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Community Gardens as a Vehicle for Community Development: A Case Study of Orti Urbani di San Matteo degli Armeni Community Garden

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ABSTRACT

Community gardens are present in many nations and in both urban and rural settings. Local needs determine what each garden offers, whether that be open, public space or inexpensive vegetables for a local community. With the rise in urbanization and consequent land scarcity, the demand for these gardens seems to be increasing (Guitart et al., 2012). These urban agriculture initiatives create benefits for both individuals and their community, including benefits to food security, human health, the local ecology, and social capital, as well as creating opportunities for community development through education, skills, and training (Wakefield et al., 2007).

To address the objectives of this study and to learn more about the evolving role of community gardens in community development, this study relies on narrative inquiry methods to complete a thematic analysis in the context of a case study. A group of ten community garden volunteers from Orti Urbani di San Matteo degli Armeni located in the Porta Sant'Angelo neighborhood of Perugia, Italy, were interviewed. The findings from the study are a compilation of the knowledge and perspectives of the interview participants and offer insight into the function of Orti Urbani in the Porta Sant'Angelo neighborhood and the garden's potential role in community development. These results may provide useful information to urban planners, community developers, and other community garden directors.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My expression of gratitude is first dedicated to my mother and father, who have instilled in me diligence in my work and passion for my education, as well as the belief that I can accomplish anything I work towards. I thank you two for giving me the opportunity to engage with different cultures from a young age; this has created a strong influence on who I am today and what moves my soul. I thank you for trusting me and allowing me to pursue my passions.

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Lastly, I thank the lovely *ortolani*, the members of Orti Urbani degli San Matteo di Armeni community garden, for immediately making me feel like a member of their community through their compassion and hospitality. Their warm nature and incredible insight are what makes this research experience so special and dear to my heart.

Chapter 1

Introduction

Community gardens maintain several functions: besides food supply, they are an instrument of civic activism and a place for educational or social activities, rehabilitation, and integration. They respond to different goals according to the actors, spaces, and socio-economic contexts involved. Oftentimes, the main goal of these gardens is not economic; instead, there is a larger focus on issues regarding culture, education, health, sustainability, and social cohesion (Giacchè et al., 2015).

Although it is essentially land shared by a group of individuals, community gardens have the potential to contribute to the creation of a community space. By regularly drawing citizens to participate in common spaces, a sense of community and commitment to one another emerges (Balfour et al., 2016). The frequent interaction and dialogue that occurs in these gardens enable the creation and strengthening of social networks and collective action. Benefits derive from gardens that are built and maintained by community residents, such as the opportunity to develop and control part of their neighborhood (Francis et al., 1984). Actively participating in the construction of their own environment gives people a sense of control and attaches meaning to a place (Sanoff, 2000). As a result of the mobilization and empowerment that occurs within community gardens, community residents gain a greater sense of pride and motivation to create further change in their area (Firth et al., 2011).

In this thesis, I will explore if community gardens can indeed provide the opportunity to socialize and create connections among community members and can serve as vehicles for

community development by focusing on a single case study: Orti Urbani di San Matteo degli Armeni community garden in Perugia, Umbria, Italy. Through independent research, interviews, conversations, and daily observation, this research investigates the extent to which Orti Urbani may contribute to community development. Broadly speaking, the goal of my research is to better understand:

● whether community gardens can foster effective dialogue, trusting relationships among its members, and a stronger connection to one's community;

● whether community gardens can serve as a vehicle for democracy, for collective agency, and for the inspiration of greater social change;

● and whether community gardens can successfully contribute to the development of a community.

Although every community is unique in its own sense, if we can discover what makes one community garden succeed, it may be possible to shape this successful strategy in a way that aids struggling initiatives. Likewise, if we can unearth what areas need to be improved, Orti Urbani management can confront these weaknesses and work to improve them, further making it a potential model for community gardens elsewhere.

The following section, Chapter 2, is a literature review that seeks to explicate the theories and concepts that are foundational to this research. Topics covered include community development, urban agriculture, community gardens, and past and present urban agricultural initiatives in Perugia, Italy. Chapter 3 details the methodology and the methods used to conduct the analysis. Next is a description and discussion of the research findings in Chapter 4. Chapter 5 concludes the research by providing a synthesis and suggesting directions for future research.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

This section will explore the existing literature that provides insight for this research approach, meaning, and analysis. To begin, it explores community theories that guide the understanding of community and community development. It draws on literature related to urban agriculture within community development and its various functions. Furthermore, it will draw on past and active urban agriculture initiatives in Perugia, Italy. Finally, the review will explore community gardens as a form of urban agriculture and how they create opportunities for community development, drawing on the potential for Orti Urbani di San Matteo degli Armeni community garden to create this opportunity.

Community Development

Community is notoriously difficult to define. Sociologists define "community" by way of three elements: a physical place, a local society, and collective actions. Accordingly, a community is a physically bounded territory where people interact with others and express common interests (Bridger & Alter, 2006). Kingsley and Townsend (2006) instead suggest that community should be no longer defined by place but by perception of personal connectedness. This argument is supported by work in the rural community studies literature more generally, where it is suggested that the term "community" cannot simply be applied to any collection of people who happen to live in proximity to one another. As Moseley (2003) argues, communities are socially constructed through people sharing and interacting with a common purpose where physical proximity is not a requirement. Strong communities are, therefore, built by engaged

community members who are supported by strong social networks and feel capable of working

through issues together (Firth, 2011).

Social interaction acts as a feature of community. Drawing from sociologist Kenneth

Wilkinson's perspective, social interaction gives local life a form and structure as people self-

organize to accomplish tasks and pursue interests (Wilkinson, 1972). Viewing the development

of communities as a process that occurs as "local residents interact with one another on projects

and issues – especially those that build linkages across groups and interest lines," Bridger and

Alter assert that to strengthen communities, one must focus on relationships and communication

across interest groups (2006, p. 170). They continue that "By creating these linkages, a

generalized structure emerges—one that can be mobilized to address shared problems and

concerns" (p. 171). In this way, the development of the community begins with relationship-

building and the capacity for individual and collective agency by community members (Bridger

& Alter, 2006).

Urban Agriculture

In the Wilksonian sense, urban agriculture, specifically urban gardening, is a vehicle for

community development, meaning urban gardens bring people together to work on issues of

common concern. The United States Department of Agriculture defines urban agriculture as "the

cultivation, processing, and distribution of agricultural products in urban and suburban areas."

Urban agriculture provides critical access to healthy food, employment, green spaces, and

personal connections for local communities (United States Department of Agriculture, 2023).

Agriculture undertaken in the city, the traditional space of residential, business, and cultural

pursuits, has generally been framed through the lens of community activity (Sheppard-Simms,

2009). Urban agriculture (UA) has become a new cultural-political expression and a source for social cohesion, environmental education, and as a recreational hobby around the globe (Langemeyer et al., 2021).

Urban agriculture contributes to local economic development, poverty alleviation, the social inclusion of the urban poor and women, as well as to the greening of the city and the productive reuse of urban wastes (World Bank's Urban Development and Resilience Unit of the Sustainable Development Network, 2013). It also curbs environmental pollution and the loss of nutritional value in the transport and storage of food by maintaining local production and distribution (de Wit, 2014). Urban agriculture encompasses a wide variety of production systems, such as crops, fish, and livestock production, as well as herbs, medicinal and ornamental plants for both home consumption and for the market. It contributes to a substantial portion of food consumed in cities in many countries around the world (World Bank's Urban Development and Resilience Unit of the Sustainable Development Network, 2013), and it remains an important foundation for food security and subsistence for the global urban poor (Langemeyer et al., 2021).

