



Growing Together: The Intersections of Food, Identity, Community and

Gardening in St. John's, Newfoundland

By: Laura Nelson-Hamilton

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ABSTRACT

All across the country, people are participating in community gardening activities as a way to learn and share gardening knowledge, gain access to fresh produce, develop social bonds and improve the physical features of neighbourhood and public space. In the eastern Canadian province of Newfoundland and Labrador, community gardening is becoming a popular way to access fresh produce and learn or practice gardening skills. While gardening has traditionally been practiced by families residing on the island of Newfoundland (Omohundro 1995), community gardens are a more recent facet of food production there. Little academic attention has been given to gardening in Newfoundland and Labrador since the mid-1990s. Fostered by what may be conceived of as a burgeoning food security movement, there is much hope amongst community garden organizers that these spaces will address food insecurity and personal health needs amongst the provincial population.

This thesis examines the Rabbittown Community Garden, which is located in a social housing neighbourhood in St. John's, Newfoundland. By considering the history of the garden's development, as well as the interests, needs and perspectives of persons who helped to organize and maintain it, I seek to question the significance of identity to participation in community gardening. My research indicates that the benefits of community gardening are diverse, that identity and sense of place contribute to women's and men's tastes for particular vegetables, and that there are both opportunities and challenges presented to those who participate in community

gardening at Rabbittown. This thesis provides a nuanced approach to understanding the range of activities that are involved in community gardening, and updates previous considerations of gardening in Newfoundland and Labrador.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC)

Community Garden Alliance (CGA)

Food Education Action St. John's (FEAST)

Food Security Network (FSN)

LIST OF APPENDICES

Interview Schedules

LIST OF REGULAR GARDENERS

In the moments leading up to 12:30 p.m. when community gardening activities would begin on Sunday afternoons, one could never be sure who would arrive in order to participate. For those who are briefly described here, Sunday afternoon community gardening activities were part of a semi-regular routine. No one participated in community gardening every single week, there were no formal membership mechanisms that secured rights or fostered particular responsibilities within the space. No one served as the garden manager, and no one was required to pay dues, explain their absences or communicate whether they would or would not be there each week to other persons who regularly tended the space. The following people comprise the garden group whose activities I discuss and describe in Chapters Three, Four, Five and Six. Each person described in this section has been given a pseudonym.



Ashley is in her early twenties and moved to St. John's in August 2009 in order to study at Memorial University. She first arrived at the Rabbittown Community Garden with her boyfriend at the time, a young man named Eric. Ashley grew up in Pictou County, Nova Scotia, where her mother kept a garden, made preserves and salsas, and froze un-used garden produce for consumption over winter. Ashley did not assist her mother with the garden while she was growing up; however, she has begun to do so as an adult, during visits home in summer. Ashley enjoys community gardening because it gives her a chance to meet people, learn how to garden from others, and learn more about sustainable living, which she became interested in during environmental studies courses that she completed during her undergraduate degree. For Ashley, gardening is a relaxing activity. Before re-locating to St. John's, she also participated in a community garden at an Eastern Canadian University, and has worked on organic farms.

Clara is in her mid-twenties, and re-located to St. John's in June, 2009 in order to be with her partner, Sam. Clara completed a Bachelor's degree at a University in British Columbia, where she specialized in Spanish and cross-cultural dialogue. She grew up on Vancouver Island, in British Columbia. Upon her arrival in St. John's she became involved with an organic farming collective. She has worked with the Otesha Project, which leads bicycle tours in various parts of Canada in order to raise awareness of environmental issues and sustainable living practices. During the summer of 2009, she also assisted with the development of garden-themed After School programs at the Rabbittown Community Centre.



Eric is in his mid-twenties. He completed a Fine Arts Degree at the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design, specializing in photography. Like his girlfriend at the time, Ashley, he grew up in Pictou County, Nova Scotia. He became interested in food production after doing a documentary photography project on the Halifax Farmers' Market. Although his mother and aunt gardened while he was growing up, he did not participate in gardening activities with them. He began gardening at an Eastern Canadian University in summer 2009. After having an enjoyable summer meeting people, learning about gardening and developing friendships with other persons involved with the initiative, Eric and Ashley decided that participating in the Rabbittown Community Garden might be a good way to forge new connections in St. John's. He and Ashley

learned about the garden's existence while reading the free St. John's newsweekly The Scope.

Gloria is the Executive Director of the Community Garden Alliance. She moved to St. John's in 2008 in order to accept a position at Memorial University. Gloria grew up in the city of Waterloo, which is located in an agricultural region of Ontario. Her family regularly purchased produce from local farmers' markets, and she has practiced the habit of purchasing locally produced food throughout her adult life. Gloria began gardening while she was completing her Master's degree. After purchasing Gardening for Dummies, a few pots, seeds and soil, she planted a garden on the balcony of an apartment that she shared with her husband Kyle. While completing her PhD, she also planted a garden in the backyard of a rental home, with the assistance of her mother and sister. Gloria's carrot and raisin salad is a favourite among persons who regularly participate in community gardening, and have attended garden days that feature potlucks and shared meals. Gloria was in her mid-thirties at the time of our interview.



Jane loves growing things, and for the past nine years she has grown a garden with her husband Leo. The couple resides in a satellite housing development that is considered to be a part of Rabbittown, and was given permission to convert their backyard into a garden in order to pursue these interests. Jane became involved with the community garden after hearing about it from someone at the Rabbittown Community Centre in 2008 while she was registering her son for summer camp. She is a certified veterinary technician, and, in 2009, was performing home care duties for persons with disabilities and elderly people. In her spare time, Jane collects wild flowers, seeds, pods, leaves, pine cones and other natural items that may be dried and utilized in crafts. Jane was born and raised in St. John's, but lived away from the island while completing her veterinary technician studies. Jane describes herself as a person living on

a low income. She became involved with the community garden out of an interest in creating a space within the neighbourhood where children might learn about sustainability issues, and where adults might come together in order to share space and produce food with one another. Along with her daughter Sophia, who was four in 2009, Jane also regularly brought Trevor, a friend and home care client, to the garden on Sunday afternoons. She is in her mid-thirties.

Kayla moved to St. John's in 2008 and began volunteering immediately upon her arrival in order to meet new people and become involved in the community. Kayla is in her late twenties and completed her undergraduate degree at a University in Ontario. She is a certified teacher, and was working at a daycare during the second season of community gardening. As an undergraduate, she coordinated a student food bank, participated in community gardening, and sold crafts at a farmers' market. Since residing in St. John's, she has continued to pursue many of these activities, and more. She has established other gardening programs in the city, and has also volunteered with Food Security Network and Food Education Action St. John's. Kayla grew up in Scarborough, Ontario and has also resided in Guelph and Montreal.



Kelly is in her early thirties and was interested in starting a community garden in the city's east end. She is originally from St. John's, Newfoundland but has lived in Ontario and other parts of the country throughout her life. She came to the garden with her partner Tony, who worked on an organic farming collective outside of the city (along with Kyle and Clara). Kelly and Tony have one daughter, who was just over the age of one in 2009. Kelly is interested in traditional healing, wild herb harvesting, and consuming fresh, organic, unprocessed foods. She arrived to the garden occasionally on Sundays, and led a workshop about medicinal uses of comfrey on one occasion. She was interested in participating in community gardening so that she could learn more about how these initiatives are organized.

Kyle is the Community Garden Alliance Treasurer. He came to St. John's in 2008 with his wife Gloria. Since 2009, he has worked on an organic farming cooperative just

outside of the city. Throughout the spring, summer, and fall he devotes his energy to planting and harvesting activities, and is a regular vendor at the St. John's Farmers' Market. Kyle grew up in New Liskeard, Ontario and began gardening while living in the United States for several years. After making friends with an avid gardener while residing there, he became interested in gardening activities. Kyle enjoys cooking, and is renowned among friends and acquaintances for his culinary skill. He is in his mid-thirties and is married to Gloria.



Lee-Anne is in her mid-forties and has lived in Rabbittown for twelve years. Although she was born in St. John's, she also resided in Saskatchewan and New

Brunswick while she was growing up. Lee-Anne has cerebral palsy and utilizes a wheelchair in order to mobilize herself. At the time of our interview, Lee-Anne was unemployed. Previously, she has worked as an actress with a local theatre troupe that included persons with disabilities. Lee-Anne collaboratively wrote and performed plays, focussing on themes of disability and poverty. She has been highly involved in the Rabbittown community. When Lee-Anne was a child, she spent time gardening with her mother. She was interested in participating in the community garden because she enjoys a challenge, and knew that it would not be easy for her, due to her disability. She said she hadn't thought about gardening much before hearing about the idea to construct a garden in her neighbourhood, but that it seemed like a good idea, and a worthwhile activity due to the potential that it would provide her with access to fresh produce, free of charge. She prefers to garden on sunny days, when the weather is not too cold. During our interview, she spoke about living on a low-income, and described her attempts to balance costs in order to feed her family and continue to pay her bills. Although she self-identified as a person living on a low income, she was also interested in growing food and consuming healthier foods, which she considered to be quite expensive at local grocery stores.

Leo is in his late thirties and grew up in Wabush, Labrador. In summer, he helped his grandfather plant and tend a garden there. Throughout the gardening season, Leo shared stories about his previous experiences gardening, and gave regular updates on the successes and challenges of the garden he maintains in the backyard of his home in

a satellite development of Rabbittown. Leo is married to a woman named Jane, and the couple has two children. In 2009, Leo had a shoulder injury, which has kept him from performing strenuous tasks. He identifies himself as a person living on a low income. Leo was interested in community gardening due to his love for growing vegetables and plants, as well as his interest in challenging himself to confront his shyness and interact with people who share common interests and concerns.



Lisa grew up on Cape Breton Island in Nova Scotia, and completed her undergraduate degree in Newfoundland. In 2009, she was completing an internship with the Community Garden Alliance as part of her Master's degree at a mainland University. Lisa had never gardened before, and wanted to complete her internship with a food-related organization due to her interests in sustainable food production and health promotion. In order to learn more about gardening, Lisa participated in a number of workshops at the St. John's Farmers' Market and other garden-related organizations in

the city. She found gardening to be an exciting activity, and wanted to learn as much as she could about it over the course of the summer months. As an intern with the Community Garden Alliance, Lisa sent out media releases, created workshops to be facilitated at a later date, and generated donations for the construction of a brick path that was to increase the garden's accessibility for persons in wheelchairs. She is in her late twenties.

Michael is described by those who live and work in Rabbittown as a person who loves his community. He has been involved with the Rabbittown Tenants' Association, volunteers and works with the Rabbittown Community Centre and often hosts social events at the home that he shares with his wife Lee-Anne, in Rabbittown. Michael has lived in Rabbittown for close to a decade. He has also lived in various parts of Canada, including British Columbia, where he was a guerrilla gardener (someone who plants food and flowers in un-used public spaces) with persons he knew there. Because of his connections within the neighbourhood, Michael was seen as someone who could help establish the garden in the neighbourhood. Michael and Lee-Anne head a blended family which includes three children and two dogs. He is in his forties.



Penney completed a Master's degree in Botany at Memorial University. She is married, and has two young sons who were one and three in 2009. She is in her thirties. Penney grew up in Prince Edward Island, where both of her parents keep gardens. After re-locating to St. John's, Penney became interested in finding a place to garden so that she could have better access to fresh produce, continue to learn about gardening, and have a space to take her two young sons so that they could play outside. Until August, 2009, Penney, her sons, and her husband, were residing one block away from the Rabbittown Community Garden in a rented apartment without a backyard. The garden was an important space to her because it allowed her to teach her sons about where their food comes from. For her, it was a space where she could be social, and meet other

people who share similar interests. In summer 2009 she was also a regular merchant at the St. John's Farmers' Market, where she sold baked goods and salads.

Sam is a young man in his mid-twenties who is a certified teacher, and had recently completed a bicycle trip across Newfoundland in order to raise awareness of environmental issues, and encourage sustainable living habits. He is from St. John's, Newfoundland and completed his studies at Memorial University. Sam came to the garden in order to practice his food production skills, and was residing in a rented apartment close to the city's downtown core in 2009. He assisted with the development of children's programs and activities, and was also interested in community development projects that would help to raise awareness of the garden within the neighbourhood, and ensure that it was a space that benefitted residents of Rabbittown. His partner is Clara, who also participated in community gardening activities.

Tony was a somewhat regular participant in community gardening who asked that he not be described in much detail within this research.



Trevor grew up in Winterton, Newfoundland and always wanted to have a garden of his own. While he was growing up, both of his parents kept gardens; however, the location of his father's garden (on a hillside) and his mother's garden (which is low to the ground), meant that Trevor could only watch them perform these activities. Trevor has spina bifida, and utilizes a wheelchair in order to mobilize himself. He is an avid cook, is interested in herbal medicine, and also enjoys trying new foods. Inside of his apartment, located a block away from the community garden, he maintains 18 house plants. He has partially completed a Bachelor of Arts at Memorial University, and was an active member of the Memorial University Pagan Society. He began participating in community gardening after hearing about the garden from Jane, who was his home care worker in 2008.



Veronica moved to St. John's in 2008, and was employed by the Community Garden Alliance until her contract ended part-way through the garden's second season. She planted her first seed at the Rabbittown Community Garden in summer 2009, and was interested in community gardening so that she could support the initiative, and learn how to grow some of her own food. Since participating in community gardening, and working for the CGA, Veronica has gone on to work with the Food Security Network of Newfoundland and Labrador. She enjoys cooking, and is a supporter of local food initiatives. She grew up near Toronto, Ontario, and has also resided in Guelph and Montreal.

These individuals formed the core community garden group. Several others participated with some frequency at the beginning of the season, or at various points of time throughout the summer. While it is not my intention to write them out of community gardening as it occurred at Rabbittown, for the purposes of maintaining focus, and remaining within the constraints of a Master's thesis, I focus much of my discussion and analysis on the activities and perspectives of those described above. Of the seventeen people who regularly participated in community gardening in 2009, four were involved with its development, four were considered to be 'community members' or residents of Rabbittown, three persons were working on an organic farm and did not express an interest in taking foods that were grown home with them (due to already having access to fresh, local, organic produce). Three participated, in part, out of an interest in providing a space in which their children could play and to teach them where their food comes from (two women and one man), two persons identified as persons with disabilities and utilized wheelchairs, three were current students and ten had completed university degrees (two of which were Master's degrees, two of which were PhDs). Among those who had completed university degrees, their educational backgrounds were cited as contributors to their interests in community gardening. Several gardeners had parents who gardened when they were young, and this was often described as inspirational to community gardeners' participation in these activities. Ten out of the seventeen regular participants were women, ten were over thirty and seven were in their twenties. Four children under the age of five also participated in

community gardening on a regular basis. Beyond those who identified as Rabbittown community members and persons living on low incomes, two other persons who participated in community gardening also said that their low income status had led to their participation in community gardening as a way to access fresh, affordable, local produce.

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

A hard rain begins to fall on a Sunday afternoon in July, and a small group of people, gathered in a fenced-in lot in a central St. John's, Newfoundland neighbourhood called Rabbittown, acknowledge it with a range of sighs, groans and laughs.



Glancing up at the sky and the work that lays before them at a handful of raised garden beds, one young woman wonders aloud if the rain will last. They've just started planting marigolds and tomatoes. A tray of both sit side by side at the base of one garden bed. Two women, who have arrived there with small children, decide not to wait the weather out. Moving quickly, they take cover under a row of trees that stand along one side of the yard, covering their children's heads and crouching beneath the leaves. Dressed for summer, in t-shirts and shorts, those who do not have children laugh off the quick change in the weather and decide to forge ahead. Kneeling down before the garden, one

young man digs into the soil, making a space for seedlings to be transplanted. A young woman squats low beside him and sprinkles blood meal - made of fish and animal bone, which acts as a high powered fertilizer for fruits and vegetables - into the crevice. Carefully lifting a seedling from the tray, the young man sets it in the space that has been cleared and prepped. The two carry on until the trays have been planted, while a small group of others who have gathered within the space stand around a circular shaped, rock framed, raised garden bed. They take turns planting leeks, squash, and chives, in between conversations about the upcoming municipal election, water saving strategies, and their zodiac signs. The rain comes and goes over the course of the two and a half hour occasion. Gardeners cheer when the rain pauses and the sun breaks through the clouds, and laugh when the rain comes down again only a moment later. Most continue gardening despite the ever-changing conditions. The two women with young children eventually take them home in order to keep them warm and dry inside. One person who gardens in a wheelchair mentions that she dislikes doing so when the weather is cold and wet, and a woman who arrived to the garden in a car offers for her to sit inside of it while the group completes their activities. At the Rabbittown Community Garden, all are welcome to come and go as they like, and they did so, for the most part, on Sunday afternoons.

All across the country, people are participating in community gardening activities as a way to learn and share gardening knowledge, gain access to fresh produce, develop social bonds and improve the physical features of neighbourhood and public space. The

term 'community garden' does not differentiate between the various styles of gardens that exist and are named as such; however, it is important to note that they may be organized as allotment style gardens, where individual plots are given out or rented within a shared space, or, as communal style gardens where labour and produce are shared by persons who tend several garden beds together. According to leisure studies scholar Troy Glover: "...Community gardens have the potential to improve the appearance of neighbourhoods, build a sense of community and become community focal points and catalysts for neighbourhood change" (2003:193). The Queen Mary Community Garden, for instance, was constructed by a neighbourhood organization in the Mid-Western United States in order to create social bonds among neighbours, alter negative perceptions of the neighbourhood within the city in which it is located, and provide fresh produce to persons living on low incomes. Franco (2004) provides a similar insight into community gardens that were developed in Latino neighbourhoods by a city-wide umbrella community gardening organization in New York City. He indicates that, in these locations, community gardening is a cultural activity, where plants, flowers, celebrations and social activities that are located within the space express the ethnic and religious identities of those who tend them. Citing Alanen and Melnick (2000:98) he argues: "Like a barn raising [community gardening] generates goodwill among everyone and it provides a source of pride and identity" (2004:17). In the City of Toronto, community gardens have been planted in several social housing neighbourhoods, and are tended by neighbourhood associations and garden facilitators who share knowledge,

provide resources, and ensure proper maintenance (Friendly 2008). In these instances, community gardening activities are meant to supply persons residing in a common neighbourhood with fresh produce, and a sense of empowerment. Elsewhere, community gardens have been constructed with the purpose of benefitting persons who reside in the same city or town, rather than a specific neighbourhood. In her Master of Arts in Justice Studies thesis Food and Social Justice in Saskatchewan: Community Gardens as a Local Practice of Food Sovereignty, Yolanda Hansen examines community gardening activities that are occurring in public parks in Regina and Saskatoon, as well as an enclosed area in Regina. In these locations, persons who participate in community gardening travel there from various parts of these municipalities in order to garden with others. In Montréal, which boasts Canada's largest network of community gardens, the municipal government has played an active role in developing and supporting these initiatives since the 1970s. Persons residing there who wish to participate in community gardening may purchase a membership in order to secure an allotment within a larger space. Although there are many similarities between the styles of community gardening organizations, there are some differences between the ways in which these organizations have been developed in various parts of Canada. Whether a garden is located on public or private land, is funded through membership fees or the support of an organization or municipality, all contribute to the specificities of each space.

