more involvement and expressed a need for, but struggled to recruit, more participants. 3 = maintained by the leader(s) with consistent help from one to two others and an active, rotating base of volunteers. 4 = organized by the leader(s) but maintained mostly by participants.

Oakridge Community Garden Group (2012-present)

community, communal plots

Resources *(scale: 0-2)*

Rating: 2

The garden group had all of the material resources it needed to maintain a healthy community garden. In addition, the group received significant donations from a local big box home improvement store.

Internal Group Structure *(5-item index)*

Rating: 1

The garden group had a formal mission statement that was clearly visible on the large sign that identified the garden from the road.

Sociopolitical Legitimacy *(5-item index)*

Rating: 2

The garden group had been covered in the local media and officially was affiliated with GrowDirt.

Participation *(scale 0-4)*

Rating: 2

In 2012, when the garden was founded, it had about 10 to 12 people consistently maintaining it. That number dwindled quickly to about 5 to 10, with a core group of 3 people doing most of the work. During interviews, the core volunteers expressed their frustration with the lack of participation and their lack of success in recruiting more help.

Group Effectiveness *(scale: 0-4)*

Overall Rating: 2

Operative Goals Scale Rating: 0

The garden was maintained inconsistently, cycling through periods of activity and inactivity depending on the availability of the leader.

Official Goals Scale Rating: 2

When the garden was active and being maintained, it seemed effective. According to the community leader, hundreds of pounds of produce were given to a local food bank the first year of the group's existence.

Livingston Community Garden Group (2012-present)

community, individual plots

Resources *(scale: 0-2)*

Rating: 1

The group had all of the material resources it needed to maintain a healthy community garden. The group's needs were supplied by the sponsoring hospital system or by donations from the local big box home improvement store.

Internal Group Structure *(5-item index)*

Rating: 3

The garden group was run administratively by the sponsoring hospital's manager of customer and volunteer services (a paid position), but on a day-to-day basis, it was run by a group of participants who formed a garden committee. The committee ran all decisions they made through the manager of customer and volunteer services (hierarchy of authority). In addition, the group had a written document of rules that each participant had to sign.

Sociopolitical Legitimacy *(5-item index)*

Rating: 2

The garden group had been covered in the local media and officially was affiliated with GrowDirt.

Participation *(scale 0-4)*

Rating: 4

The garden group was organized and run administratively by a local hospital's manager of customer and volunteer services. It began in 2012 with 50 plots and had expanded to 78 when I conducted interviews in 2015. Approximately 20 people were active members of the garden, meaning that they maintained their plots throughout the spring and summer season; many people had more than one plot. In 2015, four to five members formed a garden committee to communicate information about the garden back to the administrative leader.

Group Effectiveness *(scale: 0-4)*

Overall Rating: 4

Operative Goals Scale Rating: 2

The garden consistently was maintained and planted each season.

Official Goals Scale Rating: 2

Simply by existing and being maintained, the garden provided a place to grow vegetables for people who did not have one. As to the degree to which it promoted a healthy lifestyle – many of the people I interviewed mentioned physical health as one of the reasons why they participated. Moreover, the garden had good exposure in the community through regular articles documenting its activities in the local, online newspaper.

St. Eugene Catholic Church Community Garden Group (2007-present)

faith-based, communal plots

Resources *(scale: 0-2)*

Rating: 2

The garden group had all of the material resources it needed to maintain a healthy garden. In addition, one of the core volunteers had been successful at securing small grants over the years to pay for certain things like shelving for the toolshed.

Internal Group Structure *(5-item index)*

Rating: 0

The garden group had no formal structure. For example, while it had a clear goal of growing food for those who were hungry in the surrounding community, the group never articulated that goal in a formal mission statement.

Sociopolitical Legitimacy *(5-item index)*

Rating: 5

The garden group had been covered by the local media and officially was affiliated with GrowDirt. In addition, the founder received a local award for his work with the garden, other interviewees mentioned the St. Eugene's garden as one of which they were aware, and the garden was featured three times on the annual, local, urban farm and garden tour.