As urbanization threatens to encourage the increased industrialization of agriculture, urban agriculture alleviates this pressure while creating new opportunities for community empowerment and greater access to sustainable, healthy, and affordable food (de Wit, 2014). The integration of urban agriculture into development strategies and policy decisions will be important for long-term sustainability, but it must be relevant and customized to the objectives and circumstances of individual cities (World Bank's Urban Development and Resilience Unit of the Sustainable Development Network, 2013). Urban agriculture projects respond to the needs and opportunities of a given community (Giacchè et al., 2015). Cities have written urban

agriculture plans, included food production in citywide sustainability strategies, legalized the

keeping of bees and livestock, facilitated the integration of agriculture in new buildings, and

provided city property for new urban farms. Various cities have amended zoning ordinances and

building codes to legalize and support urban agriculture (Cohen & Reynolds, 2014).

According to "Urban Agriculture Europe" (UAE), urban agriculture has been divided into

two levels (farming and gardening) and three main categories: urban food gardening, urban

farming, and not-urban-oriented farming. Urban food gardening is considered as gardening

activities with mostly low economic dependence on physical outputs but making use of

agricultural procedures for accomplishing other, mostly social, goals, while urban farming is

deliberate business models utilizing the proximity to the city by offering local/regional

agricultural products or services (Giacchè et al., 2015). This study focuses more on urban food

gardening, particularly urban community gardens.

Within the location of my study site (Perugia, Umbria, Italy), urban agriculture is

important and extensive. Perugia, with 165,668 inhabitants, is the capital city of the Umbria

Region; it maintains a functional and strategic role within the European development policies

(Tortorella, 2013). During the 1970's, the Province of Perugia promoted the first social program

for the creation of two allotment gardens located in the suburbs of the city. In this period, entire

rural families migrated to the cities; in Umbria, Italians moved to Perugia in search of better

conditions of life and work. Unfortunately, these expectations were not met as former farmers

worked in factories, experiencing marginalization and exclusion as they were cast to the

peripheral areas of the city. To improve this situation of marginalization and to reduce the

traumatic separation from the countryside that worsens with retirement, the province designated

an area in the suburb of the city and assigned plots (150 square meters) to retired people for

gardening, otherwise known as allotment gardens. The institution provided land, water, and a tool shed in exchange for commitment from the retiree to cultivate the lot and provide tools, seeds, and other materials (Giacchè et al., 2015).

Over time, the goal of the program remains unchanged, however the type of participant has transformed from a retired individual with previous farming experience and a rural origin to someone with little to no contact with agriculture. The original aim of the program was to "keep [retired people] in their social environment and encourage employment activities which stimulate participation in collective life" (p. 404). Today, the managers of the province emphasize the social purpose of the program, but participants also value self-consumption, food security, environmental protection, leisure, and recovery of traditions and culture (Giacchè et al., 2015).

The Province of Perugia fostered one of the first public programs for promoting urban agriculture, and its role has continued into the present day. In recent years, several projects are arising, such as a synergistic therapeutic garden promoted by a social cooperative, city farms where citizens can grow fresh produce with the help of farmers, and community gardens promoted by local associations (i.e., Orti Urbani di San Matteo degli Armeni) and the University of Perugia (Giacchè et al., 2015).

Community Gardens

Community gardens are seen as a type of urban agriculture, namely urban food gardening. Ferris et al. (2001) states a community garden differs from a private garden in that it is in some sense a public garden in terms of ownership, access, and degree of democratic control. They are typically plots of land, subdivided among different users, which help to improve air quality, hydrology, soil quality, and provide opportunities for social interaction, education, play,

and access to nature. Ownership of community gardens may belong to entities, such as a municipality, an institution, a community group, or a land trust (Francis et al., 1984).

Benefits stem from gardens that are built and maintained by community residents, such as the opportunity to develop and control a portion of their neighborhood (Francis et al., 1984). Actively participating in the construction of their own environment gives people a sense of control and assigns meaning to a place (Sanoff, 2000). As a result of the mobilization and empowerment that occurs within community gardens, community residents gain a greater sense of pride, agency, and motivation to create further change in their area (Firth et al., 2011).

Community gardens are present in many nations and in both urban and rural settings. Local needs determine what each garden offers, whether that be open space and greenery or inexpensive vegetables for a local community. With the rise in urbanization and consequent land scarcity, there is an increasing demand for these gardens. Community gardens are now recognized as an international phenomenon, and urban gardening is viewed as an opportunity for improving local food supplies, as well as leisure and recreational activity (Ferris, 2001).

These initiatives create benefits for both individuals and their community, including benefits to food security, human health, local ecology, and social capital, as well as creating opportunities for community development through education, skills, and training. Social capital can be defined as the social structures, institutions, and shared values making up a community; it can also take the form of connections among individuals or social networks, and the norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness that occur from those connections. These networks consist of people from various backgrounds; consequently, these gardens are spaces where individuals can interact and overcome potential barriers between them (Wakefield et al., 2007). Social capital can be associated with greater themes of social cohesion, democracy, economic well-being, and

sustainability, leading to community gardens serving as a catalyst for addressing other matters in the community (Firth et al., 2011).

Drawing from a recent experience as an Urban Agriculture Intern at the Umbra Institute in Perugia, Umbria, Italy, I will highlight one community garden located in Perugia that serves as the focus of this research: Orti Urbani di San Matteo degli Armeni. Originally a monastery, the garden was created through an agreement between the Municipality of Perugia and Vivi Il Borgo neighborhood association and signed at the conclusion of a participatory planning process. This planning process commenced after the architectural recovery of the monumental complex of San Matteo degli Armeni and the foundation of the municipal library. The site shares the same space as the municipal library, a promoter and supporter of the garden. Another partner of the garden is the nearby elementary school that incorporates activities at Orti Urbani during the school year and summer season (Orti Urbani di San Matteo degli Armeni Community Garden, 2022).

The members of Orti Urbani, or *ortolani* as they classify themselves, belong to a dynamic group, one that is heterogeneous in age, ability, and knowledge. All participants contribute to the work according to their own capability, with the awareness of the importance of everyone's contribution to the achievement of common goals. One of these goals is to return to the neighborhood and city a green space where people can walk, meditate, play, and share experiences, knowledge, traditions, and innovations among those who work in the garden and those who frequent it. In working together towards this goal, relationships, ideas, and projects evolve, and collaboration, personal growth, cultural exchange, and social aggregation take place (Orti Urbani di San Matteo degli Armeni Community Garden, 2022).

Dishes prepared from the vegetables planted in the garden include green tomato jam, pumpkin jam, fennel jam, artichokes in oil, tomato puree, minestrone, soups, caponata, and

pumpkin pie. The garden practices organic horticulture with an attention to biodiversity of species and varieties and the seasonal rhythms and characteristics of vegetables. No exploitation of soil, waters, energy sources, biological rhythms of animals or plants, or workers occurs in the garden's practice (Orti Urbani di San Matteo degli Armeni Community Garden, 2022).

Summary

The purpose of this chapter is to frame this study, which looks at the potential of community gardens to serve as a vehicle for the development of a community. Consistent with the organization of this section, perspectives on community and community development are first introduced. Instead of restricting community to a physically bounded territory, this thesis instead regards community to be socially constructed through people sharing and interacting with a common purpose regardless of physical proximity. The section then explored urban agriculture, specifically urban food gardening, and how it may serve as a vehicle for community development by bringing people together to work on issues of common concern. This was followed by the attributes of community gardens and how they may serve as a common space for members that can lead to a greater sense of community and commitment to one another and the space. The section concludes with a description of the history and nature of Orti Urbani di San Matteo degli Armeni community garden. The following chapter details the methodology and methods used to explore the overarching research goal of this study, which is to understand perspectives on the potential role of community gardens in stimulating community development. Specifically, this study also seeks to understand whether community gardens can foster effective dialogue, trusting relationships among its members, and a stronger connection to one's community; whether community gardens can serve as a vehicle for democracy, for collective

agency, and for the inspiration of greater social change; and whether community gardens may

contribute to the development of a community.