In this thesis, I focus on the Rabbittown Community Garden, which is located in a social housing neighbourhood in St. John's, Newfoundland. "Social housing" may refer to

"All forms of non-market housing sponsored, owned, and/or managed by public, private non-profit organizations or co-operatives" (Thibert 2007: 1). Rabbittown is a government-funded neighbourhood that is managed by Newfoundland and Labrador Housing. Eight hundred and sixty-five people reside in the neighbourhood, and comprise two hundred and sixty-five families. One hundred and ninety of these families are headed by lone parents, one hundred and seventy-five of which are female. The average income of residents is \$7,100 (after tax, adjusted for inflation). In 2006, four hundred and twenty five residents received some form income support, with the average amount estimated to be \$5,100 (Newfoundland and Labrador Community Accounts: Graves Street Profile). As a Master of Women's Studies thesis, my research is to respond to questions regarding the role of women within society and issues related to social justice by exploring a chosen research topic through an interdisciplinary lens. In order to abide by disciplinary objectives, I question how, why and by whom the Rabbittown Community Garden was organized, how, and by whom the garden was maintained in 2009, and the extent to which gender, social class, physical capacity, regional identities, education, and previous experiences gardening contribute to people's participation in these activities. I utilize feminist intersectional identity theory in order to form my pre-theoretical assumptions about the conception of identity that I will utilize throughout my thesis. I analyze data from interviews and participant observation, and focus on the narratives of those who participated in organizing and maintaining the community garden between 2006 and 2009.

Existing literature on community gardening directly and indirectly connects these activities to notions of food security. According to the United Nations: "Food security at the household, national, regional and global levels [is achieved] when all people, at all times, have physical and economic access to sufficient, safe, and nutritious food to meet their dietary food needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life" (United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization 1996 in Canada's Action Plan for Food Security 1998:9). In 2007-08, it was estimated that 7.7% of Canadians (960,000 people) lived in food insecure households (Health Canada 2007). The territories and Eastern Canada report the highest rates of food insecurity within the country, which is marked by a lack of accessibility to sufficient, safe, and nutritious food, and is predominantly experienced by Aboriginal peoples, women, and persons living on social assistance (Canada's Action Plan for Food Security 1998). While aid and social service organizations tend to emphasize children's food insecurity, it is often the case that adults will limit their own food intake in order to provide their children with necessary nutrients (Health Canada 2008). Health Canada also reports that women, more so than men, experience food insecurity in their adult years (ibid). Community gardens have been constructed in order to meet personal and community food needs, and often include one plot, or bed, that is grown for the benefit of food service organizations, such as food banks and community kitchens.

In recent years, community gardening activities have been analyzed in order to discuss their potential to increase personal health and wellbeing. According to Canadian

Public Health researchers Wakefield et al.: “Community gardens are increasingly part of the urban fabric, in Canada and around the world. These gardens, often built on underutilized land, are seen as having a number of positive health benefits” (2007:92). By providing access to fresh produce for those who tend them, typically, in exchange for a small land rental or membership fee, or, depending on the funding status of the organization, for free, community gardens may increase personal health and foster increased consumption of fruits and vegetables. The health rewards of these initiatives have also been articulated by community psychologists Alaimo et al., who argue: “Community gardens are public health promotion enterprises that can simultaneously promote good nutrition and physical activity within neighbourhoods, especially in areas with economic or structural barriers to accessing fresh produce and recreation opportunities” (2010:488). In her master’s thesis Looking at Community Gardens Through Neoliberal Lenses, Tomoko Ogawa states: “In addition to providing fresh vegetables and fruits or outdoor recreations, community gardens are often portrayed as an agent of social change to address issues related to food security, the environment, or community building” (Ogawa 2009:v). These descriptions indicate that participation in community gardening increases access to fresh vegetables, provides a form of outdoor recreation, and offers people an opportunity to curb social isolation that they might experience while residing in large cities, or, as a result of re-locating to a new community. The construction of a community garden might also improve a degraded space, by increasing its utility and altering its aesthetic features.

As community gardening activities become increasingly common in Canadian cities and towns, academic interest has focused on their potential benefits and outcomes, in some instances, as a way to support their development and help gardening organizations secure funding and space. While some researchers have examined their nutritional benefits (Dickinson et al. 2003; Irvine 1999;), emphasizing the potential for community gardens to increase accessibility to healthy food, specifically, among persons who live on low incomes, others have examined the recreational aspects of these activities (Dickinson et al. 2003; Armstrong 2000). Besides the potential health rewards of community gardening, these activities have also been considered as those which might increase cross-cultural interactions within urban locales (Baker 2004, Shinew et al. 2004; Doyle and Kransky 2003; Hancock 2001). Community gardens in the city of Toronto, for instance, have been described as spaces where persons from a variety of ethnic backgrounds are able to meet with one another and develop common bonds on the basis of shared gardening experiences and common interests in consuming fresh food (Hancock 2001). Due to the social nature of these activities, community gardening has also been described as a community development-oriented initiative (Holland 2004; Schmelzkopf 2002; Fusco 2001). Other analyses have indicated that community gardens produce senses of security and safety in urban neighbourhoods (Glover et al. 2003; Ferris et al 2001; Schmelzkopf 1995). By gardening together, persons residing in the same neighbourhood are able to develop social bonds, and trust amongst one another. Those who garden together may also form a sort of community.

In some instances, community gardens have been documented as serving particular purposes for particular aspects of a population. In certain cases, communities of persons with shared cultural backgrounds garden together as a way to maintain ethnic identities in multicultural cities. One example of this is the Urban Aboriginal Kitchen Community Garden Project, which operates through the University of British Columbia's Vancouver campus. The Kitchen Community Garden is a space that creates opportunities for Aboriginal peoples to grow traditional food items, and to share cultural knowledge with one another in order to increase holistic health and wellbeing (Mundel and Chapman 2010). Similarly, community gardens that are planted by or for those residing in particular neighbourhoods also reflect the social class and ethnic organization of a city or town. Franco's analysis of community gardens in New York City, for instance, reveals the intersection of low-income status and Latino identity within the neighbourhoods in which these gardens are located, and the significance of these spaces in relation to expression of identities (2004). Glover's (2003) analysis of a community garden in the Mid-Western United States also attests to the significance of one's neighbourhood to their identity. The degradation of the neighbourhood that he considers in his analysis contributes to negative perception of those persons residing there, notably, that they are drug addicts, and criminals. He notes: "The collective identity of residents is, thus, tied to misfortune, which is only reinforced by outsiders and serves to disempower community members" (Glover 2003: 190). By constructing a community garden, those who participated in the project were attempting to re-inscribe

their neighbourhood with new meanings in an effort to alter its status as a dangerous place. As such, the act of community gardening was seen as one of resistance, which sought to create a space of civility amongst gun violence, drug dealing and prostitution (Glover 2003:208). In Toronto, the multiculturalism and ethnic organization of the city are also revealed within the social constitution of particular garden groups. At the Frances Beavis Community Garden, which is located in the city's South Riverdale neighbourhood, Asian vegetables which are difficult to find in nearby grocery stores are planted by a predominantly Chinese-Canadian garden group who reside in social housing (Baker 2004:313). Elsewhere, the Riverside Community Garden is tended by a group of recent immigrants to Canada, within a neighbourhood that is reported as having high rates of unemployment (Baker 2004:319). Although the garden is notable as a space where persons from a variety of ethnic backgrounds are able to grow produce, Baker acknowledges that there are some tensions as a result of these differences: "For example, Sri Lankan gardeners formed the majority of people on the garden committee, which produced some tension between themselves and non-Tamil residents...Language is not the only hindrance in mediating conflict; cultural, racial, and gendered conceptions of community participation are also barriers" (Baker 2004:320). Finally, her analysis of the Shamba Community Garden also indicates the significance of the space within the Jane and Wilson neighbourhood in Toronto, which is described as having high unemployment and crime rates (2004:317). Although it was constructed by a predominantly African-Canadian group, it has become a space where recent immigrants

from various parts of the world have travelled in order to participate in these activities (ibid). For some, the garden was a place where they could go in order to gain “Canadian” volunteer experience, meet other new Canadians, exercise gardening skills that were learned in other parts of the world, and obtain fresh food (319). Baker does not elaborate, specifically, on the social class backgrounds of those who participate in community gardening in these locations; however, she reports that accessing fresh produce is considered to be an important aspect of their activities, since these gardens are located in neighbourhoods where residents experience high rates of unemployment and are not always able to purchase foods that are familiar to them at nearby grocery stores. In these studies, the ethnicities and social class backgrounds of community gardeners, and, the locations of particular garden spaces, signify the ways in which cities and towns are socially, economically, and culturally organized. The issues, concerns and needs that community gardens address reveal some of the structural inequalities and disadvantages that exist in contemporary societies.

In 2008, the Rabbittown Community Garden was one of four community gardening initiatives underway within the city of St. John’s. During the summer of 2009, a temporary community garden was established in downtown, and another community garden was constructed at St. Bonaventure’s School. Between 2009 and 2010, two more community gardens were established near Mount Scio Road, and one more was constructed at Memorial University. As of 2011, there are ten community gardens operating in the city. The recent establishment of these initiatives signals a burgeoning

interest in community gardening within the city, and the organizational activities that persons who share interests in food security, sustainability, community development and gardening have performed in order to increase the amount of community garden space available to persons residing in St. John's. Although there are opportunities for researchers to consider community gardening as a sort of movement that is occurring in St. John's, my interests are to focus, intently, on one particular garden so as to understand it from the perspectives of those who were involved in these activities. According to Wakefield et al: "A surprisingly small number of published studies actually talked with community gardeners about their experiences" (2007:93). By exploring the narratives of community gardeners, and those who organized this initiative, I will provide the reader with a nuanced understanding of the space from the perspectives of those who helped to plan, construct and tend to the garden between 2006 and 2009.

1.1 Research Problem and Theoretical Perspective

While existing analyses point to the potential rewards and benefits of community gardening, who participates in these initiatives, and what they derive from these activities are dependent upon the context of the particular community garden that is being considered. As Glover notes:

Clearly, each community garden is rooted in its own unique, complex set of historical, cultural and structural conditions, which mean, correspondingly, it holds its own collectively constructed and shared meanings, interpretations, rituals, and identities for its participants. In short a community garden is embedded in its own unique narrative (Glover 2003:193).

So too are community gardens embedded in the social and economic dynamics of the municipalities and neighbourhoods in which they are located. According to Renate Sander-Regier, gardens "...are also undeniably cultural, in terms of the human vision and imagination involved in designing the structure of the space, and the varied physical work of digging and planting to shape the space, plus the weeding, pruning, mulching, fertilizing, raking, watering and more to maintain the garden's desired characteristics" (2008 2). In studies that have examined the ways in which gardening activities are carried out, and by whom, ethnicity (Shinew et al. 2004), and gender (Buckingham 2005; Bhatti and Church 2000; Dann 1992) have been determined to be significant aspects of individual identities that lead people to participate in community gardening, albeit, in different ways. Due to the garden's location in a social housing neighbourhood, my initial interests in the space were related to questions about who participated in these activities. I wondered, for instance, if the garden had been developed out of the interests of persons residing in social housing, or, whether they were carried out by persons who reside elsewhere in the city. After completing my fieldwork, I came to understand the garden as a space where persons from a variety of social and economic backgrounds arrived each week. Further, although my initial impression was that persons residing in various parts of the city may not express a low income status, interviews with community gardeners attest to the challenges that students, young families, and persons with disabilities (whom do not reside in the neighbourhood, but do

live on low and fixed incomes) face in their attempts to secure access to fresh, local, (and, for some) organic produce. As such, an intersectional analysis develops an understanding of not only gardener identities, but the reasons why people seek out and participate in community gardening at Rabbittown.

Thus far, limited attention has been given to the significance of physical capacity with regard to people's interests in community gardening, and the extent to which persons with disabilities have been able to participate in these activities. While some have argued that community food security organizing is a predominantly white, middle class movement (Guthman 2008; Mascias 2008), existing literature indicates that, in multicultural cities, especially, community gardening is an activity that is enjoyed by persons from a variety of social class and ethnic backgrounds (Baker 2004). Few analyses have considered the significance of various aspects of individual identities to participation in community gardening, and these activities have not been analyzed previously in Newfoundland and Labrador.

In order to examine the potential significance of identity to participation in community gardening, I utilize an intersectional approach within my discussion and analysis, and conceive of identity as a site of multiple vectors (Verloo 2006) including, but not limited to, gender, ethnicity, social class, physical capacity, and geographic location (McCall 2005). These identity vectors move in and out of view throughout my thesis in order to consider their significance within particular moments, and points of discussion that occurred during conversations and interviews. Beyond these traditional

identity markers, I also consider the significance of previous gardening experience, inter-provincial and international mobility, education, environmental concerns, and regional identities to women and men's perspectives and activities. I developed my interview schedules in such a way that persons who were affiliated with the garden would be able to express their own understandings of their identities to me. As such, my discussion and analysis seeks to take up feminist considerations of intersectional identities and experiences, and to utilize the terms and descriptions that research participants shared with me. Women and men often indicated that their regional identities, economic status, physical abilities and disabilities, previous experiences, time spent in other provinces or parts of the world, courses taken at university, and concerns about environmental issues led them to participate in community gardening.

When the term intersectionality was first coined by feminist legal theorist Kimberlé Crenshaw, it was used as a way to describe and represent the multiple forms of oppression experienced by women of colour in the United States. In Crenshaw's more recent telling of this way of thinking women's experience she argues:

Intersectionality is what occurs when a woman from a minority group...tries to navigate the main crossing in the city...The main highway is 'racism road'. One cross street can be Colonialism, then Patriarchy Street...She has to deal not only with one form of oppression but with all forms, those named as road signs, which link together to make a double, a triple, multiple, a many layered blanket of oppression (Crenshaw WCAR 2001 in Yuval-Davis 2006, 196).

By representing the experiences of African American women who were victims of rape, Crenshaw's discussion in "Mapping the Margins" (1989) served to challenge

universalist discussions of “women’s experience” under the category of “woman”, critically analyzing the ways in which language, ethnicity and social class create differential experiences among women in the United States. Throughout the 1980s, arguments against a universal conceptualization of ‘woman’ came from other Black feminists (Davis 1981; hooks 1981) who emphasized the political insufficiencies of politics based on women’s and African American experience. Postmodern theorists also contributed to the deconstruction of the category by emphasizing the significance of ethnicity and social class (Moore 1988; Spelman 1988; Spivak 1988). In “Mapping the Margins”, Crenshaw represented the complications of feminist advocacy related to violence and sexual assault against women, challenging the ability of identity politics- which caused women to identify and politically activate themselves on the basis of either race or gender- to adequately attend to the experiences and needs of women of colour living in a sexist, classist and racist society. Crenshaw developed this critique by exploring the negative implications that understanding sexism and racism as differential axes of subordination incurred in the lives of Black women (1989:1244). Since Crenshaw first developed the term, ‘intersectionality’ has been utilized by feminist theorists and researchers in a variety of disciplines in order to understand the diversity of women’s experiences, and more carefully consider systems of oppression in contemporary societies. Recently, intersectionality has become a mainstay in feminist research approaches, allowing current feminist theorists to produce critical analyses of identities, experiences, and the operation of systemic forms of injustice which are maintained by

social structures and status hierarchies. As a result, this has encouraged more nuanced feminist activist endeavours that might transform injustice in contemporary societies throughout the globe.

In Canada, it has been argued that feminist approaches to understanding women's experience should employ an intersectional approach in order to adequately represent and understand the ways in which oppression occurs in women's lives not only on the basis of gender (CRIAW 2006). In her essay "Intersectionality as Buzzword: A Sociology of Science Perspective on What Makes a Feminist Theory Successful" (2008) feminist sociologist Kathy Davis argues: "Learning the ropes of feminist scholarship means attending to multiple identities and experiences of subordination. Feminist journals are likely to reject articles that have not given sufficient attention to 'race', class, and heteronormativity, along with gender" (2008:68). Davis' more recent discussion shows the importance of intersectional approaches within contemporary feminist theorizing, and the legacy of its utility as a subordination theory. However, in other discussions, feminist researchers have begun to utilize intersectionality as an approach to understanding individual identities and experiences, not necessarily on the basis of individual experiences of oppression, or, in reference to women as a discrete social group (Yuval Davis 2006, Brown 2005; Brah and Phoenix 2004; Skeggs 2004). In their discussion of intersectionality, sociologists Avtar Brah and Ann Phoenix argue: "We regard the concept of 'intersectionality' as signifying the complex, irreducible, varied, and variable effects which ensue when multiple axes of differentiation-economic,

political, cultural, psychic, subjective and experiential-intersect in historically specific contexts” (2004, 76). Brah and Phoenix’s discussion of difference, rather than oppression, is particularly salient for my ensuing discussion and analysis. By emphasizing the need to contextualize individual experiences in historically specific settings, Brah and Phoenix incite me to utilize this framework for thinking and representing women’s and men’s gardening practices and reflections on the outcomes of the garden at Rabbittown.