Participation *(scale 0-4)*

Rating: 3

The garden was maintained by the two founders/current leaders who worked there weekly, and 10 regular volunteers from the church congregation who came and went from week to week as they were available. Other church members would volunteer once or twice and not again.

Group Effectiveness *(scale: 0-4)*

Overall Rating: 4

Operative Goals Scale Rating: 2

The garden consistently was maintained and planted each season.

Official Goals Scale Rating: 2

The garden itself was extremely productive. Food from the garden regularly supplemented the church's food pantry (during all seasons), and I heard numerous reports of people who lived in the neighborhood surrounding the church coming to pick produce from the garden.

Mount Pilgrim Presbyterian Community Garden Group (2012-2015)

faith-based, individual garden plots before changing to communal garden plots

Resources *(scale: 0-2)*

Rating: 1

The garden group had all of the material resources it needed to maintain a healthy garden.

Internal Group Structure *(5-item index)*

Rating: 1

The garden group had explicitly stated rules of behavior that participants were supposed to sign.

Sociopolitical Legitimacy *(5-item index)*

Rating: 1

The garden group officially was affiliated with GrowDirt.

Participation *(scale 0-4)*

Rating: 1

In 2012, the year it was founded, the garden group had 9 to 10 church members participate, each taking ownership of an individual plot. By 2015, the garden was communally maintained and the participants had disappeared, leaving the leader(s) – who changed from year to year – to do the vast majority of maintenance.

Group Effectiveness *(scale: 0-4)*

Overall Rating: 1

Operative Goals Scale Rating: 0

The garden was maintained inconsistently, and was passed from leader to leader as each person got burned out.

Official Goals Scale Rating: 1

When active, the garden did produce enough harvest to occasionally supplement the stores of a local food crisis ministry. However, from what I gathered talking to the food crisis ministry staff, the contributions from the garden were far from regular and were never large enough to make any sort of meaningful impact.

Glendale Road Neighborhood Garden Group (2013-present)

neighborhood, individual and communal garden plots

Resources *(scale: 0-2)*

Rating: 1

The garden group had all of the material resources it needed to maintain a healthy garden. The founder never was able to secure grant money for garden projects, although she did receive small donations for the garden (seeds, soil, etc.).

Internal Group Structure *(5-item index)*

Rating: 0

The garden group had no formal structure. A couple of interviewees mentioned the leader treating it like her own, personal garden.

Sociopolitical Legitimacy *(5-item index)*

Rating: 3

The garden group received coverage in the local media, officially was affiliated with GrowDirt. and was featured twice on the annual, local, urban farm and garden tour.

Participation *(scale 0-4)*

Rating: 1

The founder/leader did the vast majority of garden maintenance with occasional assistance from three to five other people in the neighborhood. The founder/leader struggled to get these additional people to help, and they only offered assistance when the founder/leader expressed a need.

Group Effectiveness *(scale: 0-4)*

Overall Rating: 2

Operative Goals Scale Rating: 1

The garden often was not planted and/or was full of weeds.

Official Goals Scale Rating: 1

The garden did produce food, some of which, according to the founder, went to a church food pantry. However, the garden was not set up to produce enough food to feed more than two or three people. In terms of building community connectivity and cohesion, the founder and her co-leader were wary of inviting people in the neighborhood they did not know to join. Moreover, a couple of people who did join left because of the overbearing nature of the founder. Over five to six site visits, I never saw anyone else there besides the founder.

Sturgis Neighborhood Garden Group (2011-present)

neighborhood, communal garden plots

Resources *(scale: 0-2)*

Rating: 2

The garden group had all of the material resources it needed to maintain a healthy garden. The founder secured a large donation to fence in the back of the garden (>$3,000).

Internal Group Structure *(5-item index)*

Rating: 0

The garden group had no formal structure.

Sociopolitical Legitimacy *(5-item index)*

Rating: 4

The garden group received a lot of coverage in the local media, and it officially was affiliated with GrowDirt. In addition, the garden was mentioned by other interviewees in a positive way, and the founder received an award for her work with the garden.