Chapter 3

Methodology

To address the objectives of this study and to learn more about the role of community gardens in the development of a community, this research was conducted using a mixed methods approach that included key informant interviews, a case study, documentary publications, and participant observation. The methodological approach for this research is rooted in the philosophy and practice of phronesis. A prominent scholar of phronesis, Aristotle defines the term as a "true state, reasoned, and capable of action with regard to things that are good or bad for men" (Costello, 2019, p. 3) Another prominent– yet more contemporary– scholar of this concept, Bent Flyvbjerg, maintains that phronesis requires "an interaction between the general and the concrete; it requires consideration, judgment, and choice. More than anything else, phronesis requires experience" (Flyvbjerg, 2014, p. 57). It is practical wisdom, which involves an understanding about the aims of activities in which one is engaged, the improvising and balancing of conflicting aims and interpreting rules and procedures in a particular context, and the blending of emotions and values with reason to do the right thing.

Flyvbjerg's interpretation of phronesis provides the specific methodological underpinning for this research, crediting knowledge that goes beyond questions of technical knowledge and instead focuses on questions that relate to the values that shape one's understanding and experience (Flyvbjerg, 2014). In this study, phronesis is grounded in a single case study (Orti Urbani di San Matteo degli Armeni). Case studies are a useful technique to assist in conveying and understanding the complexities of social life, as well as eliciting practical experience of people in that situation (Yin, 2003). Data was gathered using documentary evidence, participant observation, and semi-structured key informant interviews of ten Orti Urbani community garden

volunteers. These interviews were then analyzed using narrative inquiry techniques, specifically thematic analysis.

It is important to note that this research is inherently exploratory in nature. As such, this research examines the perspectives of a limited number of participants and makes no claims of larger generalizability. In this broad framework, the primary focus of this chapter is the specific methods used to complete this study. Given this methodological approach, this section includes a discussion of the methods used in this study, as well as a brief assessment of the strengths and limitations. This chapter is divided into the following sections:

1.   Case Study

2.   Narrative Inquiry and Analysis

3.   Participant Observation

4.   Analysis of Documentary Evidence and Literature

5.   Study Site

6.   Sampling and Recruitment

7.   Key Informant Interviews and Protocols

8.   Limitations

Case Study

A community garden located in the outskirts of the city center of Perugia was examined to assess the contribution of community gardens to the development of a community. The case study was identified after an initial survey of five other community gardens in and around the city center. This assessment involved independently researching these community gardens to determine the nature of their activities and to identify those who participated in and benefited

from the garden. The case study was selected based on its volunteer population. Unlike the other neighboring community gardens with students, professors, and community members as seasonal, rotational volunteers, Orti Urbani's membership is exclusively local community members that reside in the Porta Sant'Angelo neighborhood or surrounding neighborhoods and consistently volunteer at the garden. Case studies are a useful technique to assist in conveying and understanding the complexities of social life, as well as eliciting practical experience of people in that particular situation (Yin, 2003). The focus of this study was an exploration of the nature of the relationships within community gardens and the interaction and networks the volunteers have among each other.

Narrative Inquiry and Analysis

Given the exploratory nature of this research, semi-structured key informant interviews were conducted with an emergent sample of ten (10) individuals identified as being consistent volunteers of Perugia's community garden Orti Urbani di San Matteo degli Armeni. Interviewees were asked to share their perspectives through responses to broad, open-ended questions about the role of community gardens in community development, about the meaning and significance of Orti Urbani, and about their personal experiences volunteering at Orti Urbani. Participants were asked about the nature of their relationships with other garden members and the garden itself, the evolution of these relationships through their continuous involvement, and the potential for Orti Urbani to serve as a vehicle for community development. Participants were asked to share stories and were encouraged to speak freely throughout the course of the interview. All of these interviews were recorded as audio recordings.

After the interviews were conducted and the audio-recordings were transcribed, I analyzed the textual data to understand how the stories and responses that interviewees provided were related to the objectives of understanding:

- whether community gardens can foster effective dialogue, trusting relationships among its members, and a stronger connection to one's community;
- whether community gardens can serve as a vehicle for democracy, for collective agency, and for the inspiration of greater social change;
- and whether community gardens may successfully contribute to the development of a community.

In this way, I used narrative inquiry techniques to complete a thematic analysis in the interviews. I used key words and phrases as codes to perform the analysis. The purpose of choosing to conduct this research using methods of narrative inquiry is grounded in the belief that rich and relevant data can be gathered in the form of stories that people share (Trahar, 2009; Clandinin, 2006). Stories are meaningful and significant; they can evidence personal philosophy in ways that straightforward responses cannot (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990). By asking interviewees to share stories, or narrative data, throughout the course of each interview, I was able to collect not only direct responses to specific questions but also to learn more about the potential role of gardens in building community. Stories provided by interviewees also illuminated practical experience and created a more holistic picture of the various perspectives on the role that community gardens can play in community development, thus broadening the findings beyond simply responding to the objectives of the research.

Participant Observation

While qualitative analysis takes many forms, one of these is participant observation. The role of the researcher in participant observation tends to be unassertive, as the researcher will not intentionally interact with the research subjects to specifically acquire data or otherwise affect individual or group behavior. However, this observation process does not necessarily indicate that the researcher is not physically active within the group itself; the researcher engages in the normal processes that the group would otherwise perform were the researcher not physically present. The underlying principle for participant observation is embedded in the belief that natural behaviors are more likely to be representative of certain traits within the group, such as shared perceptions or beliefs (Qaddo, 2019). For this research, I collected insights through participant observation by consistently working at Orti Urbani with the interview participants, engaging in conversations with others while working, and witnessing interactions between volunteers during this time spent together.

Analysis of Documentary Evidence and Literature

In order to develop a theoretical framework for this thesis, to generate research objectives and interview questions, and to identify potential study participants, I conducted an extensive review of the literature on community development, urban agriculture, community gardens, and Italian and Perugian politics, culture, history, and demographics, as well as characteristics of local community gardens in Perugia.

Study Site

Perugia, Italy, is home to several community gardens just within a five-mile radius to the city center. Originally a monastery, Orti Urbani di San Matteo degli Armeni is one of these gardens and is in the Porta Sant'Angelo neighborhood of Perugia. It was created through an agreement between the Municipality of Perugia and Vivi Il Borgo neighborhood association and signed at the conclusion of a participatory planning process. This planning process commenced after the architectural recovery of the monumental complex of San Matteo degli Armeni and the foundation of the municipal library. The site shares the same space as the municipal library, a promoter and supporter of the garden.

I selected Orti Urbani di San Matteo degli Armeni as the study site due to its volunteer population. Unlike the other neighboring community gardens with students, professors, and community members as seasonal, rotational volunteers, Orti Urbani's membership is exclusively local community members that reside in the Porta Sant'Angelo neighborhood or surrounding neighborhoods. A majority of Orti Urbani garden members have been volunteering at the site since its founding in 2015. This appealed to me because of its potential to examine the evolution of relationships and beliefs from the continuous involvement of its volunteers and the extent to which, over time, these aspects may contribute to community development.