In order to clarify my terminology, it is important to note that my conception of gender follows the work of Joan Scott (1987), who indicates that gender is not simply the social roles that men and women take on:

...but the articulation (metaphoric and institutional) in specific contexts of social understandings of sexual difference...(which is culturally and historically variable, but which always seems fixed and indisputable because of its reference to natural, physical bodies) is an important way of specifying or establishing meaning (1987:3).

Scott’s analysis of gender coincides with her discussion of social class. In consideration of Steadman Jones (1983), her work attests to the intersections of these aspects of individual identities, and the ways in which they make meaning out of their identities and experiences. Before delving into a more in-depth consideration of social class, I will consider the work of Sherry Ortner (2006) who argues that, in America, class is ubiquitous, and nearly impossible to speak about “that it is ‘displaced’ or ‘spoken through’ other languages of social difference –race, ethnicity, and gender” (2006:72). Following Steadman-Jones (1983), who considers social class to be a discursive frame which creates class politics and becomes important to people’s identities as a result of

their class consciousness, Scott shows how gender and social class relate to one another, emphasizing that:

Although the rhetoric of class appeals to the objective 'experience' of workers, in fact, such experience only exists through its conceptual organization; what counts as experience cannot be established by collecting empirical data, but by analyzing the terms of definition offered in political discourse (by the state, employers, discrete political movements, etc) (Scott 1987:4).

Rather than embarking on an analytical journey that would entail empirically assessing community gardeners' social class backgrounds on the basis of their economic incomes, I chose to allow gardeners to represent themselves through their own discourses about this aspect of their identity. This decision was, in part, a result of my curiosity about whether social class would be discussed by persons involved with the garden. Rather than making this an issue by collecting economic data about those I met while conducting my research, and discussing my interpretation of the significance of social class as it related to economic conditions, I remained attentive to the ways in which income status, educational background, and, at times, the term social class were discussed and described by those affiliated with the initiative. I noticed that one's residence in Rabbittown was often utilized as a symbolic referent to a low-income status, and, that a low-income status was often discussed as a reason for participating in community gardening. While I am reluctant to promote the idea that anyone involved with the garden was of a particularly high social class, it was often the case that when social class was mentioned, people considered it to be related to living on a low-income.

In consideration of these discussions, I will utilize intersectionality as a way to retain what feminist development theorist Mike Kesby calls 'optimistic topography': theoretical conceptualizations of spaces that remain open to the possibility that social relations embedded there may not be oppressive to women (2005:2056). I do so as a way to remain open to the possibility that various aspects of individual identities, including, but not limited to, gender, affect people's experiences at the garden. This perspective on women's experience is attributable to analytical intersectional approaches which emphasize difference rather than subordination. I contend that framing research in this way will allow me to analyze gender, social class, physical capacity, ethnicity and previous experiences with gardening as aspects of people's identities which affect the ways in which they participate in community gardening. Rather than focussing on one identity category marker in particular, I seek to show how the multiple vectors of identity intersect with differential experiences and perspectives. Kesby's 'optimistic topography' allows me to document the potential differences between men and women without assuming that difference leads to dominance and oppression. According to Gressgård (2008) "The terminology of intersectionality is said to be a promising attempt at dealing with differences or complexities in theory production while maintaining the political impetus of feminism" (1). Although there are a variety of perspectives on what the political impetus of feminism might be, I will utilize a definition provided by Robyn Wiegman, in which she proposes that:

Feminism is by definition as well as by historical fact a reactive force; it is most generally an argument *against* political and social systems, ideological practices and cultural discourses that subordinate women and the feminine, on the one hand, and that arrange human potential, roles, and qualities through binary apparatuses, on the other (2008:42).

By employing an intersectional approach to conceptualizing identity, my intention is to avoid the production of binary thinking, specifically, with regard to masculinities and femininities, while remaining attentive to the ways in which identity, as an intersection, affects women's and men's experiences within the garden space. The Rabbittown Community Garden is not a feminist organization; however, its inclusion of women and men, persons with disabilities, and persons with a range of social and economic backgrounds make the garden an interesting place to study identity and experience to respond to feminist questions about the arrangement of human potential and roles. As a participant in and observer of community gardening I did not seek to apply feminist politics, yet my analysis is underlined by a feminist frame.

1.2 The Social Significance of the Research: Food Security and Community Gardening in Newfoundland and Labrador

Newfoundland and Labrador has been described as one of the most food insecure provinces in Canada due to the high numbers of persons who utilize food banks (Food Banks Canada 2009), the high cost of food (Department of Health and Community Services, 2010; The Scope, 2009), and limited availability of fresh, affordable produce in the island's grocery stores (Food Security Network 2010). It is a common sentiment that

there is but a four day food supply on the island at any given time (FSN 2009). Existing literature on food insecurity in contemporary Newfoundland and Labrador has documented the intersections of low income status and the inability to procure the foods that are needed in order to lead a healthy, active life. In a 2004 article published in the *National Review of Medicine*, Deanna Stokes Sullivan indicated that “23.4% of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians don’t have enough disposable income to buy basic necessities such as food, shelter, clothing and transportation” (2004: 1). Food security analysts have documented that, when people are forced to limit their spending on basic necessities, food is often the first thing that one chooses not to purchase in order to pay for rent, heat and hydro (Dowler:2003). Canadian social scientist Karim Hussein indicates that food security may be achieved through increased production activities (such as agriculture or gardening); the continuation of food aid and service delivery (such as food banks and community kitchens); the development of more secure and sustainable livelihoods (that allow people to purchase the foods that they need in order to lead a healthy life); or “...through a combination of production, sale or exchange of assets, sale of labour or via transfers through social networks” (Hussein 2003:72). Thompson (2005) extends this discussion in consideration of Inuit and Arctic people’s food provisioning strategies, which include securing “country foods” (those that are hunted, gathered and caught, available in specific regions, and significant to aboriginal identity). She argues: “These foods are the product of a social system and spiritual relations connected with being on the land and hunting, representing far more than a

meal, but rather, a healthy culture" (2005:50). Whales and sea mammals are especially important to Inuit diets, along with fish, berries, wild game, and northern ducks (2005:51). "Hunting, fishing, trapping, and gathering in order to obtain country food is a nutritional necessity for more Inuit communities in Nunavut. In most northern communities, fresh, nutritious, store-bought food is expensive and rare and must be imported from great distances" (2005:51). Thompson's research indicates the significance of social and kinship networks as those which supply persons with the capacity to hunt and gather proficiently. She also clarifies that food security in northern regions is often compromised as a result of the vast distances that foodstuffs must travel, the high cost of foods in northern grocery stores and, more recently, the high cost of fuel that is utilized during hunting trips. Increasing food security is understood to be a federal government goal (Canada's Action Plan for Food Security 1998), as well as an activity that citizens might help to achieve through volunteer and community organizing activities. According to leading Canadian food security analysts Mustafa Koc, Rod MacRae, Ellen Desjardins and Wayne Roberts:

Movement toward greater equity and sustainability in the food system has generally required advocacy and involvement from civil society...In recent years there has been a new awareness regarding the lack of sustainability of current practices of production, distribution, and consumption of food and a new wave of social activism and citizens' involvement in food politics in Canada (2008:123).

An awareness of the significance of personal food choices (as well as the limitations that income status presents to those seeking to purchase groceries or source their food

locally), and the effects of industrial food production on the environment, as well as a commitment to ensuring that all people residing in Canada have enough to eat, and better access to healthy food, has inspired community leaders to develop municipal food policies in Canada's major cities, as well as a variety of food security-related organizations. Individuals may participate in the development of local food security by producing food for themselves and others, donating excess non-perishables to food service agencies, or purchasing food that is grown locally in order to support area producers who are seeking to maintain agricultural livelihoods. Food banks, community kitchens, community gardens, and meal sharing programs are examples of the type of food security organizations that exist throughout the country, as well as in Newfoundland and Labrador. According to the Food Security Network of Newfoundland and Labrador, these are all aspects of the food security continuum, which entails short-term, emergency relief, and capacity- building programs (Food Security Network 2008). Aboriginal communities in Labrador are also addressing their particular food security interests and needs by organizing community hunts and community freezer programs, in order to ensure that persons residing in northern communities are able to access fresh, culturally desirable foods.

Much of the existing literature on Canadian food security organizing has focused on activities that are occurring in Canada's major cities. Koc et al., however, describe the Food Security Network of Newfoundland and Labrador as a leader in innovative grassroots responses to food insecurity (2008:135). Depiction of Newfoundland and

Labrador as a food insecure region does not adequately acknowledge the diversity of community organizations that have sought to develop food security throughout the province. Furthermore, although persons residing in Newfoundland and Labrador share some challenges with regard to procuring affordable food at local grocery stores, there are some opportunities to secure fresh, local produce in St. John's. Outlets managed by area farmers, for instance, provide access to fresh produce for affordable prices when these items are in season. Persons involved with food security organizations in Newfoundland and Labrador are attempting to balance the interests and needs of consumers and producers, develop and support sustainable food production activities as well as increase accessibility to locally produced, affordable foods for those residing within the province. Although food banks and community kitchens provide necessary emergency relief from hunger, research on the personal health effects of food bank usage indicates the negative health consequences that occur when one is unable to purchase and prepare fresh produce, and derives their daily nutrition from donated foods that often come in the form of canned goods (Tarasuk and Kirkpatrick 2003; Tarasuk and Eakin 2003; Tarasuk and Davis 1996). Alternative forms of food security organizing, such as bulk buying clubs, community gardens, school meal programs and political advocacy often seek to extend existing services with a specific emphasis on securing access to nutritious, affordable food for all.

In St. John's, an organization called Food Education Action St. John's (FEAST) has combined sustainability and social justice perspectives within their food security

organizing efforts. Another organization, the Community Garden Alliance (CGA), focuses specifically on the construction of community garden spaces within the city, and was established in 2008 in order to facilitate the development of these activities. The organization notes that they are interested in promoting “healthy, active and vibrant communities by developing organic community gardens throughout the region” (Community Garden Alliance 2008). The Rabbittown Community Garden is the only project that has been initiated by the CGA, and was organized and tended to by many persons who are also affiliated with FEASt and the FSN.

Food security is an especially concerning issue in Newfoundland and Labrador as a result of the minor status of agricultural activities within the provincial economy. Food insecurity on the island of Newfoundland may be understood within the context of its history, specifically, with regard to its fishery-based economy and the practice of food importation in order to meet the province’s non-fishery food needs. Agriculture is not a widespread practice in Newfoundland and Labrador due to a short growing season, acidic soil, and lack of infrastructure that would support these activities (MacKinnon 1991; Cadigan 1994). Attempts have been made to encourage the development of agricultural industry throughout the 19th and 20th centuries (Cadigan 1994), however, these attempts, by and large, proved unsuccessful. According to MacKinnon (1991), as the island was being colonized during the 18th Century, agricultural activities were discouraged by British officials because they did not wish to encourage permanent settlement (1991:42). As the city of St. John’s began to be settled year round throughout

the 19th and 20th centuries, some small farms were planted, and agricultural produce was sold on city streets by farmers themselves (1991:52). However, agricultural activities in and around St. John's were short-lived. According to Hilda Chaulk Murray (2002), much of the farmland that once existed in the city was developed into American military bases in the 1940s. After Confederation, further urban development came as a result of increased social expenditure that led to the construction of social housing, Memorial University, commercial and industrial proliferation, further displacing farms that were located in the city (2002: 250).

Although agriculture has not been a mainstay in St. John's, or a key aspect of the Newfoundland economy, gardening has provided families with access to fresh produce throughout the island's history. In Newfoundland's outport communities, gardening activities thrived alongside merchant capitalism. According to Omohundro (1985) the 'traditional Newfoundland economy' was established by the 18th century:

This plural economy comprised a peculiar mixture of peasant and pioneer arrangements. Fish and seal for international markets were exchanged for imported essentials (flour, tea, salt, beef, sugar) on the merchant's terms, while hunting, trapping, gathering, gardening and animal husbandry made up the family subsistence, the cushion between bare survival and sufficiency (Omohundro 1985:293).

Although fishing was the main activity for those residing in coastal Newfoundland, it was an insecure livelihood that came along with many uncertainties. The merchant capitalist system (which persisted from the 1800s until Confederation) meant that cash exchanges for fishing products did not occur between fishers and

merchants. Rather, fish products were traded for some necessary supplies such as bait, tack, fishing nets, dried goods and cooking fats. According to Gerald Sider "The fishery was organized in ways that imposed poverty, suffering, and hardship upon Newfoundland fisher families-in ways that were, in sum, extraordinarily destructive of people's lives..." (2003:23). Garden produce has acted as a source of exchange among family members, neighbours and friends, and gardening activities protected fishing families against the threat of starvation overwinter (Cadigan 1994). The most common products of these labours included root vegetables such as beets, carrots, turnip, parsnip, potato, onion, lettuces and cabbage. Tomatoes are also commonly grown in hot houses. Kale and heartier greens are also common features of some contemporary gardens.

The most recent census report on agricultural activities indicates that there are 558 farms currently in operation throughout the province; however, there were 184 fewer farms in 2006 than there were in 1996. 23.9% of 710 farm operators are women. More than 45% of Newfoundland and Labrador's farmers work second jobs, which compares with the national average of 48%. Of the 558 farms that were documented in 2006, 52 of these reported that they were producing crops, livestock, and other goods organically (Statistics Canada 2009). Despite the general decline in farming activity throughout the province, the dairy industry has grown in recent years, and many of the crops that are grown on the island are utilized to feed it. Other products that are commonly raised on the island include sheep, cattle and poultry and fox. Although these

agricultural activities provide access to locally produced milk and, some chicken, lamb and beef, for the most part, foods that are purchased on the island are imported. It is estimated that only 10% of vegetables that are sold in commercial outlets in Newfoundland and Labrador are produced there (Statistics Canada 2009).

By emphasizing commercial agricultural activities within facts and figures on food security, and, by considering food security/insecurity as something that may be documented by measuring the quantity of fresh, local produce that is sold in provincial grocery stores, or the ability/inability for persons to purchase necessary food stuffs in order to lead an active, healthy life, some of the traditional and persistent aspects of food security development that have occurred in Newfoundland and Labrador through the act of gardening are not accounted for. This contributes to some uncertainty regarding the amount of fresh produce that is available, and consumed, across the province. Attention to the traditional role of gardening and subsistence farming as protections against food insecurity reveals the significance of the garden, and the important role that women have played in the production of familial food security throughout the history of European settlement upon the island. Despite the lack of widespread agricultural activity that is occurring, gardening is an activity that has, traditionally, provided families and communities with necessary food stuffs in order to survive poor fishing seasons. In existing analyses of gardening and vegetable production activities in rural Newfoundland, there is some conflation between the garden and the farm. According to Cadigan, in the late 1800s: "People did not separate fishing and

farming in their day-to-day lives; the two were part of the same struggle for a livelihood, and together made possible a delicate balancing of locally available resources” (Cadigan 1994:12). Cadigan (1994), Omohundro (1985, 1995) and Porter (1995) all indicate that the production of vegetables, livestock and non-fishery-related resources was, traditionally, women’s work. Pocius (1990) indicates that men and women performed farming and gardening work. Although they were not considered commercial activities, potato fields and kitchen gardens provided enough food for familial sustenance. In some instances, gardens located at a distance from the home were planted with hardier root vegetables such as potatoes. According to Omohundro (1985, 1990, 1995), these were planted by “crowds” or, extended families, including brothers, sisters, nieces, nephews and grandchildren. The motto “All Hands Be as One” indicated the style of collective work that was performed by families. Heavy work was made lighter by sharing tasks. In his analysis of one family’s gardening activities, which took place in a former gravel pit outside of Main Brook, Newfoundland, he describes how a woman named Aunt Bess and her family prepare a potato field for planting. According to Bess: “Garden work is easy to do if all hands go at it together. You just make up your mind to get the work done and it goes fast” (1995:156). Vegetables produced within these larger garden spaces were shared amongst her family at harvest time. Cadigan (1994) and Porter (1995) indicate that, since settlement by Europeans in the 18th century, women just like Aunt Bess in various parts of Newfoundland have planted such gardens, as well as kitchen gardens closer to their homes in order to provide easier access to fresh produce during summer

and fall. While men carried out fishing tasks, women tended to nets, processed and salted the fish, and also laboured over sheep, cattle and chickens. In late summer, they collected wild fruits where these were available. Berries, jams, relishes and root vegetables were often preserved and stored in root cellars, to be consumed throughout the winter and spring. According to Cadigan:

In Elliston, for example, every family had access to enough land to raise vegetables for themselves and grass for their livestock before Confederation. Women tended the families' gardens, and did most of the planting and fertilizing while men worked in the fishery. Men assisted whenever their labour could be spared, but farming was women's work, and was a source of both food and fulfillment (Cadigan 1994:12).

Apparently, the production of vegetables and medicinal herbs was so fulfilling an activity that the women of Elliston rarely bothered with growing ornamental flowers (ibid). Garden produce generated a sense of prestige, and was attributed to individual skill. These activities, however, tended not to be about leisure. Rather, they were performed out of necessity.