Participation *(scale 0-4)*

Rating: 1

The land on which the garden was located was owned by the founder/leader, who also occasionally ran the group administratively and worked physically to maintain the garden. The founder/leader struggled each year to find someone to take over the maintenance of the garden, and if she was unsuccessful in doing so, the garden was not planted for that season.

Group Effectiveness *(scale: 0-4)*

Overall Rating: 1

Operative Goals Scale Rating: 0

The garden was maintained irregularly, planted some seasons and not others.

Official Goals Scale Rating: 1

When active, the garden did provide fresh produce to the neighborhood residents. Past volunteers said that although they never harvested the food, it always disappeared between their shifts of working in the garden. The garden did not meet any of its other goals.

Nourish Community Garden Group (1998-present)

nonprofit, communal garden plots

Resources *(scale: 0-2)*

Rating: 2

The garden group had more than it needed to materially sustain a healthy community garden. Additionally, the group secured thousands of dollars each year in material and financial donations.

Internal Group Structure *(5-item index)*

Rating: 2

The garden group was run administratively by the executive director of the organization that sponsored and benefited from the garden's produce (paid staff). In addition, the executive director formally hired or had a full-time volunteer who acted as the day-to-day garden manager (hierarchy of authority).

Sociopolitical Legitimacy *(5-item index)*

Rating: 4

The garden group was extremely well known and respected in Greenridge. Many of my other interviewees pointed to it as an example of a long-lasting, successful community garden. The garden was covered extensively in the local media, featured on the annual, local, urban farm and garden tour, and was affiliated officially with GrowDirt.

Participation *(scale 0-4)*

Rating: 3

The garden was run administratively and maintained by the Greenridge County Master Gardeners (MGs) from its founding in 1998 until 2012. After 2012, the executive director of Nourish was in charge of the group, recruiting one additional person each year to oversee the garden day-to-day and manage a rotating cast of community members and volunteer groups. The executive director discussed how she never had a hard time finding community members or volunteer groups to work in the garden when she needed help.

Group Effectiveness *(scale: 0-4)*

Overall Rating: 4

Operative Goals Scale Rating: 2

The garden consistently was maintained and planted each season.

Official Goals Scale Rating: 2

The garden regularly provided vegetables to the soup kitchen for daily meals and for special fundraising dinners hosted in the soup kitchen's dining hall. As far as helping people learn where food comes from, the group hosted a number of volunteers who, during the course of their work, would get to see "where food comes from." Nourish also had open community dinners once-a-month, and according to the founder/leader, guests often went back to tour around the garden before or after dinner.

Greenway Garden Group (2012-present)

nonprofit, communal garden plots

Resources *(scale: 0-2)*

Rating: 1

The garden group did not have all of the material resources it needed to sustain itself. The executive director of the host organization did not have experience writing grants and had not been successful at acquiring the money needed to fund the organization and the garden group. This was despite the fact that, especially early on, he had been successful in acquiring significant grants and donations to cover start-up costs.

Internal Group Structure *(5-item index)*

Rating: 4

The garden group was a legally incorporated 501(c)3 organization with a board of directors, executive director, and at least two employees. In addition, it had a formal mission statement.

Sociopolitical Legitimacy *(5-item index)*

Rating: 0

Despite the fact that the host organization was undertaking an ambitious project in demonstrating sustainability techniques in a low-income neighborhood, it received almost no coverage in the local media. The garden group also was not affiliated officially with GrowDirt.

Participation *(scale 0-4)*

Rating: 2

The garden primarily was maintained by the people employed by Greenway House, two of whom lived on-site. One of these employees was responsible for recruiting additional volunteers. This person had not been very successful; when Greenway did advertise a volunteer workday where they tried to recruit individuals from the neighborhood and a nearby church, they never had a turnout of more than three to five people.

Group Effectiveness *(scale: 0-4)*

Overall Rating: 2

Operative Goals Scale Rating: 2

The garden consistently was maintained and planted each season.