The following figure is a map of Orti Urbani di San Matteo degli Armeni, the location of the study site for this research.
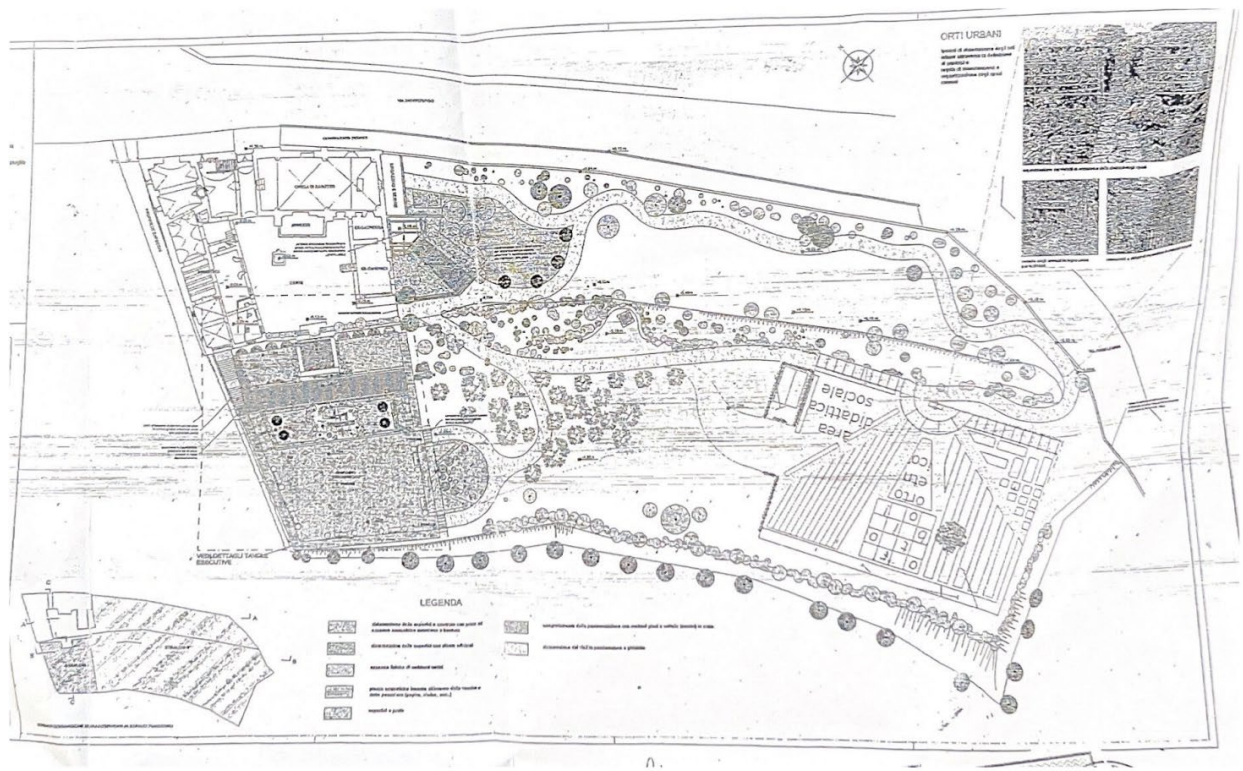
Figure 1: Map of Orti Urbani di San Matteo degli Armeni

Sampling and Recruitment

Informants were selected based on their involvement with Orti Urbani di San Matteo degli Armeni. In this study, people from various professions were interviewed, as long as they fit the criteria of volunteering at Orti Urbani for at least one month. The sample for this study is a convenience sample, meaning that the sample was selected based on accessibility, ease, and speed (Cohen & Crabtree, 2006). Possible interview participants were identified when I met with the current director of Orti Urbani di San Matteo degli Armeni community garden and mentioned my intention to interview consistent garden volunteers. From that initial meeting, I used convenience sampling to amass additional interviewees. Only ten individuals were able to be

interviewed within the timeframe of the study while approximately five additional individuals

could have been interviewed. This outcome is due to my limited time at Orti Urbani.

Participants were invited to participate in the study by word of mouth. In the initial

meeting with the Orti Urbani garden director, I explained that the purpose of this study is to learn

more about the potential role that Orti Urbani di San Matteo degli Armeni can play in building

community, particularly in regard to a community garden's role in facilitating citizen interaction

and dialogue. Potential participants were informed that interviews would last for around thirty

minutes to one hour and that they would be asked to share a bit about their experiences related to

community gardens. After potential participants agreed to participate in the study, the director of

Orti Urbani corresponded with each participant to find a mutually agreeable time to conduct the

interview. Recruitment began in May 2022. Interviews were conducted from mid-June 2022

through the end of June 2022.

Key Informant Interviews and Protocol

Participants were asked a series of questions about the role of community gardens in

society. Questions were structured into three categories, in addition to introductory and

concluding remarks. First, I asked interviewees to share their individual perspective on the

significance of the Orti Urbani community garden. Next, interviewees were asked to take a

communal perspective and think of how Orti Urbani is significant to the community. Last, I

asked interview participants about the strengths and weaknesses of Orti Urbani.

In the first set of questions, I asked participants to discuss the nature of their relationships

with other garden members and how these may have developed through their continuous

involvement with the garden; their connection to the community and if it has evolved since their

involvement in the garden; the nature of the conversations they have with other garden members and how their level of comfort among each other has expanded since their involvement in the garden; and whether their continued involvement in the garden has provided them a sense of community and belonging. In the next set of questions, participants were asked how Orti Urbani brings neighborhood residents together; the effects of residents coming together; and whether they believe Orti Urbani is building community for others. Finally, participants were asked how Orti Urbani is succeeding in bringing community members together and fostering a friendly, welcoming environment, as well as ways Orti Urbani can improve in meeting these goals. The interview concluded by asking participants if they had any additional thoughts they wanted to share. Throughout the course of the interview, I invited participants to share stories and examples of their experience with Orti Urbani.

All interviews were conducted in person. An interpreter was present for all interviews but only interpreted for the eight interviews that were conducted in Italian; the other two interviews were conducted in English. Each participant stated which language they would prefer to speak at the start of the interview. To control a uniform interview experience across all participants, at the start of each interview, I gave each participant the list of questions that would be asked. Each interview lasted for around thirty to sixty minutes.

Prior to conducting any research or communicating with any interviewees, I received approval of the study methods and procedures from the Penn State Office for Research Protection's Institutional Review Board on June 15, 2022 (STUDY00020288). Interviews were conducted immediately after this approval. However, communication with the garden director about potential interview participants and interview dates began in May 2022, due to the practicality of concluding research before my departure from Perugia, Italy, at the end of June

2022. Before conducting each interview, each participant signed a consent form which included interview protocol. Once the recording started, each participant voiced their consent to be interviewed and for the interview to be recorded. Choosing to keep all identities of participants confidential, I assured participants that their recording files and transcripts would be treated confidentially and that there was no risk to participating.

The interviews were recorded using the Windows recording software on my personal computer. The security of the recorded audio was ensured through the computer's face ID login requirement. After interviews were completed, I transferred the audio files to a professional transcription/translation service, Maestra, where the audio was transcribed and then translated from Italian to English. When the transcriptions were completed and checked for validity and precision, the audio files were destroyed, and the transcription documents were transferred to a password protected file within OneDrive.

Limitations

Though the key informant data collection method enables researchers to learn from the perspectives of interviewed individuals, it is important to note that results from this single case study cannot be generalized across all community gardens (Yin, 2003). Given these limitations, participants interviewed in this sample are not representative of all community garden members everywhere. Of the ten participants interviewed, zero identify as people of color. Only one participant of the ten is not of Italian descent. It is also important to note that of the ten Orti Urbani garden member participants interviewed, only one participant is known to be male identifying. Though limited statistics and ambiguous definition for urban agriculture make it difficult to obtain an accurate profile of global operators, regional studies show that the

majority of urban agriculturalists are women (Whitley, 2020). According to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, forty-three percent of the global agricultural labor force are women (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations). Although Orti Urbani community garden is female-dominated, in the neighboring community gardens in the city center, one that partnered with University of Perugia's Department of Agricultural, Food, and Environmental Studies and the other that partnered with the Umbra Institute, there were more male-identifying volunteers than female-identifying ones. This is a subject that could be explored in further research.