Although families undoubtedly shared some tasks as they worked to provide food for themselves, there was also a culture of food sharing with other persons who resided in the same community. This occurred at harvest time. Cadigan indicates: "In Knight's Cove, once the potatoes and other vegetables had been taken from the ground and stored away, and some of the sheep slaughtered at the end of September, people would have a large scoff, complete with much food, drink, and dancing" (Cadigan 1994: 14). According to Porter, the preparation of meals was, undoubtedly, a woman's activity

(1995:163). She argues that food production tasks were divided between men and women, simultaneously producing what is described as an extreme gendered division of labour, whereby men and women existed in separate spheres and spent most of their time working among members of the same sex (1995:169). According to Newfoundland anthropologist John T. Omohundro, a gendered division of labour could be seen in gardens that were planted on hillsides, and in ditches along the Great Northern Peninsula. A drive across the province will include glimpses of such gardens, which continue to be planted along roadsides. In his description of garden planting that occurred within the region in the mid-1990s, he acknowledges that men prepared garden beds by raking the soil, lining the rows with stakes and strings and spreading manure and seaweed, while women followed behind them planting seeds and transplants that were begun in transplant beds or within the home (Omohundro 1995: 156). In his description, women tended these 'lazy beds' as well as kitchen gardens while men carried out fishing tasks. After the gardens were planted, weeding and harvesting activities were the responsibility of women. Due to its peripheral status within the Newfoundland economy, gardening activities have received less academic attention than the fishing and commercial agricultural tasks that have occurred on the island. As such, there are few representations of gardening activities. Further, little attention has been paid to the significance of gender to the organization of gardening labour. Although a gendered division of labour is described by each author considered thus far, Porter (1995) places special emphasis on the fact that this does not necessarily imply

subordination. According to her analysis, women had authority within their sphere, and their contribution to the family's subsistence was respected rather than undermined (169-170). Although Porter makes gender relations an object of her analysis, neither Omohundro nor Cadigan do so. As such, it is difficult to say whether such divisions of labour were steadfast or present within specific families and, whether a gender division of labour was oppressive to women in various parts of Newfoundland.

Literature completed on subsistence food production to date has mentioned, rather than directly analyzed, the importance of vegetable gardening as an activity that was to increase familial food security (Omohundro 198, 1994, 1995). According to Omohundro "Like other subsistence work, gardening was subordinate culturally and economically to fishing and logging, but it supplemented and complemented that commercial sphere" (1995:155). References to gardening, such as Cadigan's discussion of subsistence methods at Bonavista and Omohundro's consideration of the Great Northern Peninsula do exist; however, little has been made of subsistence or horticultural rather than agricultural food production activities as communal or personal projects within the city of St. John's. Newfoundland's Confederation with Canada in 1949 instigated sweeping changes to the province's social, economic, and cultural dynamic and were visible with regard to gardening practices. Although gardening was once a mainstay throughout the province, by the 1990s, gardening activities were argued (by Newfoundland anthropologists, historians, and sociologists) to be on the decline.

According to Pottle, after Newfoundland's Confederation, the construction of roads facilitated sweeping changes to consumption activities. "The precariousness of life that had made gardening necessary began to diminish" (Pottle 1979:74). This was a result of the technological, economical and social changes that occurred in Newfoundland in the wake of Confederation. Employment insurance benefits, for instance, provided a new style of protection from the economic uncertainty of the fishery (Cadigan 1994). In his discussion of changes that have occurred within food production activities on the island since Confederation, Cadigan indicates that:

The lowering of Newfoundland tariffs against Canadian foodstuffs led to the availability of cheap food by purchase, while new welfare and social security payments gave outport residents the means to buy this food. These latter payments were supposed to be temporary measures which would allow an adjustment period while the labour market expanded in a diversified industrial sector, but such expansion never came. Many rural Newfoundlanders by the early 1970s came to see supplementary farming as not worth the effort compared to transfer payments in contributing to their real incomes (Cadigan 1994: 20).

In a similar fashion as Cadigan, Omohundro argues that gardening and subsistence agricultural activities lost their urgency after Confederation (1995:158). In regions where commercial agriculture began to be developed, gardening was further subordinated as a lesser industry-seen as more of a pastime, or traditional activity than one that would contribute to the benefit of Newfoundland society or familial well-being. The construction of grocery and convenience stores also contributed to the sense that, if food was needed, it could be secured financially (1995:158). In the 1970s, gardening also ceased to be taught as a skill in home economics courses (ibid). More recently, gardens

have begun to be planted in schools in order to teach children where their food comes from, and how to carry out gardening activities (Peters 2011). Purchasing canned goods, and learning to prepare convenience items replaced these lessons (Omohundro 1995: 160). While there is indication that gardening activities are not as pervasive as they once were, they are still occurring throughout the province. Cadigan, for instance, indicates that gardening remains a widespread activity throughout the Bonavista region (1994) and, according to Omohundro, "...Vegetable gardening persists because it displays and perpetuates old values concerning self-reliance, subsistence skills and extended family reciprocity. Those who garden today are not the poorest, but the proudest, that is, the flag-bearers of a traditionalist vision of rural life" (Omohundro 1995:155). Beets, cabbage, carrot, turnip, parsnips, potato, onion, lettuce, and herbs have been mainstays in Newfoundland gardens over the course of its colonization. Although there have been many changes to the Newfoundland diet as a result of Confederation and the decline of the inshore fishery, many of these traditional foods continue to be consumed and procured on the island. Sunday dinner, often referred to as 'Jigg's Dinner', for instance, includes boiled cabbage, potato, carrot, and turnip. The meal is rounded out by pease pudding, duff, dressing, gravy and roast salt beef, chicken or turkey, peas, corn and pickled beets. This traditional meal remains common fare for persons residing in Newfoundland and Labrador.

Little has been written about gardening practices in Newfoundland since the mid-1990s. Although Omohundro argues that these activities are on a decline, and, that

those who continue to garden are the flag bearers of tradition, there is reason to question the extent to which those who are currently carrying out gardening tasks are doing so as a way to maintain food security, gain access to fresh produce, or, performing gardening tasks as a sort of leisure pursuit. Due to the recent construction of several community gardens within the province, questioning the ways in which, and reasons why people participate in community gardening at Rabbittown will develop an insight into the significance of these activities from the perspective of those involved.

1.3 Thesis Outline

In a section that precedes this chapter, I have provided the reader with brief descriptions about those persons who regularly participated in community gardening in 2009. This section is meant to ensure that the reader has a reference point which they may utilize while considering my analytical chapters and discussion. Every person who participated in this research was given a pseudonym in order to offer some privacy to those whose perspectives and images are included in this thesis. I utilize pseudonyms throughout my thesis in order to provide those I gardened with and interviewed with some privacy. I did not promise that persons who participated in this research would remain anonymous, and they did not express a desire to remain unidentifiable. Indeed, most persons who participated in this research were proud of their involvement with the community garden, and were enthusiastic supporters of this research. My decision to utilize pseudonyms relates to my own concerns about the small size of St. John's, the

small size of the garden group, and my desire to offer some privacy to research participants, despite their sense of openness.

In this chapter, I have outlined my research interests, the significance of these activities, and the questions that I will respond to about community gardening as it is occurring in Rabbittown, St. John's. I have also completed a literature review on community gardening, food security and intersectional identity theory. As you will notice, I do not complete another literature review as a separate chapter. I do, however, continue to produce literature reviews on topics that are related to my discussion and analysis throughout my thesis. In Chapter Two, I will provide an overview of my research methods and methodologies. In Chapter Three, I examine the history (2006-2008) and ongoing development of the Rabbittown Community Garden. This chapter responds to questions regarding how, why and by whom the garden was organized, and also offers the reader some insight into the significance of community gardening within the city of St. John's, and some of the ways in which these activities are framed by garden organizers. I utilize the perspectives of persons who helped to organize the garden, those who granted permission for its establishment, and those who reside in the neighbourhood in order to discuss the reasons for its development, and the ways in which the garden has altered the space in which it is located. In Chapter Three, I also consider the reasons why permission for its establishment was granted, and some of the hopes that persons involved with its initiation shared, with regard to its potential to increase accessibility to fresh, healthy food amongst persons who reside in Rabbittown

and live on low incomes. In Chapter Four, I discuss the significance of food to the development of community, and the ways in which food expresses ethnic and regional identities. Utilizing ethnographic descriptions that were completed during my fieldwork phase, I focus on shared meals that occurred within the neighbourhood, as well as garden events that featured food sharing, in order to explore the types of food that brought neighbourhood residents and community gardeners together in 2009. This chapter highlights the possibilities that food creates for the development of community, as well as the differences between the types of food that were planted and shared at the garden, and those that were routinely shared at neighbourhood events and activities. This chapter emphasizes the significance of particular types of food – such as fresh, local, organic - to people's interests in community gardening. In Chapter Five, I focus on the significance of identity to community gardening and continue to explore people's interests in particular types of food. I utilize the photo and personal narratives of those who regularly participated in community gardening in 2009 in order to examine the identity categories and previous experiences that have contributed to people's interests in these activities, and their reasons for gardening there. Photo narratives also provide multiple insights into the types of activities that occurred while community gardening, and allow me to consider the types of work that was performed within the space, and elsewhere, in order to continue to develop and maintain the garden. In Chapter Six, I conclude my thesis by providing an overview of my research findings, and making suggestions for further research.

Next, I will discuss my research methodology.

CHAPTER TWO

Methodologies

Beginning is not only a kind of action, it is also a frame of mind, a kind of work, an attitude, a consciousness...And it is theoretic as when we ask whether there is any particular epistemological trait or performance unique to beginning in general. For any writer to begin is to embark upon something connected to a designated point of departure (Said 1985 xv-xvi).

In this chapter, I discuss my research methodology. I begin by providing a general overview of my research methods. Next, I engage with feminist critiques of objectivity, which lead me to consider reflexivity and ethnographic research. Due to the social nature of community gardening, and ethnographic research, I also discuss how my research unfolded as a result of the relationships that I formed while participating in and observing these activities. I provide an overview of the types of interviews that I conducted, and also discuss my use of photography and how I developed consent in order to conduct my research.

2.1 Overview of Research Methods

My research goals were to understand the garden from the perspectives of those who were involved in its development, as well as those who regularly participated in these activities. I also hoped to learn more about the types of work that contribute to the maintenance of a community garden. I endeavoured to secure interviews with persons who helped to organize the community garden, persons who granted permission for its establishment, persons who participated in community gardening, and

persons residing in the neighbourhood. Rather than set out with a determined number of individuals to interview, my goals were to conduct semi-structured and unstructured interviews that would allow me to situate the garden within the lives of those who regularly tended it, as well as within the neighbourhood and the city of St. John's. I arrived to each interview with a schedule prepared; however, I allowed those I interviewed to diverge from my interview questions to some extent. I conducted follow-up interviews throughout my writing stage in order to clarify responses and check back for any changes in perspective. While securing permission to utilize photos within my research, I also invited research participants to share their impressions of these images with me.

Participant observation was an important aspect of my research. This involved regular attendance at the garden, some organizing activities with the CGA, and attendance at neighbourhood events. I came to know other gardeners, and secured interviews with those who were involved with community gardening while participating in and observing these activities. This allowed me to learn more about the types of activities that community gardening entailed, and to meet those who regularly tended the garden, as well as those who live and work in the neighbourhood. I secured interviews with garden organizers as a result of my attendance at various food security-related events and activities in St. John's and also with neighbourhood residents and officials through my involvement with the Rabbittown After-School Program. This aspect of my field work involved helping to organize children's gardening activities with other

persons affiliated with the community garden. I conducted interviews as a result of my participant observation activities, which facilitated my attendance at neighbourhood events, including the Rabbittown Summer BBQ and the Rabbittown Thanksgiving Dinner. These activities allowed me to learn more about the neighbourhood, and the garden's connection to its surroundings. Although not a part of my social science fieldwork, I also volunteered with the Rabbittown After-School Program and summer camp days, which led me to know some of the community officials and residents. These contacts helped me to secure interviews with some of these individuals.

In an effort to develop a thesis that would allow research participants to express themselves somewhat creatively, I also invited persons who participated in community gardening to take photos of their activities. Photo narrative elicitation interviews, which I will discuss in more detail at a later stage in this chapter, were meant to allow people's perspectives and experiences to be drawn out from the images that they took throughout the season. In order to document community gardening activities I also utilized photographic methodologies. I shared the images that I took of community gardening with other gardeners while developing consent to include selected photos in my thesis, and we discussed them during meetings that occurred after the gardening season was over.

2.2 Feminist Critiques of Objectivity

Coursework completed in partial fulfillment of my Master of Women's Studies degree allowed me to consider, more fully, how I might develop an inclusive and ethical

research project, and how I would position myself, and the object of my study, within the field. Sonja Boon's graduate course "Women's Studies 6100: Epistemological and Methodological Approaches to Women's Studies", encouraged me to consider the historical absence of women's perspectives, experiences, and the lack of consideration for their unique biological and physiological features within social and scientific research. Readings and discussions completed in Dr. Boon's course also encouraged me to question my epistemological position-notably, how objective or subjective my research would be - and how I would conduct my research activities. Readings and discussions that focused on questions of objectivity, subjectivity, and reflexivity had the greatest impression on me. In consideration of these course themes, it seems important to indicate how these readings affected my research design and activities.

Since the 1980s, feminist philosophers have critiqued objectivity as a value-free, seemingly neutral stance that enables scholars to authoritatively produce accounts of, or facts about, reality (Jayaratne and Stewart 1991; Haraway 1988, 1997; Longino 1990; Lloyd 2005). Feminist philosopher of science, Helen Longino defines objectivity as: "...a characteristic ascribed variously to beliefs, individuals, theories, observations, and methods of inquiry. It is generally thought to involve the willingness to let our beliefs be determined by 'the facts' or by some impartial and nonarbitrary criteria rather than by our wishes as to how things out to be" (1990 in Jaggar 2006:391). Rather than attempt to develop an objective account of the community garden, or community gardening, I

will attempt to be clear about how my own beliefs and wishes as to how things ought to be have affected my findings and discussion.

This thesis follows previous research activities that considered the social and spatial organization of food preparation and consumption activities at a community kitchen. My honours thesis in Anthropology To Whom it May Concern: Poverty and Forms of Address at a Community Kitchen focused on the differences between volunteers and guests within a community kitchen, in consideration of their use of space, and their abilities to determine how much, and what kinds, of foods they consumed there.

Throughout my academic studies, I have sought to combine my theoretical and research interests with some of my community organizing and volunteer activities. As an undergraduate, I volunteered with a student organization called Meal Exchange that raises food and funds for community food security organizations, and also seeks to raise awareness of hunger in Canada. These activities led me to volunteer at the community kitchen that I would go on to consider in my honours thesis and caused me to become interested in domestic food insecurity. After helping to generate some of the food resources that supported the community kitchen, I became interested in learning more about who accessed these services, and, what role students might be able to play in supporting, or developing, responses to domestic food insecurity. Within the context of my role as the Social Issues Advocate on the St. Thomas University Student Union, I applied sustainability-related interests in food production and consumption by

organizing an environmental film festival with a team of other students. The festival focused on food issues, and several persons involved with the initiative went on to organize a community garden beside our university campus. A small group of students and I (many of whom were friends), constructed two raised bed gardens, planted a variety of greens and vegetables, held regular gatherings at the garden, and attempted to preserve some of the foods that we grew together. We later sold preserves and baked goods in order to raise awareness of the garden among the student population, and to raise money for Students for Sustainability who organized the garden. In consideration of feminist critiques of objectivity that emphasize the ways in which personal values, perspectives, and desires shape one's research topics and activities, it seems important to indicate that the determination of the research problem for my Master of Women's Studies thesis closely corresponds with these previous activities. I decided to focus my research on the community garden as a result of my interests in community-based food security organizing, income-related food insecurity, and gardening.

In her essay "Silence and the Limits of Contextual Objectivity", feminist philosopher Catherine Hundleby argues: "Many feminist epistemologists suggest that although we may not escape from our own perspectives, we can address the ways in which our perspectives influence our understandings" (2009 254). As I conducted my research, my perspective focused on a few key themes: I was interested in the extent to which the garden benefitted persons living on low incomes; the general social dynamics of the community garden, specifically, who participated in community gardening and

why; and the extent to which aspects of gardener identities contributed to their community gardening activities and perspectives on the space. Although I was interested in gender, I was also interested in exploring identity as an intersection of multiple vectors, and utilizing contemporary feminist approaches to conceiving of identity within my discussion and analysis. These interests have contributed to my research design, and, have been influenced by my previous research experiences and volunteer activities. My decision to conduct research at a community garden located in a social housing neighbourhood was out of an interest in exploring questions about social inclusion within food security-related organizing. After conducting research at the community kitchen, I began to question the extent to which persons who are to benefit from community food services have a say in the development of these initiatives, or participate in related organizations. However, after completing my research activities, I would not position the garden as a food security-related organization, or a sort of service for persons living on low-incomes. Rather, by participating in and observing community gardening in this particular site at a specific historical moment, I learned that it is a space to which many people arrive for reasons other than securing access to fresh produce. Further, I learned that although the garden is physically located in the neighbourhood, it is not a space that is specifically *for* those who reside there.

My research activities were meant to determine the extent to which gender, social class, previous experiences with gardening or other aspects of people's identities contributed to their participation in community gardening. I wondered: How and by

whom was the garden organized? Would persons who reside in the neighbourhood participate in these activities? Further, was the garden something that people who reside in the neighbourhood expressed an interest in or need for, specifically, as a result of a low income status and need for food? These questions guided the initial development of my research design. After meeting Gloria, the Executive Director of the Community Garden Alliance, at a food security event in November 2008, and speaking with her about the garden's history, and the constitution of the garden group, it became apparent to me that, in order to document these activities, I would need to expand my focus, in order to conceive of the garden as a space where people from various parts of St. John's arrived. In an early conversation about the garden, she described it as a space within a social housing neighbourhood that people were developing in an effort to support those residing there. Although this was consistent with the goals of the garden that were expressed by other organizers, Gloria also emphasized that this was space under continued development, one that people from various parts of St. John's tended along with persons residing in the neighbourhood. These conversations helped me to design my research proposal. As such, my previous experiences and interests, along with Gloria's descriptions of the garden, contributed to the development of my research questions and activities.