Official Goals Scale Rating: 0

Although the garden had not been fully implemented on the site chosen for it, neighborhood residents could have been learning how to build and begin to maintain a garden. However, very few people from the neighborhood came to volunteer or learn about how to garden.

Laurel Road Elementary School Garden Group (2011-present)

school, communal garden plots

Resources *(scale: 0-2)*

Rating: 1

The garden group had all of the material resources it needed to maintain a healthy garden.

Internal Group Structure *(5-item index)*

Rating: 1

The garden was led by a science teacher who, while not formally paid for the extra work she did for the garden, agreed to take it on as part of her job.

Sociopolitical Legitimacy *(5-item index)*

Rating: 1

The second leader of the garden was profiled in the local newspaper for her work with the garden group.

Participation *(scale 0-4)*

Rating: 3

The garden primarily was maintained by the teacher who started and led the Green Thumbs Club, with the assistance of a host of parent volunteers who signed up for days to come work in the garden.

Group Effectiveness *(scale: 0-4)*

Overall Rating: 4

Operative Goals Scale Rating: 2

The garden consistently was maintained.

Official Goals Scale Rating: 2

The garden was utilized once every week by the students in the Green Thumbs Club. The club became so popular that the leader reported getting more than double the number of student applications than she could accept each year.

Arnold Academy School Garden Group (2011-present)

school, communal garden plots

Resources *(scale: 0-2)*

Rating: 2

The garden group had all of the material resources it needed to maintain a healthy garden. In addition, the group had received grants in the past for special projects, including a recycled bottle greenhouse and new raised beds.

Internal Group Structure *(5-item index)*

Rating: 1

Maintaining the garden was part of the official responsibilities of Arnold Academy's director of programs. This was the only aspect of the group that was formalized.

Sociopolitical Legitimacy *(5-item index)*

Rating: 4

The group was featured on the annual, local, urban farm and garden tour in 2012, was mentioned by other interviewees as a school garden that they had heard of, was mentioned in news articles related to the school (including one in *The Atlantic*), and officially was affiliated with GrowDirt.

Participation *(scale 0-4)*

Rating: 2

During the summer months, the school's director of programs maintained the garden (or failed to) singlehandedly. During the academic year, the director of programs required each class in the school to give her 45 minutes of work once a year. What did not get done by the classes was completed by the director of programs, by outside volunteers who she recruited to help her, or by a "yard" man she occasionally paid. The director of programs expressed during an interview how difficult it was to get enough volunteers to help her maintain the garden.

Group Effectiveness *(scale: 0-4)*

Overall Rating: 3

Operative Goals Scale Rating: 1

The garden consistently was maintained, but this was only because the leader occasionally hired a "yard" man to help her clean it up.

Official Goals Scale Rating: 2

By requiring each class to come work in the garden 45 minutes a year, and by helping teachers to incorporate the garden into lesson plans, the director of programs was able to encourage use of the garden to help students learn about the natural world and get outside.

Human Teach Community Garden Group (2013-present)

workspace, communal garden plots

Resources *(scale: 0-2)*

Rating: 1

The garden group had all of the material resources it needed to maintain a healthy garden.

Internal Group Structure *(5-item index)*

Rating: 3

The garden group was overseen by a member of the school's faculty (paid position). Each year, the group elected officers – president, vice president, and secretary (hierarchy of authority). The group also had a formal mission statement.

Sociopolitical Legitimacy *(5-item index)*

Rating: 2

The garden group was featured as a site visit during a local farm to school conference held in Greenridge, and it was affiliated officially with GrowDirt.

Participation *(scale 0-4)*

Rating: 2

The garden primarily was maintained by the student garden group faculty advisor and three to four student leaders who changed each year as each progressed through school. A handful of other students and faculty assisted sporadically, mainly when the garden had a planting day each season. During interviews, the faculty and student leaders expressed their struggle to recruit consistent participation.