Summary

The next chapter presents the findings of this research that were collected using the methods detailed above. Data from this study was analyzed to gather insights that related to each of the study's specific objectives, as well as to detect any additional themes that were evidenced in the interviewees' narrative interview response. The overarching goal of this study is to gain insight into the potential for community gardens in building community, and to explore whether community gardens can foster effective dialogue, trusting relationships among its members, and a stronger connection to one's community; whether community gardens can serve as a vehicle for democracy, for collective agency, and for the inspiration of greater social change; and whether community gardens may successfully contribute to the development of a community.

Chapter 4

Research Findings and Discussion

As discussed in Chapter 2, Flyvbjerg's interpretation of phronesis provides the specific methodological underpinning for this research, crediting knowledge that goes beyond questions of technical knowledge and instead focuses on questions that relate to the values that shape one's understanding and experience (Flyvbjerg, 2014). This methodology is applied to this case study of Orti Urbani di San Matteo degli Armeni. This chapter presents findings collected through personal observation and key informant interviews. During the interviews, participants were asked to share their perspectives on the extent in which a community garden may contribute to community development. The semi-structured nature of the interview was designed to elicit interviewees' reflections, and to create a context in which interviewees could potentially speak to the objectives of this research in a conversational way.

The findings presented in this chapter pertain to the broad purpose of this research: to investigate the extent in which community gardens have the potential to contribute to community development. The objectives of this research are designed as a framework in which to elicit insight of whether community gardens can foster dialogue, relationships, democracy, collective agency, inspiration of great social change, and connection to one's community. Research findings are organized around key themes that emerged within and across the study's objectives. The first section of the chapter focuses on findings around themes of how community gardens may serve as a vehicle for democracy, collective agency, and inspiration for greater social change. The second section highlights findings organized around themes of community gardens fostering effective dialogue, trusting relationships, knowledge sharing, and an introduction to new people. The third section concentrates on the theme that a public space can create a stronger

connection to one's community. The themes discussed in these three sections were created prior to the thematic analysis as a predefined list of codes. Throughout the sections, I included quotations from interviews to create a more holistic picture of my findings; all quotations are illustrative of shared ideas expressed by several interviewees.

Democracy, Collective Agency, and Inspiration of Greater Social Change

Many interviewees discussed the different levels and types of expertise among garden volunteers, yet all of them emphasized how the garden is a space where each person is valued and respected for her contributions, in whatever capacity or form they take. Interviewee F.G. eloquently touches on this matter:

> *It does this by providing a space and allowing everyone to give what they can. There are those who have agricultural expertise; there are those who simply tear weeds; there are those who come here and water. It is all very useful because it allows even the most disparate people who have maybe no competence or experience to be here, to be part of this community, and to put in a piece of herself. There is no discrimination between who knows and who does not know. We all work for the same goal.*

The garden members normally make decisions together collectively, but other times, when certain situations arise, they trust that the individual who ultimately makes the decision has the knowledge to decide appropriately. Interviewee P.B. communicated how he observed democracy in the garden with the following quote:

> *The format is practically a community without a hierarchy of command or authority. It's a model of working towards democratic system of society. Democracy continues to train. We always make decisions, of course–otherwise it would be anarchy–but the level of sharing of decisions is so that there is never a need to individually vote. Each of us has his own authority for certain things and therefore I take care of this…We are accustomed to being the first to roll up our sleeves, to have solidarity as our goal. Decision-making is equal and does not need to be forced.*

Although these decisions often are made by the volunteers who have been present since the start of the garden, there is an openness and appreciation towards "new species, new adventures, new plants, new treatments, new recipes", as expressed by Interviewee P.B. This idea drives the decision-making process and makes it more an experience of sharing.

Individuals of various ages, professions, disciplines, religions, and economic backgrounds gather to volunteer at Orti Urbani di San Matteo degli Armeni. Although there may be differences among them, they are joined by "a collective experience" that seems to one interviewee to have a "social value of inclusion and participation". They try to focus on their similarities, one of them being the garden, and interviewee F.G. states, "We have learned to share what unites us and to leave aside what makes us quarrel, otherwise we will not work together." Many interviewees regard their garden and their volunteer experience as the knot that ties them all together; interviewee M.B. spoke of the garden as a mediator between people:

> *We are a group of people with different motivations who have the garden as a mediator element. In this reality, we are together. Even though there are moments when personalities come out, it is precisely through being together in one's own way that a community is made. A community with a common goal– to keep the garden clean, to sow, to harvest, to eat what you have sown and harvested. This is a good community.*

Although some individuals volunteer to produce food while others may volunteer to maintain their health, they are united by this space. In maintaining this space, the volunteers learn many lessons that can be applied outside of the garden's gates. Interviewee D.A. reflects on a lesson she has found through her work in the garden:

> *Things don't always succeed in the garden, as one would like. For example, yesterday there was a very strong hailstorm, and it ruined the harvest a lot. We will have to make it all up. This also helps us accept things that sometimes do go wrong in life. It is a bit of a metaphor for existence. No cure. We don't know how it goes. And above all, it also helps us accept this cyclicality in the production because plants have life cycles, then they must be removed and others are put in. Therefore, it is also an exercise with respect to transformation, to things that are born and develop. It seems to me something that is also very useful at a spiritual or existential level.*

Figure 2: Photograph of Orti Urbani di San Matteo degli Armeni, taken by researcher

Another lesson that is communicated to garden volunteers is the idea of taking agency in one's

life, which can also be practiced in other aspects outside of the garden, which Interviewee L.P.

explains:

> We can acquire knowledge that allows us to take even a small step towards the goal of a
> healthier life, through food more in balance with nature. In my opinion, food is not
> ethical unless it is ethical from the beginning. In this garden, all the steps are sustainable
> and fair. It is important that the citizen can have the power to control this fundamental
> aspect of life.

Figure 3: Lettuce growing in plant beds at Orti Urbani, taken by researcher

The collective agency that derives from taking care of a space and circulating life within it can give rise to other initiatives in the community. For example, the husband of one of the volunteers came to the garden to take pictures. The volunteers decided to turn it into a photographic exhibition on "hands at work"; the event was held at the library adjacent to the garden, advertised by the neighborhood association, and open to the public. Additionally, the volunteers created a book club at the library where many of the stories and poems focused on the themes of their garden. One interviewee emphasized how these were examples of how the garden can transmit the components of *coltura* and *cultura*, or the cultivation of both vegetables and culture.

Although the volunteers come from various parts of Perugia outside of the neighborhood in which the garden resides, they all come together to brainstorm initiatives and create projects and programs for within and outside of the garden. One interviewee sees this as a means "to cultivate a good that today among young people is quite rare that is called solidarity", and the group grows into its own community because of it. This consistent time spent together and the sharing of projects is a form of insurance against loneliness, which is a struggle faced by many of the volunteers who are currently retired and living alone at home.

Dialogue, relationships, knowledge sharing, and introduction to new people

It is uncommon for strangers to openly share personal information with each other, but the more the same people frequent the same place together, conversations and relationship-building are bound to occur. Working in the common space together for an extended period of time, volunteers can "entertain discussions about what happens in the city, about politics, about films, about anything", as interviewee A.C. states. One garden volunteer G.C. describes this social development: "There is a possibility to exchange opinions in a very easy way, which is nearly impossible in other situations. It really helps to be altogether here. I think what helps is to be here for a long period–after one year, two years, you start to be comfortable with each other."