In order to produce a rich, ethnographic account of community gardening, I utilized my fieldnotes, interview materials, photographs and descriptions of interview activities in order to determine key themes, the commonalities and differences between

perspectives, and some of the key events that were crucial to my own understanding of the space, as well as its development and maintenance. Between the months of January and March, 2010, I coded my fieldnotes using a colour scheme (which referenced activities, feelings, environmental perspectives, desires, relationships, hopes, community affiliations and needs) as well as shapes (which indicated gender, ethnicity, social class, education, physical capacities, regional identities, particular interests in food, previous gardening experiences, previous community organizing experiences, occupations and roles within the garden). Between the months of April and September, 2010, I allowed myself to free-write in reference to these codes, and in consideration of quotes that I determined to be particularly poignant, or outstanding for their ability to communicate common understandings and perspectives. I also focused my attention on quotes and reflections that were unlike others that were shared with me, and free-wrote about my own interpretations, which allowed me to determine a list of follow-up questions with interviewees. When my free-writing reached a stage of repetition, I began to determine the focus of my discussion and analysis; however, this unfolded in consideration of existing literature in order to fill in research gaps among previous writings about community gardening. I found that these free-writing exercises helped me to determine my own understanding of the garden as a space, which I then set out to consider as one among many. In September, 2010 I began to outline my chapters and produce writing that utilized collected materials. I continued to organize and re-organize my thesis throughout my writing stage. Discussions with my supervisors about my fieldwork

reports (at an earlier stage) and then my draft chapters helped me to clarify my writing, and further develop my inquiry into key themes. My decision to offer a narrative and descriptive account is a result of my admiration for the work of Berdahl (1999), Bourgois (1996), and Sacks (1987).

2.3 Ethnographic Research, Reflexivity and Participant Observation

The overarching goal of my thesis is to produce an ethnographic account of the community garden. I understand ethnographic research to be an experiential process of creating and representing understandings of society, culture, and people's lives (Pink 2007:32). It typically involves the use of participant observation. In order to develop an understanding of the types of activities that contributed to the ongoing development of the community garden, and to meet those involved in these activities, I regularly participated in and observed community gardening as it occurred on Sunday afternoons. My fieldwork phase lasted between June and October 2009. During this period, I attended all but two community gardening days. Following feminist critiques of objectivity, I utilize the anthropologist Sarah Pink's conception of ethnography in order to acknowledge that: "It does not claim to produce an objective or truthful account of reality, but should aim to offer versions of ethnographers' experiences of reality that are as loyal as possible to the context, negotiations, and intersubjectivities through which the knowledge was produced (Pink 2007:22). As a participant-observer of community gardening, I became acquainted with others who participated in these activities, persons who reside in the neighbourhood, persons who helped to organize the garden and

persons who are employed at the Rabbittown Community Centre. For me, participant observation included helping to plant and tend the garden, construct raised garden beds, organize garden-related events, and activities for children in the neighbourhood including three after school program sessions held at the community centre, and two summer camp days. Because of my regular involvement in these activities, I was also offered food that was grown. Although I was reluctant to do so at first, because I did not anticipate that I would receive food as a result of my research activities, I also helped out with harvesting activities, and enjoyed the edible products of community gardening labour.

Before beginning my research activities, I had the sense that I would develop relationships as a result of my participant-observation activities; however, I was not fully prepared for the extent to which I would come to know and care about those I met while conducting research. I was also unprepared, and surprised, by the number of opportunities that I was given to attend dinner parties, social events, and activities in St. John's with those I met while gardening. It was a common occurrence to be invited to attend potlucks, craft nights, shows downtown, or to get together for tea and other social activities with other gardeners - especially by those who were similar in age to me. Although I appreciated these invitations, I tried to remain professional, and to keep my interactions with others limited to garden-related topics and themes. It seemed important to me to put some distance between myself and others because I worried that if I developed friendships while doing research it would mean that my relationships

were forged out of an interest in securing their participation in my study, rather than becoming someone's friend because I appreciated them, enjoyed their company, or felt an affinity with them.

Throughout my fieldwork phase I was also concerned with the possibility that by developing friendships with those I met while gardening, I would complicate the ability to write about the garden, and people's activities there. Further, I worried that I would cause harm in some way if my thesis did not represent community gardeners as they wished. Although I hoped that I would be able to learn more about who participates in community gardening, and why, I did not set out with the intention to make close friendships with persons I would go on to write about. This created a sense of awkwardness for me throughout my fieldwork phase, as I attempted to balance friendliness and friendship with professionalism and respect for those I met.

In her essay "Friendship, Friendliness and Feminist Fieldwork" Gesa Kirsch acknowledges the existence of several writings that warn of the potential ethical dangers that exist when one develops friendships while conducting ethnographic research: "These risks include the potential for relationships to end abruptly, for participants to feel that they have been misunderstood or betrayed, especially in moments when participants' and researchers' priorities diverge" (2005:2163). Initially, in an effort to avoid some of these pitfalls, I tended to decline social invitations when they were initially made to me. This began to feel somewhat uncomfortable, however, since it was difficult to explain to other gardeners, specifically those who are my age, why I

could not attend dinners, craft nights and other events. Eventually, I did attend a few potlucks, personal celebrations and events with other gardeners. I attempted to be even-handed in my participation in extra-gardening activities so as to ensure that I was not developing closer bonds with some rather than others.

Maintaining personal distance from other community gardeners who were similar to me in age, and status as a Come From Away (a common descriptor of persons whose families are not from Newfoundland), was challenging. I wanted to spend more time with other gardeners, and to take people up on offers of tea and company. To talk about food, prepare meals, and learn more about gardening in Newfoundland were personal interests to me that I would have been able to share with other gardeners. However, because of my concerns in regard to forming friendships while conducting fieldwork, it was not possible to allow myself to become as fully involved as I would have, were I a gardener who was not conducting research. This stance toward friendship shifted to some extent, when two young gardeners who I organized children's gardening activities with (as a way to give back to those whom allowed me to conduct participant observation at the garden) ceased to participate in community gardening on Sunday afternoons. I developed closer friendships with them after they told me that they would not be returning to the garden.

The topic of ethnographic inquiry has produced rich conversations among feminist anthropologists and sociologists regarding some of the ethical concerns that relate to the development of personal relationships during fieldwork. In her essay "Can

there be a Feminist Ethnography?" Judith Stacey provides a rationale for feminist interest in utilizing ethnographic methodologies: "Discussions of feminist methodology generally assault the hierarchical, exploitative relations of conventional research, urging feminist researchers to seek instead an egalitarian research process characterized by authenticity, reciprocity, and intersubjectivity between the researcher and her subjects" (Stacey 1998:22). Stacey's discussion provokes me to consider the negotiations that occur throughout and after ethnographic research. She indicates that there is a sort of irony within relationships forged while conducting fieldwork, which implicates the researcher in the lives of those she meets, but also positions her as potentially exploitative of their perspectives, experiences and concerns. While Stacey describes the potential benefits of an experiential, social research practice that is based upon intersubjectivity, she also emphasizes the ethical and personal challenges that occur as a result of this research method:

Precisely because research depends upon human relationship, engagement, and attachment, it places research subjects at grave risk of manipulation and betrayal...ethnographic method appears to (and often does) place the researcher and her informants in a collaborative, reciprocal quest for understanding, but the research project is ultimately that of the researcher, however modified or influenced by informants (Stacey 1998:23).

I utilize Stacey's sentiments because of her emphasis on the personal aspects of ethnographic research, and the risks that may exist in regard to the possibility that persons involved in research will be exploited in some way. Most impressive to me, however, is her sense that, despite the collaborations that occur while conducting

fieldwork - the conversations that take place among the researcher and those who agree to participate in research - responsibility for the final production of descriptions and analysis falls into the hands of the researcher, who becomes a writer upon completion of the fieldwork phase. In her response to Stacey's argument about the possibility that ethnographic methods are intrinsically exploitative or at odds with feminist attempts to conduct research in non-hierarchical, experiential, and caring ways Elizabeth Wheatley suggests: "The ethical and epistemological questions that arise in this process are inherent features of ethnography. Rather than obstacles to be avoided, or hurdles to be cleared on the way to some finishing point, they are constitutive of the relationships that we move through, and are moved by, in the ethnographic process" (1994:412).

Before arriving in St. John's in order to complete my Master of Women's Studies degree, it was my intention to locate my analysis within some aspect of what appeared to be a burgeoning food security movement in the city. Websites for the Food Security Network of Newfoundland and Labrador, Food Education Action St. John's, the St. John's Farmers' Market, and community food sharing organizations alerted me to the vibrancy of food security-related organizing within the city. After arriving to St. John's, I read about the Rabbittown Community Garden in the free St. John's newsweekly The Scope. I met Gloria at an event in November 2008. She agreed to meet with me in winter 2009, and during monthly meetings between January and April 2009, she assisted me by giving an overview of the garden's history, and discussing the potential for me to conduct research with other persons involved with the community garden. Gloria arranged for

me to meet other gardeners and discuss my research interests at a community gardening meeting that occurred in March 2009. She also gave me the contact information for neighbourhood officials, and neighbourhood residents who were affiliated with the garden in its first year so that I could discuss my ideas and interests with them. These meetings and conversations allowed me to develop a research and ethics proposal that were acceptable to University and Tri-Council requirements, and those involved with the community garden. The development of my research proposal indicates something of the significance of social relationships to research design.

I developed consent throughout my fieldwork phase, by introducing myself as a Master's student who hoped to write her thesis about community gardening, discussing my research objectives and interests with those I met while conducting research, and handing out information documents to those who arrived at various points of time during the season after I secured consent to conduct research activities from neighbourhood officials and those who formed the core garden group. I secured interviews during participant observation activities, and finalized details for meetings by using the phone numbers and email addresses that participants gave me in order to do so.

From the beginning of my fieldwork phase until the end, I attempted to get to know those who regularly participated in community gardening, which involved physically and socially shifting myself among persons who arrived at the garden, persons who resided in the neighbourhood, and those who were involved with the garden's

organization, or were working at the community centre at the time. Beyond the effects that my theoretical perspectives have had upon the development of my thesis, I am also aware that I was moved by some persons' perspectives of the garden more so than others. For instance, I found that I got along easily with some rather than others. I also found that I sometimes focused more intently on the perspectives of persons who resided in the neighbourhood, because of my initial sense that the garden was to benefit persons residing there. I attempted to balance my interactions by gardening with different people on Sunday afternoons, and being even in my approach to attending non-gardening events with persons who participated in these activities.

Beyond the social aspects of ethnographic research, one issue that is commonly discussed by those who utilize participant observation as a research method is the challenge it poses to researchers in their attempt to balance general participation activities with observation tasks (DeWalt and DeWalt 2002:21). I also found this to be the case for me throughout my fieldwork phase. While participation in community gardening allowed me to develop an understanding of the various activities that contribute to the development and maintenance of a community garden space, in order to observe the activities occurring around me, I often stood back from the garden, or paused my own gardening activities in order to make brief field notes.

Throughout the gardening season, I made observational notes in a pocket notepad in order to indicate the types of work that occurred. I organized my notes by jotting down the time of day that my notes were taken, and the spatial locations of

people within the garden. In order to make for easier notation, I named each raised garden bed ("Wooden Bed One, Two, Three"/ "Rock Bed One, Two, Three, Four") and made spatial notations in reference to them. I also carried a small digital camera with me in order to take photos of the growth that was occurring at the space, the changes occurring to the houses that back on to the garden site, and people's gardening activities. I made sure to write down who attended the community garden, when people arrived at and exited the space, who gardened with whom, and who performed which activities as well as the topics of conversation that I participated in, or overheard while gardening with others. Although I made an effort to fully participate in community gardening so that I would not be considered a hindrance to those around me, I am aware that making jottings in my note pad and taking photographs sometimes detracted from my participation in physical activities such as planting and weeding. Balancing participation and observation of some of the social aspects of community gardening was also challenging. There were times when talking with other gardeners seemed to form a large part of my community gardening activities. I also wanted to be sure that I was helping the ongoing development of the garden while I conducted my research. This came to mean organizing social events, and children's programs. While my involvement with these activities ensured that they were carried out, it also positioned me as a more dominant member of the garden than I anticipated I would be. I offered ideas, suggestions and actively participated in carrying out initiatives that summer. This was

often in response to requests for help that were made by other persons involved with the community garden.

After leaving the garden each week, I would utilize these pocket notes and photographs in order to draft longer field notes, which I kept in full size spiral bound notebooks. Recreating gardening scenes into longer field notes took me anywhere from one to five days, depending on the duration of the gardening session I was describing. In an effort to reconstruct gardening scenes with as much detail as I could, I committed myself to writing my field notes immediately after leaving the garden. By the end of my fieldwork phase I had completed over 700 pages of field notes and taken 400 photographs. Although I tried to keep my notebook and camera on hand, I did set them aside from time to time in order to help with planting, harvesting and weeding work. My fieldnotes were often mud-stained as a result of participating in gardening, and making notation of my activities.

2.4 Semi Structured and Unstructured Interviews: The History of the Rabbittown Community Garden

In order to develop understandings of the history of the Rabbittown Community Garden as an idea and a recent development within the neighbourhood, I conducted semi-structured interviews with: three employees at the Rabbittown Community Centre; one official from Newfoundland and Labrador Housing; and five persons who were involved with planning and initiating its development. In order to understand the history

of the space where the garden is located, and the perceptions that neighbourhood residents have about the garden, I also conducted three semi-structured interviews and had three unstructured interviews with persons who reside in the neighbourhood. Although I discuss these interviewees within seemingly discrete types (Rabbittown residents, neighbourhood officials, garden organizers and regular gardeners), it should be noted that many persons whom I interviewed were able to discuss or describe the garden from perspectives informed by multiple subject positions. For instance, four Rabbittown residents also regularly participated in community gardening and two neighbourhood officials had also resided in the neighbourhood at some point. When I interviewed them, we discussed the history of the garden space and their experiences there. Two persons who reside in the neighbourhood also helped to organize the garden, and the interviews I conducted with them also traversed between discussions of the history of the space, the activities they performed that helped to construct the garden there, as well as their experiences at the community garden in 2009. I also conducted one semi-structured interview with a neighbourhood resident who did not have any affiliation with the Rabbittown Community Garden and was not aware that it was located within the neighbourhood. Unstructured interviews were also conducted with three persons who had varying degrees of connection to the space. One woman lived close by and came to the garden in order to harvest from time to time, one man regularly came to the space where the garden is located in order to let his dog out, and

one woman had participated in community gardening the year before, but did not do so in 2009.

In an effort to understand how and why the garden was organized, I also interviewed two persons who were described as initiators of the idea to construct the garden at Rabbittown. Neither man participated in community gardening in 2009, or resided in the neighbourhood, however their narratives reflect the original intention for the garden to be a space that would benefit persons residing there, as well as the connections that were crucial to the garden's establishment in 2008. Two other non-Rabbittown residents who helped to organize the garden were also interviewed. One interviewee was no longer participating in community gardening in Rabbittown, as she had located a community garden closer to her home. The other interviewee remained an active organizer of garden events and initiatives, and participated infrequently in community gardening throughout 2009.

The locations of these interviews varied. I conducted one interview at a coffee shop, one in a home office, two at the Rabbittown Community Centre, two at the Rabbittown Summer BBQ, two at my room in Memorial University graduate housing and the remainder at the homes of interviewees.

2.5 Personal Narratives on Community Gardening: Semi-Structured Interviews and Photo Narrative Elicitation Interviews

In order to respond to my research questions regarding the intersections that occurred at the garden, and the intersections between people's gardening activities and personal identities, I also conducted four semi-structured interviews and four photo narrative elicitation interviews with persons who regularly participated in community gardening over the course of the summer of 2009. These interviews allow me to develop understandings of community gardening from the perspective of those who were involved in 2009. I utilize this material in order to consider the ways that identity (as an intersection of multiple vectors) and previous experiences gardening contributed to men and women's perspectives on the space, and their activities in 2009.

Photo narrative elicitation involves the utilization of photographs within interviews in order to create an opportunity for individuals to reflect on their images and explain their memories and experiences in photographed events (Banks 2007:65). This led to the development of personal narratives about community gardening. In their photo essay "Getting There: Photo Stories with Immigrant Women" Barndt et al. argue: "When people are involved in taking their own photographs, looking at them, reordering them and connecting them with words, they are engaged in a powerful kind of self-reflection, an activity that can help them to understand and analyze their experience and participate more actively in their society" (Barndt et al. 1982:18). When planning my research activities, I did not anticipate that everyone would participate in research in

this way. I considered the use of photo narrative elicitation interviewing to be a research method that could engage people in sharing their perspectives on community gardening in a creative way. Although nine people agreed to participate in this research as “creative contributor-informants”, four of these potential informants did not continue to come to the community garden throughout the summer, and one person’s images were lost when the hard drive of his computer malfunctioned. When I began my research phase, I discussed my research methods with each person who arrived at the community garden more than twice in order to secure their consent for these activities. At this time, I handed them an information document about my research, and also asked if they would be interested in participating as a creative contributor/informant. I indicated that I would supply them with a one-time-use camera if need be, or would pay for the cost of developing film should they wish to use their own camera. Of those who agreed to participate as creative contributor/informants, only one person utilized a one-time-use camera. Veronica utilized two one-time-use cameras, and participated in a photo narrative elicitation interview. Eric and Ashley, who arrived at the community garden in September and participated in community gardening on a regular basis until the season ended, also agreed to participate in research as creative contributor/informants. Eric took black and white photographs of community gardening utilizing his own camera. Ashley, who came to St. John’s in September 2009 in order to further her studies at Memorial University, also utilized her own camera and took black and white images of her community gardening activities. The photo narrative elicitation interviews that I

conducted with them took place in my residence room at Memorial University after the gardening season ended, on separate occasions in October 2009. Finally, Lee-Anne, who had participated in community gardening in 2008 and frequently in 2009, took photos of her gardening activities utilizing her digital camera. We completed a photo narrative elicitation interview at her home in Rabbittown in October 2009.

Each semi-structured and photo narrative elicitation interview was recorded with a digital recording device, uploaded onto my secured computer account at Memorial University and burned onto a DVD, stored at my home. Each semi-structured and photo narrative interview was transcribed and emailed to the interviewee for his or her consideration and potential edits.

While conducting interviews about the history of the space where the garden is located, and people's perspectives on the garden and experiences in 2009, I attempted to secure interviews with all those who had been involved in the garden's planning, and regularly tended the garden in 2009. It should be noted that there were others involved in organizing the community garden that I would have liked to interview; however, not everyone was willing, or able, to be interviewed. Time constraints, busy schedules and lack of interest have limited my inclusion of garden organizers and participants to some extent. Work schedules, voluntary activities, and the ongoing development of other garden spaces in St. John's occupied people's time. My awareness of their busy schedules made it so that I did not wish to add further stress to their lives. I sincerely appreciated the time that interviewees took in order to discuss the garden with me.