Group Effectiveness *(scale: 0-4)*

Overall Rating: 2

Operative Goals Scale Rating: 1

The garden mostly was maintained, but the faculty advisor struggled to get students to help her do the maintenance work.

Official Goals Scale Rating: 1

The group was meeting very few of the goals set forth by the founder when it was started. Namely, so few students participated that the garden did not help build community cohesion. In fact, according to the founder, many students saw the garden as her "thing" rather than something for which they, as a student body, were responsible. Also, to my knowledge, students never used it as a way to practice the principles of nutrition and exercise that they taught to patients.

Lightyear Technologies Community Garden Group (2012-present)

workspace, communal garden plots

Resources *(scale: 0-2)*

Rating: 1

The garden group had all of the material resources it needed to maintain a healthy garden.

Internal Group Structure *(5-item index)*

Rating: 1

The garden group's leader appointed volunteers each year to oversee different sections of the garden (peppers, herbs, tomatoes, etc.) and manage the volunteers for their section. Each of the section heads were under the overall authority of the group's leader, the organization's facilities manager.

Sociopolitical Legitimacy *(5-item index)*

Rating: 1

The garden group was affiliated officially with GrowDirt.

Participation *(scale 0-4)*

Rating: 2

The garden was maintained by 25 to 30 people its first year. However, according to the founder, that number was down to 10 in 2015 when I conducted interviews, with other participants both past and present reporting only about two to three current active participants. The leader expressed a desire for more participation during our interview.

Group Effectiveness *(scale: 0-4)*

Overall Rating: 1

Operative Goals Scale Rating: 0

The garden was planted every season but not consistently maintained due to a struggle to get volunteers.

Official Goals Scale Rating: 1

Almost no one worked in the garden, so it never built community among employees. Additionally, it was not taken advantage of as an on-site stress-relieving activity. However, some people who worked in it did report starting their own gardens at home, so it somewhat promoted healthy living and sustainability.

APPENDIX D: INTERVIEW AND SITE VISIT GUIDES

IN-DEPTH INTERVIEW GUIDES

Table D.1 below lists the topics and questions that structured my in-depth interviews. While this table details many questions, I did not always ask all of them. Instead, I structured the interviews themselves around larger, topical questions like "tell me how the garden got started," instead of "how did you decide on the garden location, and who was involved?" By using the types of probes I provide below, I was able to elicit rich descriptions of garden history and usage that touched on the topics I enumerate in detail in the table without having to actually ask each specific question. However, this list of questions should give a sense of the material covered during most interviews.

In addition, although I remained open to all factors that might have shaped the ability of groups to achieve their goals, I began this study with the belief that goal attainment was most related to the success of leaders in building group capacity. As such, I structured many of my interview questions around understanding the four types of group capacity that were, according to the literature, most likely to impact group goal attainment: 1) material resources, 2) internal group structure, 3) sociopolitical legitimacy, and 4) participation. I marked which questions corresponded with which types of capacity using color-coordinated boxes. A key to the colors is at the beginning of the table.

GENERAL PROBES[47]

- Can you tell me more about that?
- Can you give me an example?
- What do you mean by _____?
- What do you mean when you say _____?
- Can you talk more/tell me more about _____?
- Why do you think that happened?
- And what did you think about that?
- Who is _____? Can you tell me more about him/her?
- How did you feel? What did you do next?
- And what did you do in response?
- How do you think that impacted you?
- Did you talk to anyone about it?
- How did _____ respond?

[47] Language is borrowed from the dissertation proposals of Jordan Radke, Sarah Gaby, and Jonathan Horowitz.

› Who did you talk to about that? What did he/she say?

Table D.1: Interview Guides

Key

light blue box = goal attainment

green box = material resources

dark blue box = internal group structure

yellow box = sociopolitical legitimacy

pink box = participation

- An X indicates that I asked this question to the interviewee.
- A "?" next to an X in the table below indicates that I only asked this question of the interviewee if it was or seemed relevant to his/her experience.