Although there are volunteers that are more talkative than others, all of them share in their willingness to listen. An interviewee shared his perception of this:

> *I personally am a very open person, and I talk a lot. This is the ideal place because there are people who are willing to listen and also talk…But, this is not the place for word. Actually, this is a place of silence. Then, the words must be meaningful, even if they concern personal facts.*

While gardening tends to be more of a solitary activity, it takes on a new meaning when done

collectively. For a non-native-speaking garden volunteer, this abundance of conversation assists

her in learning new vocabulary, and she remarks that the other volunteers happily explain the

nuances of expressions or jokes when she does not understand them.

Through time spent together where experiences, suggestions, and ideas are exchanged, a

connection among people begins to form. Individuals grasp the realization that they may have

more in common with each other than they originally thought. Interviewee D.A. describes this

evolution:

> *Meeting weekly in this activity with people who have this same passion in cultivating*
> *makes us feel close, and from this, clearly relationships are born. We talk not only about*
> *the garden, but we talk about personal things or what happens in everyday life. The*
> *garden becomes a pretext for something else. Not only to grow healthy products that we*
> *then take home but also to get to know people and stay in touch with others and to take*
> *care of the space around the place where we live.*

As individuals are bonded by this common characteristic, trust becomes a growing element as

they continue to work in the garden. Interviewee M.D. explains this form of trust:

> *When you are unguarded, when you sweat, when you just do the work, and you do it with*
> *someone else. It really creates this kind of trust between you, almost a tribal feeling. I*
> *can trust you to have my back. We also have trust in our preferred roles in the garden. I*
> *am a donkey; I like to just come and work hard. Others are taking more care of how the*
> *garden looks. It creates a nice trust, recognizing our strengths and using them where they*
> *are most helpful…We acknowledge and honor this.*

This trust contributes to the creation of a social fabric comprised of individuals from a variety of

backgrounds and disciplines. This creates potential for the garden to serve as a space of

exchange, of learning and knowledge sharing. For one garden volunteer who is a retired

mathematics teacher with no garden skills, the garden gave her the opportunity to get closer to a

world unknown to her. Yet, every volunteer understands that each person brings something

valuable to the table, regardless of where his or her expertise lies. Interviewee P.B. explicates:

It is clear that each of us here brings an experience and then it becomes personal. Since the average age [of volunteers] *is over sixty, our path, our experience is important. Each of us brings an experience that naturally pours here. I am an archeologist who deals with the history of food. It is not exactly like having been a farmer for forty years. My way of relating to the land that has been my job for fifty years is substantially different from another type of approach. I worked with the earth, not to extract potatoes, to extract archeological finds. But the matrix is the same.*

What contributes to the success of Orti Urbani is the volunteers' respect for others and their different levels and types of expertise, as well as a shared willingness to learn from each other.

This knowledge exchange is not just limited to volunteers. With the garden's proximity to an elementary school, the volunteers prepare a spot where the children can plant the seeds and welcome students during the school year and summer. As the children come and sow their plants, the garden volunteers educate them on plant growth and the responsibility that comes with being the planter.

These different outreach initiatives, along with the fact that the garden itself is open to the public, creates the opportunity to meet new people. Interviewee D.A. speaks on this opportunity:

Not only are there people from this neighborhood I did not know before but also people who come from outside. One garden volunteer is foreign; therefore, we say that it is an international garden. It does not host only local people. It was born as a place for the locals, but it is an open space, so those who want can come and participate.

As many volunteers are retired, this source of sociality is necessary for them. An interviewee reflected that she had minimal social interactions since retiring as a schoolteacher. Volunteering at the garden has relieved this and regularly interacting with children that come has brought her great joy.

Figure 4: Orti Urbani volunteer working in the garden with her child, taken by researcher

Public space creates a stronger connection to one's community

By stretching their hands into the soil of Orti Urbani di San Matteo degli Armeni, a stronger connection to the community of Perugia is fostered among the garden volunteers. An interviewee illustrates the evolution of his connection to the city:

> *I had no relationship with the city before. Now, with this group I feel even more rooted in the community of the city where I live. In fact, it is also a way of strengthening social relationships related to the neighborhood in which you are…The garden gives a sense of community and belonging…I have lived here for thirty-five years, but I never thought of being in a community…For me, the garden is the foundation of my belonging to the neighborhood.*

To allow others to experience this same connection to their community, Orti Urbani is open to all. Orti Urbani volunteers take pride in knowing their work and upkeep contributes to the garden's status as a public space. Interviewee G.C. explains, "We really transform the area. We grow and keep the place clean. We speak and tell others about our progress. We really feel that our group has meaning for the area, having seen the evidence of our work." What once was a dilapidated, abandoned, overgrown area is now a place usable by everyone, even those who live outside of the neighborhood. The garden, cared for in this way, adds value to both the city and neighborhood. The space belongs to everyone and can be enjoyed by everyone, and it makes the neighborhood more alive.

The location of the garden is unique in that it is in the outskirts of the city center. Its volunteers are city-goers turned farmers. One interviewee sees it as "a place of contrasts yet a very powerful synthesis". Its proximity to the library is extremely helpful in promoting the space to the public. An interviewee elucidates this ideal location:

> *The vegetable garden is the green output of a community that does different things in the neighborhood and is involved in aspects of social aid and the organization of small events and exhibits. This is just one of the activities done by the [neighborhood] association…The fact that we are still an appendix of a library yet also a center makes this place even more special because it loads several added values. It is not just any piece of land; it is a beautiful place where more or less intelligent people with nothing to do, go spend an hour of time. I think this is a time that is worth much more than it would be to go alone in the countryside and hoe the garden. From this point of view, that this is contained in a neighborhood makes the neighborhood now, for me, more visible and also more exciting.*

The garden is in a hub of activity. There is a library within the same complex. There is an elementary school a few kilometers away. There is a church just up the road. It is a gathering point for many. For this reason, interviewees regard the garden as important to the building of community among individuals, and thus, the development of the community.

Summary

Throughout the interviews, concepts of trust, dialogue, relationships, democracy, collective and individual agency, and community are pervasive. Common ideas that emerged from several interviews were regarded as themes. The three sections contained themes that were established through a priori deductive coding. This chapter explores all these themes and ultimately confirms my research hypothesis that community gardens can, in fact, contribute to community development.

A Note on Findings

Based on the sample of interviewees and based on the methods used to collect this narrative data, it is important to note that these results are conditional and are not generalizable. Individuals interviewed for this research are not representative of all community garden volunteers everywhere.

Chapter 5

Synthesis and Conclusion

Though this thesis research asks questions about a particular community garden, it is fundamentally concerned with community development. In drawing on theories of phronesis and interactional field theory, this thesis aims to discuss and illuminate the importance of this public space for relationship-building and individual and collective agency. Community development can take many shapes and forms, and this thesis seeks to understand whether community gardens can be applied in this framework. As outlined in this thesis, community gardens have the potential to be recognized as laboratories for community development and democracy.

The objectives of this research are designed to provide insight into whether community gardens can foster effective dialogue, trusting relationships among its members, and a stronger connection to one's community; whether community gardens can serve as a vehicle for democracy, for collective agency, and for the inspiration of greater social change; and whether community gardens may successfully contribute to the development of a community. From data collected through interviews with Orti Urbani's garden volunteers, I found that there is, in fact, an opportunity for community gardens to serve as a vehicle for community development as conceptualized in this thesis. This data can potentially be translated into strategic and tactical guidelines for new or struggling initiatives that are interested in similar community development projects.