2.6 Gathering Consent for Research

In accordance with the ethics proposal that I submitted to the Interdisciplinary Committee on Ethics in Human Research, I developed one-on-one consent with each person who participated in my research. During the first month of community gardening, I offered an information document to each new arrival at the garden space, and discussed my research with them. Eventually, after recognizing that many people who arrived to the garden did not return and, would not bear consideration within my discussion and analysis, I began to offer information documents to those who arrived at the garden more than twice. The information document that I utilized provided a general overview of my research questions, as well as my contact information, and that of the Interdisciplinary Committee on Ethics in Human Research. As I went over this document with them, I also asked about their willingness to participate in research as a creative contributor/informant. Some community gardeners discussed their desire to be interviewed for this research, but not as creative contributor/informants. Afterward, I asked if they would be interested in participating in research as a creative contributor/informant by taking photographs of their community gardening activities. If they agreed, I offered them a second document, a written consent form that outlined this aspect of my research. They signed the document and returned it to me at the garden-either immediately, or after taking it home to think about it. While attending neighbourhood events, or food security-related gatherings, I introduced myself as a Master of Women's Studies student, conducting research on the community garden.

2.7 The Use of Photography

When I began to develop my research proposal, I hoped to utilize photography within my research as a way to document the processes of community gardening, and to represent those who participated in these activities in 2009. Although I am not a formally trained photographer, taking pictures is a personal pastime. It seemed that it would be a good way to document events, activities, and growth that occurred at the garden over the summer. Visual anthropologist Sarah Pink notes that: "Photography, video and electronic media are becoming increasingly incorporated into the work of ethnographers: as cultural texts; as representations of ethnographic knowledge; as sites of cultural production, social interaction and individual experience that themselves form fieldwork locales" (2001: 3). Because it is common to include photographs within ethnographic analyses, I felt that my representation of community gardening would benefit from the addition of photographs to my data set.

Throughout my field work phase, I often took photos randomly - simply pointing and shooting toward the raised garden beds as people tended them. I did not always ask if I could photograph people as they participated in community gardening. This was because I had developed their consent for these activities by going over the information document with them, and, because I did not wish to interrupt them. I also wished to have the number of staged photos kept to a minimum. However, on some occasions, I did ask if I could take people's photographs. While developing consent for my use of photography, some persons who tended the garden made jokes about having their

photo taken, which I took as an indication that they might be uncomfortable with this aspect of my research. Although they were appeased when I discussed that they would have to approve any image of them that I wished to include in my thesis, I took care to ask those who expressed discomfort if it was fine for me to take their picture or not. Early in the gardening season Trevor mentioned to me that he was not photogenic. He said that he had not had his photo taken since he was a teenager. I was cautious with the photographs that I took of him, and made sure to ask if "Is it OK if I take a photo of you working, if I focus only on your hands?" "Yes" He would say "That kind of photo is OK." As the season progressed, I eventually asked if I could take a picture that included his face. By August, he was comfortable with this, and allowed me to do so. By the end of the season, he even posed for the camera.

Although I took photos on a digital camera, I did not show them to other gardeners as I took them. This would have taken away from their gardening activities. Rather, I tried to remain an aloof photographer and often stepped away from the garden beds in order to document larger scenes. I found that taking photographs of gardening activities gave me much to consider - specifically in regard to who worked with who, what types of activities occurred on a particular gardening day, as well as the growth of produce and addition of raised beds within the space. As I examined the photographs and began to make decisions about which I would include within my thesis, I also noticed that changes occurring within the neighbourhood such as the construction activities at the corner housing unit that stands in front of the garden. This provided a

visual indication of the garden's setting within a neighbourhood that was under repair at the time. Further, in some images, children could be seen sitting on the front steps of a housing unit, and open front doors were also depicted in the background of images that I captured while participating in and observing community gardening.

After completing my fieldwork activities on Sunday afternoons, I utilized the images to make field notes about what had occurred that day. After completing my fieldwork phase, I began go through the photos more carefully, and consider which I would like to include within my thesis. I shared the images of community gardening with those who were depicted in photographs. As I showed them the photos that I had taken, they shared their perspectives with me. Pink notes: "When ethnographers produce photographs of video, these visual texts, as well as the experience of producing and discussing them, become part of ethnographic knowledge" (Pink 2001:17). After determining the images that I would like to utilize in my thesis, I shared them with those who were depicted, and did unstructured interviews with them about what they saw within the pictures, or felt as a result of seeing them in order to delve more deeply into what was depicted.

2.8 Research Timeline

I conducted fieldwork at the community garden from June until October 2009. I began interviewing neighbourhood officials and persons who helped to organize the garden beginning in July 2009. Interviews with persons who participated in community gardening began in August, 2009. I completed all interviews by November 2009. In fall

2010 I began to develop consent to utilize images that I took during my fieldwork phase in order to include them in my thesis.

2.9 Conclusion

In this chapter, I have provided an overview of my research methodologies, and the ways in which I secured permission to complete these activities. I have discussed some of the issues that were involved with performing participant observation activities. My thesis considers 22 interviews (four of which were photo narrative elicitation interviews), 21 days of participant observation at the garden, six days of participant observation at neighbourhood events and five months of fieldwork activities which included social and food security-related events. I also utilize photographs and field notes that were taken during my fieldwork phase. I utilize pseudonyms for research participants throughout my thesis.

CHAPTER THREE:

History of the Rabbittown Community Garden



Since its establishment in 2008, the Rabbittown Community Garden has instigated a number of changes within the neighbourhood, and has also encouraged persons residing in various parts of St. John's to travel to a place that they most likely would not have gone to were it not for the garden's location there. While some persons whom I interviewed were not previously aware of the neighbourhood before becoming involved in the initiative, others knew Rabbittown as a social housing neighbourhood, and had the sense that persons residing there who live on low incomes would benefit

from the produce that was grown at what eventually became the garden. Although I will focus on people's activities and experiences within the space in chapters to come, in this chapter, I will respond to research questions regarding how and why the garden was organized. I pay particular attention to the aspects of garden organizers' identities that contributed to their participation in developing this initiative.



The narratives of garden organizers, neighbourhood officials and neighbourhood residents attest to the differences amongst people's perspectives on the space, particularly with regard to the garden's potential benefits and why it was located in Rabbittown. As a general overview, the Rabbittown Community Garden was constructed

with the permission of persons who reside and work within the neighbourhood, as well as officials from Newfoundland and Labrador Housing. Funds and materials that were necessary for its establishment were derived from social networking, fundraising and grant-writing activities. Although the establishment of the garden was understood to be completed by an organization called the Community Garden Alliance (CGA), tasks and activities that were necessary to construct the garden were taken on in different ways by particular people. Most persons involved with organizing the garden were not acquainted with one another before plans to initiate its construction began. Some garden organizers who reside outside of Rabbittown described themselves as “foodies” and located the garden within a local food movement on the island of Newfoundland. In their book Foodies: Democracy and Distinction in the Gourmet Foodscape sociologists Josée Johnston and Shyon Baumann describe “foodies” as people who savour food, and order much of their lives around consuming gourmet, or specialty foods. Although they acknowledge that the term has an array of meanings that often refer to consumption habits, and practices, they argue: “...foodies shape their world- the gourmet foodscape-around distinctions between ‘good’ and ‘bad’ foods...At the same time that they genuinely enjoy food, foodies engage in identity politics and status distinctions through their eating practices” (2010:4). These authors discuss discourses that are present among self-identified American foodies, as well as the practices which include consuming exotic ‘authentic’ cuisine, home-style cooking, and locally produced, organic foods. Following Peterson (2005), Johnston and Baumann describe the current era of

food production and consumption as an “omnivorous” era of food: “...where the traditional divide between highbrow and lowbrow has eroded” (Johnston and Bauman 2010:3). They focus on notions of quality, rarity, locality, organic, hand-made, creativity and simplicity as foodies construct notions of “good” and “bad” foods, emphasizing the tensions that exist among these categories, and the ways in which conceptions of good and bad are informed by foodie’s preferences and engagement with these terms (2010:3). According to these authors, foodie identities are formed within the context of conceptions of gourmet food (or highbrow food), as well as increasing awareness about the unsustainable aspects of a globalized food system, and the extreme inequalities that exist among those who have and do not have enough food to eat (Johnston and Baumann 2010: 4). Foodies live out their identities in a variety of ways, but - their discourses refer to the pleasures that they derive from consuming “good food”, which: “is frequently constructed to meet both aesthetic and moral criteria and is commonly understood as both politically palatable and delicious” (Johnston and Baumann 2010: 129). This emphasis on “good food” contributes to the definition of highbrow. Alternatively, an increasing interest in “lowbrow” foods is not necessarily the opposite. Rather, contemporary foodies also value home-cooked or home-style meals. These are comfort foods such as meatloaf, or homemade versions of macaroni and cheese that might utilize local cheeses and homemade pasta. In this way, an expressed identification as a foodie comes to connote different meanings, and consumption habits, depending on the personal perspective and taste of the persons who identify with the label of

“foodie”. Shared interests in developing better access to fresh, locally produced food, and concerns with industrial agriculture and food importation practices contributed to garden organizers’ participation in developing the garden. A shared sense that the garden would be a benefit to persons residing in the neighbourhood was expressed as a common reason that neighbourhood officials granted permission for the garden to be constructed there, but they did not utilize the foodie descriptor as a reason for these interests. Amongst those I interviewed, use of the term was specific to persons who were involved with food security organizations or connected to area organic farms. Part of an identification with the term “foodie” was related to consuming home-grown foods. Persons with experience growing food acted as leaders in the early stages of the garden’s development, providing skills and seeds in order to see that the idea to develop the garden would become a reality. As I will show in Chapter Four, a shared understanding of “good food” - or a common sense about what should be grown - did not exist within the neighbourhood or amongst those who participated in community gardening. The existence of traditional “Newfoundland foods”, however, also conveys the significance of one’s identification with the province, through the act of eating foods that may be harvested, caught, hunted, or grown in Newfoundland and Labrador. In this chapter, I explore the notion of foodie in reference to both food production and consumption habits.

My use of the term foodie comes out of the self-descriptions of some of those I interviewed who played an early role in establishing the community garden. Whether

they described themselves as a foodie or, described their involvement with a “foodie community”, the term was on the lips of some of those who have been involved with community organizing around the issue of local, organic food production, and the connections between one’s eating habits and environmental sustainability. Although they had the sense that the garden might be of benefit to persons residing in the neighbourhood, they also shared the sense that the establishment of community garden within the city would expand people’s understanding of local food issues, encourage gardening activities, and foster an increased awareness of the connections between one’s consumption habits and environmental sustainability. In some ways, reference to the term foodie is incomplete, as not everyone who participated in these activities saw themselves as a foodie. However, by utilizing this terminology, I endeavour to show local (to St. John’s) connotations of this term, and the ways in which people’s understandings of being a foodie seem to vary when it is utilized in Newfoundland. Throughout my fieldwork phase, I also noticed that persons who were involved with community gardening, but did not utilize the term foodie to describe themselves, shared similar perspectives on food, and similar goals with regard to the ways in which it should be produced, and the need to increase availability to fresh, local, (and often) organic food in St. John’s. While I utilize this terminology in certain circumstances, I also consider the ways in which persons who did not identify as a foodie articulated similar concerns and sentiments as those who did.

In this chapter, I describe some of the important events and activities that contributed to the garden's establishment. The construction of the Rabbittown Community Garden stands as testament to local understandings of food security, and the interests of those who are involved in a local food movement, some of which refer to themselves as "foodies". In the ensuing sections, I consider two phases of the garden's development: the first phase occurred between 2006 and 2007, and involved developing and sharing the idea to construct a community garden in St. John's. After a brief lull in activity over summer 2007 that occurred when a proposal to construct the garden was sent to an incorrect email address, a second phase of organizing occurred between fall 2007 and summer 2008.

3.1 The Idea to Construct a Garden

Plans to develop the Rabbittown Community Garden were initiated in fall 2006 when two men, Dane and Steve met at a wild food harvesting conference that was held in St. John's that fall. After discussing shared interests in organic food, farming, and gardening, they spoke about the potential to construct a community garden somewhere central in the city. I interviewed Dane and Steve separately in fall 2009 in order to learn more about the garden's establishment in Rabbittown. During these interviews I learned that each man spent much of his life living in Ontario. Steve grew up in South-western Ontario and Dane commonly resides in Ottawa. They have both travelled extensively throughout Canada and the United States and have previous experiences gardening and farming. Dane was previously occupied by gardening and landscaping activities in Florida

and Steve recounted experiences farming in Ontario and the United Kingdom. They made their first acquaintance at the wild food harvesting conference, and continued to get to know one another through planning activities and mutual participation in food-security related events and meetings in St. John's. Both men were described to me as persons who were instrumental to the garden's development in Rabbittown by neighbourhood officials and other organizers.

I met with Steve at his rented apartment in downtown St. John's on Halloween night (October 31) in 2009 in order to learn more about the garden's history, and his interests in community gardening. Steve was someone who was familiar to me as a result of his participation in food security events in St. John's. He was also occupied by other activities in 2009, which included attempting to secure farmland just outside of the city and maintaining connections with local food security organizations such as FSN and FEAST.

When I arrived at Steve's apartment, three of his friends were visiting him. Two of them were often in attendance at local food security events, and we greeted each other warmly, making small talk in the kitchen about the evening's plans for a short while. After Steve mentioned that I was there to conduct an interview, his guests departed. He offered me a seat at his kitchen table, and I began to prepare the necessary documents for the interview. He began to boil water to be used in a pot of tea. A large pot of soup sat on a burner on his kitchen stove, and he also offered to warm what remained from an earlier meal. I would learn, throughout the interview,

about Steve's sense of the importance of sharing food with others. After listing the ingredients (arctic char and miso broth, garlic, onion and broccoli) and making sure that I would be able to enjoy a bowl, he warmed the soup and we chatted about recent concerts, school, and the changing season. Arlie, his dog, rested quietly on a couch beside the kitchen table. The evening cooled into an autumn night outside while the kitchen warmed with the water and soup on the stove.

After going over consent forms, and securing his permission to record our conversation, I began by asking Steve about how and when he started growing food. Recalling his childhood on a farm in South-western Ontario, Steve described a food production history that began at the age of four. Although he eventually learned some farming skills by working with his father- such as driving a tractor and tending to farm fields and animals- Steve described learning how to garden with his mother. He recalled spending afternoons with her when he was a young boy. She taught him to plant, weed and harvest vegetables by including him in her activities: "I think I probably learned a lot from my mom, just in terms of how plants grow, like watching how things grow, how to plant seeds." He told me. "And then after that really understanding the kind of different capacities of each type of plant, and the root system, and those kind of things. I think that comes from understanding plants in the wild, seeing, and being interested in them." His narrative referred to a childhood and adolescence spent farming, and exploring plants that grew wild in the area surrounding his home. Although he would go on to begin a university degree in biology, Steve did not complete his studies, choosing to

follow agricultural pursuits instead. He was in his mid-thirties at the time of our interview.

Steve moved to St. John's in 2004, and began to learn how to farm in Newfoundland by working with area organic growers. Some aspects of his narrative emphasized the differences between soils in Newfoundland and those in Ontario and England (where he had grown food before). He discussed some of the lessons that he had learned during his time in Newfoundland about utilizing compost and lime mixes in order to diminish the acidity of the soil here. Steve made connections between his concerns with soil production and his concerns with food security: "So that's what I'm focused on right now" he said, after discussing the challenges that soil and weather conditions present to farmers on the island of Newfoundland: "How can we feed ourselves here? How can we do it without having to spend millions of dollars all at once on chemicals? Because we know that is not feasible, and we know that it kills off a lot of the microbial activity in the soil as well. And how do we do it, how do we sort of progress?" At the time of our interview, Steve was working as an organic farm certifier, and was also volunteering with the Food Security Network, Food Education Action St. John's and the Atlantic Canadian Organic Regional Network-Newfoundland and Labrador. Drumming his fingers on the kitchen table softly, Steve expressed his food security concerns as they intersected with his interests in organic agriculture, and producing food on the island. He referred to the Rabbittown Community Garden motto "All for One Harvest, One Harvest for All" and explained: "The One for All style, in

theory, is to let people grow for everybody, basically. And to create space for everyone to grow in. I guess tying food security in with that, it's about feeding people that don't necessarily have the food that they need. And the nutrients, especially." His interests in reaching out to people who do not have the food that they need in order to lead a healthy life may be considered an example of how food security activists' frames were consistent with some of the larger goals of the provincial Food Security Network. Due to his background in farming, Steve saw his role as someone who could help increase food production on the island. He indicated: "Providing people with substantial nutrients in the form of fresh food is the best solution that I can come up with. That's what food security is to me. Give people. Be able to allow people to eat what they need. To have the nutrients that they need to be successful in their lives. To be happy." His discussion of food security as a human right, and his interests in providing healthy food to persons who do not currently have access to it provides an insight into his conceptions of the issue, and his rationale for participating in the development of a community garden in a social housing neighbourhood.

In Steve's telling of the garden's development, Dane played an important early role in establishing connections that were necessary to construct the space. Neither Steve nor Dane reside in Rabbittown, nor did they know one another before plans to organize the Rabbittown Community Garden began. Although Steve was involved with the early stages of garden planning, he described Dane as the garden's instigator. Steve recalled: "Dane was really pushing. He was involved with the Community Centre

Alliance. He was kind of, you know, he was going in. He's the type of guy that really is an instigator. He sees a niche and he sees where things might need a change and might be able to be benefitted by activity and by people who exist around him." Dane's connections with a man named Will, who worked for the Community Centre Alliance (an organization that connects five of St. John's social housing neighbourhood community centres with one another in an effort to strengthen programs and services for residents) was crucial to the garden's establishment at Rabbittown.