Questions, by Topic	Respondent Type: Garden Founder	Garden Leader	Core Participant	Occasional Participant	Non-Participant Constituent	Community Leader
Identification/Background questions						
› How long have you been a member of the community? Can you tell me about your history in the community? › Do you have any prior experience with gardening and community gardening, in particular?	X	X	X	X	X	X
Garden founding/creation (*Will ask these questions of the leader and core volunteer if they were around for the founding of the garden*)						
› Tell me about how the garden got started.	X	X?	X?			
› How was the location decided on? › Who was involved, and how were they involved? (*Specifically, I would like to know how many members the garden had when it started*). › Did you model the garden on any other gardens? Which ones? › Who participated in the garden originally? Can you describe them? › What did people in the community think about the idea? › What was it like during those first days of starting the garden? › When was the garden started? (*I'm looking for season (fall, winter, spring summer) and year – e.g. fall 2010*). › Was part of the founding process to register and incorporate as a 501(c)3? If so, can you tell me about that process? (*Will ask only if they do not bring it up themselves*).	X	X?	X?			
What the garden is like now (*will ask of the founder if the founder is still involved*)						

› What is the mission or purpose of the garden?	X?	X	X			
›	**Garden Founder**	**Garden Leader**	**Core Participant**	**Occasional Participant**	**Non-Participant Constituent**	**Community Leader**
› In what ways, if any, has the garden changed over time? ○ Has the involvement of the community with the garden changed over time, or has it not changed? In what way(s)?	X?	X?	X?			
› How would you describe the structure of the garden – how is it set up?	X?	X	X	X		
› How does stuff get done in the garden? Who does what in the garden? E.g. water, weed, mow the lawn, amend beds, harvest, etc.	X?	X	X	X		
› Are there any regular workdays or meetings? Any coming up that I could attend? ○ Describe what a "good" workday/meeting looks like versus a "bad" or not particularly good workday/meeting.	X?	X	X	X?		
› Are there or have there been any events held at the garden that weren't or aren't related to working on it? For example, a community picnic. What are they? Who comes? Can you describe some for me?	X?	X	X	X?		
› How many people come to the garden for whatever reason (to work, play, etc.), in an average week? Who are they? What do they do? Is there anyone you would like to see come who isn't coming?	X?	X	X			
› What do you seek to accomplish each season in and through the garden? At the end of each season when you look back at it, what qualifies as a good season versus a bad or not particularly good season?	X?	X	X			
› Who, in your opinion, leads the garden, if any one person?	X		X	X	X	X
› Are there any times you have described the garden to someone who wasn't a part of it/didn't know about it? How did you/do you describe it?	X	X	X	X	X	X
› Have you seen the garden? What do you make of it? What is your overall impression?					X	X
Questions about garden involvement/role in the garden (*will only ask the founder if s/he is still involved*)						
› When did you first hear about the garden? (*If the interviewee was involved in the garden's founding, I may have already asked them about it, above*).		X	X	X	X	X
› Describe your involvement in the garden. What do you do in/with the garden?	X	X	X	X		
› Can you describe your interactions with the garden? Have you interacted with it at all? In what capacity?						X