Implication for further action and research

In many cases, insights from study participants raised more questions than they answered, which suggests that there is much more to be explored. These additional findings, implications, and opportunities for future research are explored here. Out of the ten individuals interviewed, nine of them are women. Nine out of the ten volunteers are of Italian descent, being born and raised in the central region of Umbria. Their age ranged from forty to sixty-five years. As interviewee L.C. stated, they share quite similar opinions, "all coming a little bit from the left, more progressive, who love the environment." For this reason, these individuals may have been more inclined to form a community among themselves. I would enjoy continuing this research and expanding it to different locations. It would be interesting to see if similar results would appear if the case study was performed on a community garden whose volunteers come from more diverse backgrounds. Additional research would contribute richness to future studies that explore the role of community gardens in community development.

Nonetheless, this research and its results are not ineffective. If we can discover what makes one community garden thrive, it may be possible to shape this successful strategy in a way that aids struggling initiatives. However, this must be done with caution, as what is successful for one community garden does not necessarily translate to success in another. Likewise, if we can unearth what areas need to be improved, Orti Urbani management can confront these weaknesses and work to correct them, further making it a potential model for community gardens elsewhere.

Final thoughts

Drawing from the rich body of work related to community development theory that underpins this research, combined with the findings gleaned from the extensive narrative data collected in this study, I conclude that there is an underutilized, and possibly unrealized, opportunity for community gardens to serve as vehicles for community development as conceptualized in this thesis. Moreover, my experience of doing this work further reinforces my conviction that community gardens have the capacity to enable collective agency, democracy, greater social change, as well as foster effective dialogue, trusting relationships among its members, and a stronger connection to one's community.

Upon my first round of interviews, I received a warm welcome from the Orti Urbani garden volunteers that resembled an invitation into their community; all were excited by my presence and more than willing to share their experiences. I dedicated a few hours once a week volunteering at Orti Urbani once my internship concluded for the day. By the second round of interviews, I was being sent home with two heads of lettuce and four zucchinis that they had harvested that day. From personal interactions, as well as witnessing the interactions among the other volunteers, I witnessed firsthand the community that was alluded to in each person's interview. I came to understand the power of this group of individuals; the power that a common goal can create; the power of a space where others can express themselves openly; the power of the respect and recognition of each person's gifts; and the power of listening.

Appendix A

Interview Questions

Introductory
1.   What is your name?
2.   Where are you from?
3.   What is the nature of your involvement/role in Orti Urbani di San Matteo degli Armeni?
4.   How long have you been involved with the garden?
5.   How were you introduced to the garden?

B. For the following questions, please think about your individual perspective. Why are you involved in the garden? How is Orti Urbani personally significant to you?

Has being involved in Orti Urbani exposed you to people of Vivi il Borgo that you would not have met without your involvement? If yes/no, please explain.
1.   What is the nature of your relationships with other garden members? How have your relationships with other people involved in the Orti evolved through your participation? Have these relationships been strengthened since your start?
2.   Do you feel more connected to/appreciative of the Vivi il Borgo neighborhood through your involvement with the garden? If yes/no, explain how and why.
3.   .Do you feel comfortable having conversations with other involved members about your beliefs, opinions, family, religion, daily life? Can you explain how this feeling may have changed throughout your involvement? Were you less inclined to have these conversations when you first started working?
4.   From your involvement in Orti Urbani, do you feel like you belong to a community?
5.

C.   For these next questions, I ask you to think about the Orti Urbani as a whole. Why and how is Orti Urbani significant to the Vivi il Borgo neighborhood as a whole?
1.   How does Orti Urbani bring the Vivi il Borgo neighborhood residents together?
2.   Are there any specific garden-led programs, events, or engagement initiatives that come to mind? Can you explain one? If there are not any that come to mind, what programs, events, initiatives should be done to bring residents together?
    a.   In your opinion, what are the effects of residents coming together for these activities/events/initiatives?
3.   Have you noticed a greater sense of trust between yourself and other members involved in the Orti from when you first started until now? Please explain this evolution.
4.   Do members have a deeper connection to/appreciation of the Vivi il Borgo neighborhood because of their involvement with the garden? Why is this?
5.   Have you noticed involved members are able to comfortably converse with each other about their beliefs, families, opinions, religions, daily lives?
6.   Do involved members regard Orti Urbani as a community? Explain why you think they do/do not.

D. How is Orti Urbani di San Matteo degli Armeni succeeding in bringing people together, fostering a friendly environment, building community? What are some things that Orti Urbani di San Matteo degli Armeni can improve or change to achieve this?

      1.   Can Orti Urbani incorporate ways to be more inclusive? Better organized? Better managed? More democratic? How can this be achieved?

Appendix B

Consent Form

Consenso per la ricerca esente
L'Università Statale della Pennsylvania

Titolo del Progetto: Community Gardens as a Vehicle for Community Development: A Case Study of Orti Urbani di San Matteo degli Armeni Community Garden

Ricercatore principale: Bianca Mazzarella
Numero telefonico: +39 342 765 9864
Consulente di Facoltà: Theodore Alter
Numero di telefono del consulente di facoltà: +1 814 883 9634
Lei e' invitato a fare volontariato per partecipare a uno studio di ricerca. Questo riepilogo spiega le informazioni su questa ricerca.
Scopo: Una pletora di ricerche è stata stabilita su come gli orti comunitari sono laboratori per lo sviluppo della comunità e della leadership. Attraverso un'analisi della ricerca indipendente, interazioni organizzate come interviste, interazioni non organizzate come conversazioni informali e osservazione quotidiana, vogliamo esplorare come gli orti comunitari contribuiscono alla costruzione della comunità, creando un microcosmo attraverso gli Orti Urbani di San Matteo degli Armeni nel quartiere Porta Sant'Angelo.
Procedure: Questo colloquio richiederà circa 60 minuti per essere completato. La faremo domande su come Orti Urbani di San Matteo degli Armeni contribuisce a costruire comunità, stabilire relazioni personali e infondere solidarietà locale all'interno del quartiere Porta Sant'Angelo.
Se non La senta a Suo agio nel rispondere a una domanda, non deve rispondere. Se non La desidera continuare a partecipare, è possibile partire in qualsiasi momento senza penalità.

Vorremmo registrare vocalmente questa conversazione al fine di garantire che riportiamo accuratamente tutte le informazioni dell'intervista e confermeremo di avere il Suo consenso prima di iniziare la registrazione. Se ci permetti di registrare e cambiare idea nel corso dell'intervista, dimmi. Interromperemo la registrazione ed elimineremo la registrazione. La registrazione verrà eliminata dopo essere stata trascritta. La trascrizione (così come le eventuali note che potremmo prendere) saranno "ripulite" dal Suo nome e da qualsiasi altra informazione identificativa. Tutte le informazioni relative a questo studio saranno archiviate in modo sicuro.
Questa intervista si svolgerà solo una volta. Pero', La potremmo contattare di nuovo per condividere i risultati con Le e ottenere il Suo feedback per l'accuratezza della segnalazione.

Riservatezza: C'è il rischio di perdita di riservatezza se le Sue informazioni o la Sua identità sono ottenute da qualcuno diverso dagli investigatori, ma verranno prese precauzioni per evitare che ciò accada. Saranno compiuti sforzi per limitare l'uso e la condivisione delle informazioni di ricerca personali alle persone che hanno bisogno di rivedere queste informazioni.

Saranno fatti sforzi ragionevoli per mantenere private le informazioni personali nel Suo record di ricerca. La riservatezza dei Suoi dati elettronici creati da Le o dai ricercatori sarà mantenuta come richiesto dalla legge applicabile e nella misura consentita dalla tecnologia utilizzata. L'assoluta riservatezza non può essere garantita.