Dane described himself in reference to his previous community development and social justice-related activities as well as his previous experiences gardening. For Dane, these previous activities, which included attendance at conferences, and participation in food security, environmental and social justice organizations, were particularly important to his participation in the development of the community garden. Throughout our interview, he told me about his recent travels and conference attendance. Earlier that year, he had participated in a community development conference at the University of Prince Edward Island, and he mentioned this with much enthusiasm, offering to show me some of the information that he had gathered. Before beginning to discuss the history of the community garden, Dane described his burgeoning interests in Aboriginal land rights and the Stolen Sister's Project, which seeks to raise awareness of violence against Aboriginal women. Dane was careful to note that he does not call himself as an activist, however he did describe a long history of community organizing, protesting and attending conferences. These activities were performed in an effort to maintain his

awareness of current social issues and to generate ideas about potential community responses that may be organized in order to address various interests and needs. His concerns ranged from those related to sustainability, human rights and labour standards.

Like Steve, Dane recalled previous gardening experiences when he discussed his interests in developing a community garden in St. John's. Dane's narrative describes travelling throughout North America, where he has gardened in community, and on his own. He also described visiting and participating in community gardening activities in places such as Florida and Montreal. He recalled:

The year before I moved back to Newfoundland I'd taken a break from gardening. Because I always did it for years. And I took a break for about three years from gardening. And I was doing more wildcrafting plants, north of Ottawa with First Nations. Restoring health. Different types of Labrador tea and things like that. So the year before I moved back here, there was a community garden in Gatherall, on the other side of Ottawa, near the Hull area. And myself and two other people, a friend from Africa and a friend who was from Columbia. So we did a.... We included three plots together and did a spiral garden.

Dane described the garden in Gatherall as a meditative place, where one could go in order to escape from the city, and enjoy quiet contemplation. Dane's narrative also describes a history of movement between St. John's, Ottawa, Quebec and Florida. During the interview he skipped from discussion of community gardening to sustainability initiatives, community development activities in St. John's, Montreal and Ottawa as well as his initiation of the Rabbittown Community Garden. He also described his relationship with Will from the Community Centre Alliance as an important aspect of

the garden's establishment at Rabbittown. Although Steve and Dane shared a general interest in developing a community garden, it was Dane's contact with Bill, and Bill's mention of a man named Michael, who lives and volunteers in Rabbittown, that eventually set the trajectory of the garden's construction within the neighbourhood. The garden was eventually located there because Bill had the sense that there may be some available space within the neighbourhood, and that community gardening would be an enjoyable social activity for persons residing there. Dane recalled: "So I discussed with Bill about doing a garden out back. The only garden in St. John's at the time was one on Mount Scio Road. But that was farther away. The first location was Froude Avenue. Because of the greenspace in front of it. And then Bill mentioned to me that Michael seemed to be a good person to contact, because Rabbittown might have an interest."

The Brother McSheffrey Community Garden, located on Mount Scio Road, was a longstanding initiative that had been organized in an effort to benefit persons residing in another social housing neighbourhood in the city. Although it was open to those residing anywhere in St. John's, its location presented some challenges for persons to participate in gardening there. During interviews with other persons involved with food security organizations, a common desire to see a garden located near downtown St. John's was expressed. Dane's reflections on these conversations with Bill indicate his intention to organize a community garden in a social housing neighbourhood, and the important role that a man named Michael, who resides in Rabbittown, would eventually play in the garden's development. According to Dane: "The idea for the garden was basically skills

development, and education for youth. And to engage community.” Broadening the scope of his idea, Steve recalled that:

Dane’s idea was to create this pilot project and spread it around to all the Community Centres, which I still think is a brilliant idea...So with that in mind the goal would be providing food to people who need it, that don’t have a lot of money, a lot of spare money. Trying to create, to do things for people that don’t have the things they need to eat. Or perceivably.

Dane and Steve shared the perception that, due to the low income status of persons residing in the neighbourhood, the garden would be a benefit to them.

Although some garden organizers had the sense that Dane was well-connected within the Rabbittown neighbourhood, my interview with him revealed that, like Steve, he did not have any familiarity with the neighbourhood before becoming involved with the garden’s establishment. When I asked Steve if he or Dane if they knew much about the neighbourhood before initiating the garden’s construction there, he said that they knew:

Nothing really. Like I didn’t even know what Rabbittown was. Before getting involved with those three [Dane, Michael and Paul]. Of course I learned a little bit from Paul [the Executive Director of the Rabbittown Community Centre from 2006-2009]. But I mean, I still don’t. I don’t really know. I know a lot of people there. But. I mean I don’t know what their lives are like, really. I don’t know what they go through, I don’t know how they deal with NL Housing, or what low cost housing is like, really. What that whole interaction process is.

Following suggestions made by Bill from the Community Centre Alliance, Steve and Dane made contact with Michael. He played an important role in the early stages of the garden’s development by supporting Dane and Steve’s idea, and offering his sense that the garden would be a benefit to neighbourhood residents who live on low incomes, and

may experience financial challenges in purchasing fresh foods from nearby grocery stores. Dane and Steve also met with Paul at this time.

Steve provided his reflections on early conversations with Michael, which encouraged the development of the garden at Rabbittown. Emphasizing his sense that the garden would benefit neighbourhood residents, Steve said:

So I think what I knew going into it was that I could probably help to some degree. And that we were in a state of, you know, that we were in a state of not really knowing how we could help, but... You know, trusting Michael that we could do something...He was like, you know, this is definitely what people need, people don't eat well enough here, and there were lots of things that he said that made me believe that this was a really good idea. And everyone pointed to it being a good idea. So even, you know, Paul thought it was a great idea, too.

From Michael's perspective, having the garden in Rabbittown seemed like a good fit because of the availability of space behind the Rabbittown Community Centre, and his perception that those who reside in the neighbourhood could benefit from the food that would be grown. Analyses of food security levels within the neighbourhood do not currently exist, so it is difficult to determine whether or not persons residing in the neighbourhood experience income-related food insecurity. However, neighbourhood officials also expressed their sense that the garden would be a benefit to persons residing in Rabbittown due to the opportunity it would give them to secure fresh produce, for free. One employee at the Community Centre, who has lived in the neighbourhood for most of his life, reflected:

Once again, it comes back to being in a low income neighbourhood. Obviously, some people are on supports, so food. I think food is a big component for families.

And I am going to stress this one more time. The fact that having vegetables there, and stuff like that? And the people who do take advantage and benefit from that? It's good. The whole community can benefit from it. They just have to come out and not necessarily be ashamed, take it upon themselves to just come out and enjoy it. But like I said, there's a stigma of people and people talk. I mean, it's disheartening, but it's life. That's the reality of the situation.

These types of sentiments - about the garden's potential to benefit persons living in a low income neighbourhood - were shared among neighbourhood officials. While Tyler indicates that the garden might be a help to persons living on income support, his discussion of stigma provokes consideration of some of the social dynamics of the neighbourhood, which Steve and Dane did not profess to understand when they reflected on their idea to construct the garden in Rabbittown. As a result of conversations with Michael, his wife Lee-Anne and employees at the Community Centre, Dane and Steve continued to work on plans to construct a garden there.

Because Michael was described to me as someone who played a key role in establishing the community garden, I conducted an interview with him about the history of the garden in July 2009. He and Lee-Anne invited me to come to their home to speak with them about how the garden came to be. We shared cold drinks and snacks in the living room of their housing unit on a warm afternoon. The couple challenged me to try a few extra spicy Doritos, and I offered them a container of chocolate chip cookies, which they said were their favourite, as a token of thanks for meeting with me. Our interview lasted for two and a half hours.

I met Michael and Lee-Anne for the first time while conducting participant observation activities at the garden. Three weeks into the second season of community gardening at Rabbittown, and my research phase, they invited me to come to their home. Even though I had only met them a few weeks before, they made me feel welcome and encouraged me to drop by any time. I do so on several occasions while I completed my research, and began my writing phase. Since coming to know them as a result of my research on community gardening, they have thrown several get-togethers and family celebrations to which I and other gardeners have been invited. Between 2009 and 2010, I stopped by their home to chat with them, and I also attended their anniversary party on a warm July evening in 2009, and once more the following year. Michael and Lee-Anne reside in a section of Rabbittown called 'The Courts' and they both volunteer at the Rabbittown Community Centre. Community Centre employees described Michael as a Champion, or, someone who could promote causes and participation in activities among his neighbours. During our first interview, which occurred in July 2009, Michael and Lee-Anne left their front door open, and passersby called in to greet them. On one occasion, a young man called after Lee-Anne, carrying on what seemed to be a long-running joke between them. When I interviewed them again at the end of the gardening season, a young mother stopped in to ask if Michael could help her to blow up a children's wading pool. These types of interactions were typical, and Michael often emphasized his love for his community, his desire to help his neighbours, and his sense that people should

love, respect and care for one another. He expressed these sentiments while being interviewed and participating in community gardening. These interactions indicated why Bill would suggest Michael as a contact for Dane and Steve. He seemed to have a wide social network, and strong relationships within the neighbourhood. Furthermore, Michael and Lee-Anne's residence within the neighbourhood gave them a special role amongst garden organizers. While neither Dane nor Steve knew much about the neighbourhood before embarking upon the initiative to establish a garden there, Michael and Lee-Anne's experiences as residents, persons living on low-incomes, and their relationships with their neighbours allowed them to share their perspectives on the extent to which the garden would be a benefit to Rabbittown residents, and whether community gardening would be an activity that people within the neighbourhood would wish to participate in.

Michael recalled meeting with Dane and Steve at his home in Rabbittown in winter 2006. Like Dane and Steve, he indicated: "Well, the dreams we had for it was to pursue a garden that could be duplicated elsewhere, like we were looking at the idea of growing, you know putting enough food in the gardens all over the city." Michael expressed that he was interested in participating in the garden's organization out of an interest in social justice, and being a part of a movement to develop garden spaces throughout the city. Michael was connected to Rabbittown Community Centre employees, and was also in contact with residents of the neighbourhood. His role

gave him some authority to speak on their behalf. When I asked him about how he became involved with the community garden, Michael recalled:

I was on the Tenants' Association at the time, so they felt that it was a great fit. You know, that the easiest route would be to go through Rabbittown because we had an area that wasn't being used that was just a big trash heap, essentially, with car parts everywhere and we wanted to do something about it and so we cleaned it up and we decided, you know, that it was a perfect spot for a garden.

Although he saw his participation as it related to his formal role on the Tenants' Association, others expressed their sense that he was a good contact for garden organizers because of his friendly nature and helpful demeanor.

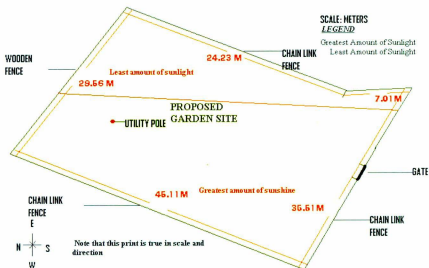
After meeting with Dane and Steve, Michael and his wife Lee-Anne went up to the space where the garden is now located in order to measure the lot and determine the possibility of planting a garden there. During the meeting with Michael, Lee-Anne sat with us and contributed to our conversation from time to time. In his description of his own activities that helped to facilitate the garden's development, Michael mentioned her as someone who helped him take measurements of the garden space. Both Michael and Lee-Anne welcomed Steve and Dane into their home in order to organize the garden. She recalled details of the early meetings, and helped Michael to remember the dates, and frequency, of these early interactions.

When I spoke to Lee-Anne about her involvement with the garden's development, she recalled going up to measure the space in order to draft a proposal for the Rabbittown Tenants' Association, the Rabbittown Community Centre Board of

Directors and Newfoundland and Labrador Housing. Michael nodded along with her recollections and said:

There was still snow on the ground when we started looking at it. So I went up, took a bunch of pictures in the winter time, and then took a bunch more when the snow was pretty much melted and then I pretty much went up and started measuring the garden. Lee-Anne and I went up together. So she was writing the measurements down, and I sketched out a map of the garden and, you know, looked at the way the sun would hit the garden. Sort of observed it, sat there for awhile, got to know which way would be the best way to plant it.

The couple described this as an enjoyable activity. They liked being outside, sitting within the space, and contributing to the garden's development. Michael went on to draft a map of the space that was used in the original proposal to construct the garden:



Neither Michael nor Lee-Anne described themselves as foodies. Instead, they emphasized their identities as persons living on low incomes. They discussed their sense that the garden would be of some benefit to persons residing in the neighbourhood, who may not be able to afford to purchase healthy food at local grocery stores. They also expressed that, for themselves personally, it had encouraged them to consider the foods that they eat, and to begin to make attempts to consume more fresh produce.

Based on their interactions with Michael, Lee-Anne and neighbourhood officials, Steve and Dane developed the sense that the garden would be a space that could increase accessibility to fresh vegetables among persons residing in the neighbourhood.

According to Michael, who expressed the realities of grocery shopping on a low income: "Meats are quite expensive, and vegetables are expensive, so you tend to go for the cheapest foods that you can get. Kraft Dinner, and pastas. You're always under constant stress. If you get healthy food well, then you have to stress about your bill not being paid." These types of sentiments – about neighbourhood residents' inability to afford to purchase healthy foods at grocery stores – were shared by neighbourhood employees.

According to Laurie, who worked as the Director of Programs and Services in 2006, and until 2009 when she took on the role as Executive Director:

A lot of community members don't get a lot of fresh vegetables, if they get any vegetables at all, because it is a lot cheaper for them to go out and buy garbage food. This is their opportunity where they could get fresh vegetables. It could be a social network for them, and it's just a chance for them to learn something. Take ownership of something in that garden which was so incredible. It was a visual they could see right from the beginning to what was grown. And picking. And getting ready to harvest it, and eat it.

In winter 2007, Michael, Dane and Steve also met with Paul, who worked as the Executive Director of the Community Garden Alliance. Steve recalled:

Dane, Michael and I got together a couple times. And we got together with Paul, checked out the site, you know, saw the truck cab sitting in the yard. There was a big engine out there. Like, the place was full of garbage. It was also full of snow when we were there. So there was a lot of work to do.

These early meetings and visits to the space where the garden was eventually located were informal activities that facilitated the development of future plans, and relationships necessary to construct the garden there.

Steve's narrative indicates that some connections were made with neighbourhood officials and residents in the early stages of the garden's development. His description of the space also indicates that, in the years leading up to the garden's establishment, the space where it is located had become a sort of refuse site for persons residing nearby. In order to learn more about how the garden came to be developed in Rabbittown, I met with Paul, who worked as the Executive Director of the Rabbittown Community Centre between 2006 and 2009. I conducted an informal interview with him about the garden's history in his office at his new place of employment, where he began working that summer. As I have throughout this chapter, I will continue to use pseudonyms to describe those persons who were involved with organizing the community garden. Paul remembered that:

The first meeting that I went to was with Steve, and I think Michael. And Kyle came later on. But, I'm not sure if the Community Garden Alliance was formed at that

point or not. But I know they originally came to me and said “This is something we’re looking at doing. And, you know, do you have a space? Is there a value to all this? Sort of stuff. So of course we jumped on that, saying that it was just perfect timing, just kind of fell into place because we had the space up in the back of our building that wasn’t in use. It literally had abandoned cars in it, there was garbage in it, it was just, you know, it was just useless and dangerous on top of that.

While neighbourhood officials, Michael and Lee-Anne shared the sense that the garden would be a benefit to persons living on low incomes, the garden was also considered to have the potential to make an improvement to the physical space where it is located. Paul’s narrative provides more insight into the early meetings, and some of the reasons why persons who work at the community centre perceived of the garden as a good idea.

Garden organizers, employees, and Michael and Lee-Anne (who reside in the neighbourhood) generated initial support for the initiative, which Steve and Dane compiled in order to submit a proposal to Newfoundland and Labrador Housing. In the next section I will focus on neighbourhood official and residents’ perceptions of the space where the garden is located in order to discuss how the development of the garden changed this aspect of the neighbourhood. The physical improvements that the garden encouraged were seen to be positive aspects of its development, and part of the reason why support and permission were granted to garden organizers in order to utilize the space.

3.2 Oral Histories About the Space Within the Neighbourhood

For those who reside and work within the neighbourhood, and were familiar with the location of the garden, the space where it is located was considered to be a formerly

vacant lot, or dumping ground. Persons who work at the Community Centre, and persons who reside near to the garden were able to recall more details about the changes that the garden has made to the space in which it is located. Among those I spoke to, the garden was seen to be a positive aspect of the neighbourhood, and its establishment was considered to be a vast improvement upon what had become a space of disarray. Some residents, however, had no familiarity with the garden, or the space where it is located. My understanding of the history of the space where the garden is located is informed by interviews with neighbourhood officials and residents, as well as conversations with those who reside in the neighbourhood during my attendance at neighbourhood events and social activities.

As I will describe in an ensuing section, persons who were involved with the establishment of the community garden often referred to themselves as foodies and discussed the existence of a foodie community within St. John's. Although they made attempts to develop the garden within the neighbourhood, in order to benefit persons living on low incomes, garden organizers expressed a lack of understanding about the community in which the garden was to be located. There also seemed to be some perceived divisions between foodies and neighbourhood residents, with foodies being those who were developing the garden, or participating in community gardening, and neighbourhood residents being persons that needed to be included in these activities, and engaged in foodie issues and concerns. Although my research project was not designed to focus specifically on the neighbourhood, or the experiences of persons who

live there, I did participate in events that I was invited to, and this allowed me to generate some insight into life in Rabbittown. Conceptions of the neighbourhood that referred to it as a community were described in reference to the kindness of those who reside there, and a sense of camaraderie among some neighbours. Stories of shared meals and pastimes, however, were juxtaposed by stories about unfriendly relationships within some neighbours, and an ongoing threat that one's neighbour could report on another's behaviour to Housing authorities. This contributed to some gardeners' sense that they could not trust those who lived in close proximity. Furthermore, as a result of construction activities that were occurring at social housing units in 2008 and 2009, residents were also being moved about the neighbourhood, and to various parts of St. John's. Community Centre employees, for instance, acknowledged that they were having difficulty keeping track of who lived where, and some residents also shared their sense that Rabbittown was enduring a turbulent period.