› Have you ever helped the garden get something that it needs (e.g. money, tools, etc.)? If so, can you describe one of those times when you helped fill a need?	X	X	X	X		X
› Have you thought about joining the garden? Tell me about that.					X	X
	Garden Founder	**Garden Leader**	**Core Participant**	**Occasional Participant**	**Non-Participant Constituent**	**Community Leader**
Questions specific to the garden leader						
› How did you become the/a leader?		X				
› What does it mean to you to be a leader in the garden? What do you do as a leader?		X				
› Can you describe an example of when you acted as a leader?		X				
Garden effectiveness						
› What do you think is the purpose of the garden? Do you think that the garden is effective? *(Have the interviewee describe what they mean when they say they do or don't think the garden is effective. Will do this by asking them to give specific examples that support their opinion*).	X	X	X	X	X	X
› Why do you think the garden is effective or not effective? (*Here, I am seeking to get the common story that is told about the garden to other communities, to Gardening for Good, etc.*)	X	X	X	X	X	X
› If you were to picture the garden as doing really well in 2-3 years, what would it look like? What would be going on?	X	X	X	X		
› How much money does it take to keep the garden going each season? Where does the money come from? › What other things does the garden need to keep it going each season? › Does the garden have everything it needs right now to keep going? Why or why not?		X	X			
› Are there gardens that you think are doing really well that you look to or have looked to in the past, or no? If yes, can you describe them for me? Why do you think they are doing really well?		X	X			
› What kinds of struggles has the garden had, if any? Can you describe some of them for me?	X	X	X	X		X
› Are/were there any times when you were frustrated/angry/annoyed at anything in relation to the garden? What was it?	X	X	X	X	X	X
› What has been the garden's greatest success(es), in your opinion?	X	X	X	X		X
› If another (*neighborhood, church, nonprofit, community, school, workplace*) was starting a garden, what would you want them to know?	X	X	X	X		

› ☐What is your sense of how people in the community think about the garden? Can you give me an example? How do you know?	X	X	X	X	X	X
	Garden Founder	**Garden Leader**	**Core Participant**	**Occasional Participant**	**Non-Participant Constituent**	**Community Leader**
Documenting specific garden characteristics						
› Are there any formal documents associated with the garden that you have access to? For example, a list of rules, lists of members, a mission statement, anything like that?[48] ○ If yes, would you mind sharing them with me? ○ If yes, can you tell me about when these documents were created?	X	X	X			
○ If yes, how are each of these documents used?	X	X	X			
› Do you have access to any documents/flyers/emails/etc. used to tell people about the garden? Are you willing to share those with me?[49]	X	X	X	X		X
› ☐Has the garden ever had contact or worked with folks from any other garden in Greenville? If yes, which ones? Can you tell me about that experience? › ☐Has the garden ever had contact or worked with folks from any other organizations in Greenville? If yes, which ones? Can you tell me about that experience?	X	X	X	X		
› ☐☐Who are some of the people and/or organizations who have been most supportive of the garden? What have they done/what do they do? How did they get involved?	X	X	X			
Open-ended wrap-up questions						
› What else should I know about the garden? › What else should I know about the community? › Are there any other things I didn't ask you about today that I should have or that you were expecting me to ask about?	X	X	X	X	X	X
Linking to other contacts for future interviews						
› Who else, if anybody, do you think I should be talking to?	X	X	X	X	X	X

[48] I have a written document release form that I will ask the interviewee to sign if they agree to let me view documents/emails/etc. for content analysis.

[49] ibid.

› Who is one of the main leaders of the garden?	X		X	X		X
› Can you identify a volunteer or member who you would consider to be a regular or strong part of the garden that might be interested in meeting with me?	X	X				
› What about an occasional volunteer, or someone who only has come once?	X	X	X			
	Garden Founder	**Garden Leader**	**Core Participant**	**Occasional Participant**	**Non-Participant Constituent**	**Community Leader**
› What about a leader in this community who would be good to chat with about things going on in the community?	X	X	X	X	X	
› Can you tell me the names of other organizations and initiatives in the community that you are aware of? Including churches, other community organizations/associations, prominent businesses that play a role in community life, sports leagues, etc. I'm trying to get a picture of the whole community.	X	X	X	X	X	X

SITE VISIT OBSERVATION GUIDE

I conducted site visits to document characteristics of each of the gardens. Below is the list of garden characteristics I made note of during each visit:

- Number of garden beds
- Raised or in-ground beds, or a combination of the two
- Arrangement of beds
- Water access - how easy is the access?
- Whether it has a place to store tools and other equipment
- Availability of restrooms
- Existence of an irrigation system
- Whether there is a fence surrounding the garden
- Whether people were in the garden
- Presence of people around the garden location (walking by on sidewalks, etc.)
- Quality of surroundings (e.g. if in a neighborhood, quality of the homes, existence of sidewalks, etc.)
- Location of garden in reference to location of target participants

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