                • Le informazioni raccolte in questo progetto possono essere condivise con altri ricercatori, ma non condivideremo alcuna informazione che La possa identificare.

        Consenso alla raccolta, all'utilizzo, all'archiviazione e al trattamento delle informazioni personali ai sensi del Regolamento generale sulla protezione dei dati: Come parte di questo studio, la Pennsylvania State University raccoglierà, utilizzerà, memorizzerà ed elaborerà le informazioni di ricerca personali che fornirai in relazione alla ricerca per gli scopi descritti nel presente Consenso per la ricerca. Poiché La trova nell'Unione Europea, tutte le informazioni di ricerca personali che fornisci in relazione allo studio di ricerca saranno raccolte, utilizzate, archiviate ed elaborate in conformità con le disposizioni del Regolamento (UE) 2016/679 ("Regolamento sulla protezione delle persone fisiche con riguardo al trattamento dei dati personali, nonché alla libera circolazione di tali dati"), così come tutte le altre leggi applicabili e le politiche della Pennsylvania State University. Queste leggi e regolamenti, a seconda del tipo di informazioni coinvolte, La forniscono determinati diritti in relazione alle Sue informazioni personali.

        Puo' scegliere di ritirare il Suo consenso alla raccolta, all'uso, alla memorizzazione e all'elaborazione delle Sue informazioni di ricerca personali prima di completare le procedure di ricerca descritte nel presente Consenso per la ricerca. Se decide di ritirare il Suo consenso durante lo studio, nella misura richiesta dalla legge e siamo in grado di La identificare dalle informazioni conservate come parte di questo studio, tutte le informazioni di ricerca personali che ha già fornito saranno distrutte o cancellate e non saranno più raccolte, utilizzate, archiviate o elaborate. Puo' anche ritirare il Suo consenso all'uso, all'archiviazione e all'elaborazione delle Sue informazioni di ricerca personali dallo studio di ricerca dopo che la Sua partecipazione allo studio è terminata. Se ritira il Suo consenso all'uso, alla memorizzazione e al trattamento delle Sue informazioni di ricerca personali dopo che lo studio è stato completato, nella misura richiesta dalla legge e siamo in grado di La identificare dalle informazioni conservate come parte di questo studio, le Sue informazioni di ricerca personali saranno distrutte o cancellate e non saranno più raccolte, utilizzato, archiviato o elaborato. Puo' revocare il Suo consenso all'uso, all'archiviazione e all'elaborazione delle Sue informazioni di ricerca personali in qualsiasi momento contattando il ricercatore principale dello studio, Bianca Mazzarella a +39 342 765 9864, bum380@psu.edu. Puo' anche contattare il programma di protezione della ricerca umana al numero +1 (814) 865 1775, (e-mail irb-orp@psu.edu) se non e' in grado di raggiungere l'investigatore.

        • Completando questo Consenso per la ricerca, acconsente consapevolmente e volontariamente alla raccolta, all'uso, all'archiviazione e all'elaborazione delle Sue informazioni personali da parte della Pennsylvania State University ai fini di questo studio di ricerca qui descritto.

        In caso di domande, reclami o dubbi sulla ricerca, è necessario contattare Bianca Mazzarella al numero: +39 342 765 9864 o Theodore Alter al numero +1 814 883 9634.   In caso di domande relative ai Suoi diritti come soggetto di ricerca o dubbi riguardanti la Sua privacy, puo' contattare il Programma di protezione della ricerca umana al numero +1 814 865 1775.

La Sua partecipazione è volontaria e puo' decidere di interrompere in qualsiasi momento. Non deve rispondere a domande a cui non vuole rispondere.

Indica la Sua decisione in merito alla partecipazione o meno alla ricerca.

Ha deciso: (Iniziale)   _____ Di prendere parte alla ricerca.
                          _____ NON prendere parte alla ricerca.

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ACADEMIC VITA

Bianca L. Mazzarella

EDUCATION

Bachelor of Arts in Economics
Enhanced Minor in Italian
Minor in Global and International Studies
Honors Thesis in Community, Environment, and Development
Community, Environment, and Development Specialization in Political Economy

The Pennsylvania State University	**University Park, PA**
Schreyer Honors College	May 2023
College of Liberal Arts Paterno Fellowship	

Umbra Institute	**Perugia, Umbria, Italy**
Semester Study Abroad	Spring 2022

EMPLOYMENT

Penn State College of Agriculture	**University Park, PA**
Administrative, Research, and Teaching Assistant	June 2021-present

- Conducts annotated literature reviews
- Gathers, integrates, analyzes, and synthesizes quantitative and qualitative information and data
- Writes reports and publications
- Mentors new members of the research/administration team

INTERNSHIP

Umbra Institute	**Perugia, Umbria, Italy**
Urban Agriculture Development Assistant	May 2022-June 2022

- Planted, harvested, and practiced regular garden maintenance within the local community garden, Orto Sole
- Engaged with local stakeholders to discuss future development of the University of Perugia and The Umbra Institute's urban agriculture projects
- Assisted University of Perugia's College of Agriculture in developing and executing pilot activities related to the College's on-going community engagement efforts

LAW-RELATED EXPERIENCE

Empowering Women in Law	**University Park, PA**
Member	August 2021-present
Nocito Law Offices	**Kingston, PA**
Intern	August 2021

Luzerne County Courthouse   **Wilkes-Barre, PA**
Intern   August-November 2020
Saporito, Falcone, & Watt   **Pittston, PA**
Intern   June-August 2018
Pennsylvania Young Lawyers Club   **Wilkes-Barre, PA**
Member   September 2017-May 2019

LEADERSHIP EXPERIENCE

Schreyer Honors College Orientation   **University Park, PA**
Group Mentor   February 2020-August 2021
- Guided 250+ first year scholars through welcoming events, seminars, and tours

Girl Scouts of America   **Pittston, PA**
Troop Member   2010-2019
- Obtained Silver Award through the collection over 250 items for a local animal shelter
- Obtained Gold Award by recording interviews with local nursing home members and gifting the interviewees' families with a copy of their interview on a burned CD

VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE

Parents' Council Family Ambassadors   **University Park, PA**
Student Ambassador   January 2021-present
- Serves as student liaison between the Parents Program office and Penn State parents and families at large
- Volunteers at key parent and family programming throughout the year

Lion Ambassadors   **University Park, PA**
Student Ambassador   December 2020-present
- Instills pride among student body and promotes the University within the Penn State community including past, present, and future students through campus tours and university-wide projects
    o Homecoming Ad-Hoc, Fall 2021
    o External Service Ad-Hoc, Fall 2022-present
    o Director of Internal Affairs, Fall 2022-present

College of Liberal Arts Ambassadors   **University Park, PA**
Student Ambassador   January 2020-2022
- Operates as a representative for the College of the Liberal Arts through engagement with prospective students, parents, and alumni

Centre County Centre PACT   **State College, PA**
Collegiate Advisor   2019-2021
- Offers advice and guidance to high school students as they solicit funds from local businesses to support grants given to local nonprofit

Rustic Pathways Service Trips   **Dominican Republic | Fiji**
Jarabacoa, Dominican Republic   Summer 2017
- Completed over 20 hours of service
- Constructed aqueducts for villages with inadequate water sources
- Interacted with villagers and children to promote good will

Bavu, Fiji   Summer 2018

- Completed over 30 hours of service
- Assembled compost toilets in the village
- Prepared meals and distributed the food at local women's shelters

SKILLS

Language
- Full professional proficiency in Italian after enrolling in eight semesters of college-level Italian language courses
- Completed a semester-long program in Perugia, Italy, for Spring 2022 semester, followed by a two-month internship in this location