Further discussion about the history of the garden within the neighbourhood, and people's familiarity with the space occurred at the Rabbittown Community Centre Thanksgiving Dinner, which I attended with another gardener who expressed an interest in making attempts to generate connections between the garden and the neighbourhood that year. While seated at the dinner table, we spoke to those around us, and sat next to Michael, Lee-Anne and Jane who also attended the meal. Two persons who had recently moved into the neighbourhood indicated that they had not heard about the garden before. In an effort to invite neighbourhood residents to an

upcoming Harvest Party (which occurred at the end of the gardening season in 2009) I had developed a printed flyer indicating the date, time and location of the activity. One man, whom I sat across from at the dinner, was not able to accept the document due to a visual impairment. Michael, who sat beside him, took up the flyer gently, "Here, Keith, we want to invite you to something." He read him the information that was provided, and the man nodded his head. "Do you think you'll go?" Michael asked him "I'd like to!" he said.

Discussions that occurred at neighbourhood events indicated that some residents were not interested in participating in community gardening, some did not know of its existence, and that others were aware of its location, but uncertain about whether they wished to be involved or not. While attending the Rabbittown Summer BBQ, I also met two women in their thirties who said that they knew of the garden's existence and had visited the space before. One of the women said that she had gardened there the year before, but did not need the food because of her connections to a family farm. The other said that she did not wish to go to the garden because she did not want to spend time with some of her neighbours. Rather than conceiving of the neighbourhood as a community that is comprised of persons living on low incomes, these events, activities, and interviews promoted a sense of liveliness, the potential that some residents have pre-existing access to fresh produce, as well as a general sense that not everyone in the neighbourhood knows of the garden's existence or is necessarily interested in participating in these activities.

Persons who reside close to the garden, and those who work at the Rabbittown Community Centre had the most to say about the changes that the garden has made to the space where it is located. Two persons who reside close to the garden expressed that children have played within the space for more than thirty years. One woman who grew up in the neighbourhood, and now has grandchildren that she brings to the garden from time to time, recalled playing there when she was a child. While tying up the vines of snow peas on Sunday afternoon in September, she told me stories about some of her former play activities within the space. She described running through the garden before it was fenced in by Newfoundland and Labrador Housing. She also shared a story about the death of her family's dog when she was a child, and, how her brother had buried it where the garden's South Eastern fence is now located. She said that she avoided playing in that part of the space after the dog was buried there, and recalled happier memories of playing hide and seek and King's Castle in the tall grasses that grew throughout the lot, more than thirty years ago, she supposed. She said that the grass used to grow as high as her adult waist, then smiled and laughed recalling her play activities there. She returned to her gardening activities when Jane called her over to the fence in order to tie up the peas. "You done your talking yet?" She jibed. "We've got work to do!"

Another man who resides in the neighbourhood, and visited the garden on Sunday afternoons in order to let his dog out, had the sense that, since the garden was developed, children no longer played there as much. He did, however, describe the back

section of the space where trees and taller grasses continue to grow, as an especially popular place for them to play. He shared his concerns that neighbourhood children would do damage to the garden beds, and also mentioned that he kept an eye out over the garden, which can be seen from windows in his housing unit. He said that he enjoyed the changes that the garden has made to the space, even though he did not regularly participate in community gardening activities, or harvest the vegetables that are grown there.

Interviews with neighbourhood officials indicated that before becoming a community garden, the space where it is located was a refuse site that was not regularly maintained by Newfoundland and Labrador Housing, or the Rabbittown Community Centre. Laurie, who became the Executive Director of the Rabbittown Community Centre in 2009, and previously worked as the Director of Programs and Services there, recalled:

It was a dumping ground. The grass was never cut. We'd cut the first part of the grass if we wanted to...Ask Housing to come in and cut the first part so that we could just have games out there for our Canada Day and other community carnivals. Other times, we wouldn't even bring our children up there, because you didn't know what was in the grass. It was a dumping site for everything. So that's why, to see something go from a useless piece of land that was just there as a dumping station, as hazardous for the children that used to go up there after the Centre would close and you would see people up there in the evening, to now this garden where they can get vegetables? And that is just so useful now. That it has a purpose up there.

I met with Laurie at her office on the main floor of the Rabbittown Community Centre in order to discuss the history of the community garden with her. The garden is visible

through her office window. While I was meeting with her on a Friday afternoon, she raised the blinds in order to look toward the garden while she recalled its previous state to me. Although she no longer resides in Rabbittown, Laurie had lived there for a period of time. She was able to speak at length about the changes that the garden has made to the space, and also discussed residents' perceptions of the garden, which they shared with her during visits to the Community Centre.

Laurie also provided her sense that residents' memories of the space may contribute to their confusion about what the space has become since the garden was established: "A lot of people can remember that field" She said. "There was car pieces, parts...you couldn't let kids go up there because the grass would be up to your hip. You didn't know what was in it, you didn't know if there was a lot of oils up there or if people were dumping... what they were dumping up there." Previous use of the space as a dumping ground contributed to neighbourhood residents' sense that it should not be entered. Further, that it was a space that children were not encouraged to play within: "You didn't want kids up there" Laurie continued. "Only for the first part, if we had it mowed. And now, to see how much it has grown in the past couple of years? It's just amazing. So you just have to tell people sometimes, especially with other parts of our community" Her narrative indicates her sense of the positive changes that the garden has made within the neighbourhood, and the need to let residents know about its existence, due to its only recent establishment as well as its history as a space that was not to be entered, or was perceived to be dangerous.

Another employee at the Rabbittown Community Centre, who grew up in the neighbourhood and continues to reside there, recalled that the space had not been anything other than a dumping ground over the past twenty-two years. However, he also indicated that children have a history of playing there despite the disarray:

As far as I can remember back there, it's essentially, once upon a time it used to be for garbage. A dump. Residents from the community just put their old stuff up there. I know as a child myself we used to go up there and frolic around, play. Whatever the case may be. The past few years actually before the whole community garden was proposed, we used it for Canada Day events and stuff like that. As a place to do some activities with the kids.

Tyler, who works as a youth programmer at the community centre described an annual clean-up day within the space. He also indicated that the front section of the lot had some previous utility for neighbourhood events and activities. While Laurie emphasized the desire to keep children from playing within the space, because of hazardous materials and potential to injure themselves on old car parts and other refuse, Tyler's narrative indicates that there is a history of children playing there, despite (or perhaps because of) these dangers. Rather than taking children to the vacant lot during Centre programs Tyler said that he and other employees would often make use of nearby city parks.

Laurie was not clear about how, exactly, the garden came to be developed at Rabbittown, but she remembered some of the early conversations that occurred among persons who worked at the Community Centre in 2008 when the idea to develop the community garden was expressed to her. Although she was excited about the potential

to have a garden in the neighbourhood, and supported the idea, Laurie recalled: “So when they said they were going to put it there (PHONE RINGS) we were very excited. But we thought “There is no way they’re going to get anything to grow up there” because it was used as a dump site. There was a lot of hazardous material up there.” Over the hour and a half that I spoke with her about the garden’s history, the phone on her desk rang on five separate occasions, and persons who reside in the neighbourhood stopped by her office to say hello. She also received the donation of a children’s sand box. This offered me a sense for how busy the community centre is, and how frequently Laurie interacts with persons residing in the neighbourhood. The busy afternoon activities at the centre, ringing phone, and visits to her office provide a portrait of her own work there. She discussed the significance of other groups organizing programs in partnership with the Centre in order to secure volunteers and receive some support with running services for residents.

Laurie provided a long list of current initiatives taking place at the Centre, and also indicated that many programs are offered by external organizations. A community kitchen program, for instance, is run by members of a nearby church. Community centre employees had the sense that the Community Garden Alliance would construct the garden and lead programming in a similar way: through the support of a volunteer-base, in an effort to engage persons residing in the neighbourhood and share gardening skills with them. Citing conversations among Community Centre employees, Laurie recalled:

We said we loved the idea. Which we really did, it was just that we didn't have staff. And we had to be really firm on that. Because sometimes we take on... We want this here, and we really want it here. So we try to take it on. But we know that if we tried to take that on, especially since myself and Paul don't have green thumbs (laughs). It wouldn't be best. So we wanted to make sure they understood that we would love to see something flourish like that up there, but just unfortunately we didn't have the manpower to do it ourselves.

Along with her discussions about the role of organizations comprised of persons who reside outside of the neighbourhood to the facilitation of programs and activities, she also described a long history of neighbourhood organizing, and the Centre's role as a space that people who reside there might utilize in order to form social clubs, address shared concerns, and work toward personal health and wellness. The garden and the neighbourhood were understood to be a sort of partnership, and community centre officials offered vocal support for the initiative. Laurie expressed her sense that more people would participate in community gardening if the CGA continued to offer programs for children, and carried out door-to-door campaigns, that included informal discussions about the garden with residents. Her narrative made reference to the physical improvements that had been made to the space, as well as her support for the initiative and hope that it would be taken on by residents eventually. Rather than conceiving of this as something that would happen on its own accord, she provided a number of suggestions for how the garden could become more connected to those who reside nearby.

When I spoke to Paul about the garden's history, he saw his role as one that included helping persons involved with garden planning to connect with Newfoundland

and Labrador Housing and supporting them in generating permission in order to develop the space. When I met with him in June 2009, he shared stories about his gardening attempts in Portugal Cove, where he resides with his wife. He said that he had recently begun gardening, but by no means considered himself to have a green thumb. Like Laurie, Tyler also expressed that he did not have a background in gardening. Due to his role as the Executive Director of the Rabbittown Community Centre at the time of the garden's establishment, Paul was most able to recount how the garden came to be organized there. Referring back to the meetings that he had with Dane and Steve in winter 2007, he recalled:

So, we went up and had a meeting looking at the place, came back sat down and just got everything in motion. I mean, we had to connect with NL Housing to make sure it was OK to do this, and they were all for it. Had to make sure all the proper documents were signed, you know, just to make sure that everything was legit to do this thing, all the appropriate people to talk to.

Although he did not take credit for helping to establish the community garden, Paul did play an important role in generating support for the initiative, offering his sense that the garden would be a benefit to persons residing in the neighbourhood and helping what would eventually become the Community Garden Alliance to secure permission to utilize the space. Laurie, who accepted the Executive Director position after Paul's departure in 2009, indicated that there was much excitement among Community Centre employees about the initiative, but also, some reservation regarding how a partnership would be developed between the garden and the neighbourhood:

It was brought to our attention that we were possibly going to be getting a community garden. We loved the idea, but we also had so many programs going on at the time. We loved the idea, we just did not have the staff to go out and man the station. That's why it was fantastic when the Community Garden Alliance was coming on board with it.

Paul and Laurie's narratives indicate that those working at the Community Centre were in support of the garden; that permission to construct it had to be secured through permission from Newfoundland and Labrador Housing; and that the simultaneous development of an organization called the Community Garden Alliance were all crucial to the garden's construction.

In spring 2007 Dane and Steve compiled letters of support from the Rabbittown Community Centre, the Food Security Network of Newfoundland and Labrador, and the Rabbittown Tenants' Association. Although these individuals and organizations were able to offer support, permission to construct the garden had to be granted by Newfoundland and Labrador Housing. A proposal to utilize the space for the purposes of community gardening was sent, by email, to an official from Newfoundland and Labrador Housing. However, it was sent to a wrong address and the idea to construct the garden sat idle for several months. In the next section, I discuss how the idea to develop the community garden unfolded into a physical reality due to the involvement of persons residing outside of Rabbittown who share interests in food security, organic food production and community development activities rather than those who reside in the neighbourhood or work at the Rabbittown Community Centre. I focus on the development of the Community Garden Alliance, which moved to establish the

Rabbittown Community Garden in 2008 by securing permission, grants, and materials that were necessary to carry out the initiative.

3.3 Developing Networks, Funds and Permission to Construct a Community Garden at Rabbittown

A year's worth of fundraising and coordinating activities occurred in the time that followed the mis-directed email and formal permission to construct the community garden at Rabbittown. Dane, Steve and Michael awaited a response for several months, but did not receive a reply. Although Dane told me that he felt some concern over the silence that they received, he indicated that he and Steve had been warned that it would take time for Newfoundland and Labrador Housing officials to get back to them. They chose to wait for a response, rather than force one. In the meantime, they continued to share the idea with others who might be interested in participating in the garden's development.

Those who shared interests in developing a community garden came together over fall and winter 2007-08 to form the Community Garden Alliance. Just as he had conceived of the garden, Dane was instrumental to the development of this organization. It was his hope that, eventually, every community centre in the city would have its own community garden that would benefit persons residing in social housing neighbourhoods. Although the garden was originally conceived of as a space that could benefit persons living on low incomes who reside in Rabbittown, and informal

permission had been granted as a result of neighbourhood officials' and some residents' sense that this would be the case, the garden also eventually became a space of importance for persons who are affiliated with food security initiatives.

During a telephone conversation that occurred early in the summer of 2009, Gloria expressed her sense that the garden is located within the context of a burgeoning food security movement: "You have to understand" she said on the phone one evening "This isn't just a garden that you're studying, it's a social movement." Her sentiment that this was the case was shared by others who were active in the early stages of the garden's development, such as Dave, Steve, Michael, Lee-Anne, and a young woman named Sasha. The establishment of the community garden occurred in unison with a number of food security initiatives in St. John's, and in other regions of the province. According to garden organizers, a Food Security Assembly was an important part of the garden's history. In October 2007, the Food Security Network of Newfoundland and Labrador hosted a Food Security Assembly in St. John's. The event included three days of discussions and workshops on the status of food security within the province. It also provided networking opportunities for persons who share interests in food security. The assembly acted as an incubator for conversations and connections that led to the organization of Food Education Action St. John's (FEAST) and the Community Garden Alliance (CGA). According to the report that was drafted by the Food Security Network of Newfoundland and Labrador (2007), the Food Security Assembly brought together 117 individuals from a variety of faith groups, community development, social justice and

emergency food organizations. Persons who attended the Assembly included professors, students, activists, farmers, gardeners and nutritionists as well as provincial and municipal government officials. The report summarizes the Assembly as such: "The purpose of the conference was to create opportunities for networking, learning, and action planning. The Assembly was designed to gather information and opinions on key food security issues and priorities from delegates and to provide direction for a provincial food security agenda" (Food Security Network of Newfoundland and Labrador 2007:2). Key issues of concern identified by delegates included poverty, education, and access to food as it corresponds with the availability of fresh, local produce. Increased food production on the island, income supplements, Farmers' Markets, and community gardens were discussed as key responses to food insecurity within the region. The report provides an insight into topics of discussion, and the expression of attendees' interests in increasing food production, and supply of healthy food to vulnerable groups: "A number of participants said that energy should be focused on these projects and actions that are intended to help vulnerable groups acquire food. It was also suggested that communities provide space for local food action, such as community gardens, community kitchens, and farmers' markets" (FSN 2007:30). Through group discussions and workshops, conference delegates were able to determine potential paths toward increasing food security, and what their next steps might be. Networking activities were seen to be key to developing these initiatives. According to the closing address, given by the Executive Director of the Food Security Network, social networking would be

important to the ongoing development of food security throughout the province: “The second stage is when people realize that they can create more benefit by working together. Relationships shift from casual exchanges to a commitment to work together in some way. Personal needs expand to include a desire to support others” (FSN 2007: 37). According to those I spoke to who were present at the Assembly, her reflections inspired those in attendance to forge connections with one another and to develop local initiatives and smaller organizations that would begin to address the issue of food insecurity on the island.

In the months that followed the Food Security Assembly, the St. John’s-based Food Education Action St. John’s (FEAST) and the Community Garden Alliance (CGA) were organized. Dane, Steve, and a young woman named Imogen attended the event. I was not able to interview Imogen; however, informal conversations that occurred with her at the community garden, and other food security related events that occurred in 2009 focused on her work with the Newfoundland and Labrador Environment Network (NLEN), as well as her previous experiences working on organic farms. Imogen was regarded among those I spoke to as a knowledgeable farmer, a busy activist, and someone that was working to raise awareness of food insecurity, and develop local responses to this issue. Like Steve and Dane, Imogen had previously resided in various parts of Canada, and has experience working on organic farms. She is originally from Ontario,. Dane sent emails and arranged for meetings over the course of fall 2007, and Imogen and Steve also worked to organize meetings in their homes and at local cafes in

order to develop interest and raise awareness of food security issues in St. John's after the Assembly. Eventually, Imogen spearheaded FEAST. Steve and Dane indicated that they had connections to this organization as well as to CGA. These organizations seem to have facilitated use of the term foodie, which was often used to describe persons who were involved in these initiatives. Although the garden was constructed in Rabbittown, Steve remarked that: "The core group of foodie people, you could sort of define them or characterize them as being not from Rabbittown." Rather than focussing efforts to develop the garden within the neighbourhood, the garden became a space that many of those who were working to establish other food security related organizations and initiatives played a role in developing. The garden's construction was meant to serve two functions: to develop more garden space within the city in order to encourage local food consumption and gardening activities, and to benefit persons residing in the neighbourhood, who were not referred to as foodies.

Although Michael and Lee-Anne played an early role in establishing support for the garden within the neighbourhood, they did not participate in meetings that were held downtown in fall and winter 2007-08. They cited busy schedules and involvement with neighbourhood events and activities as part of the reason that they were not involved in this aspect of the garden's development. Although there was a general sense of openness expressed among garden organizers, there was also a sense that particular skills and previous experiences made some more suited to certain types of activities than others. Of those who played key roles in the garden's establishment, two held

PhD's, one held a Master's degree, and one held a Bachelor's degree. One garden organizer had the sense that persons who participated in the garden's development, and had completed postsecondary education, knew how to connect with government officials and other groups. To her, being a member of a "higher social class" was important because it signified one's ability to be professional, and to be taken seriously by persons who held the power to grant permission to construct the space. Educational attainment, which she connected with notions of membership within a "higher social class" also seemed to have been an important contributor to people's participation in this aspect of organizing the garden. Persons who attended meetings that were organized by Steve, Dane and Imogen in 2007 were also described in reference to their affiliations with Memorial University. Many of those who were involved with organizing the community garden were also working and volunteering with local environmental organizations at the time. Social connections that developed among persons who shared interests in gardening, farming, and consuming local organic food became important to the garden's establishment.

According to Gloria, one person who played a key role in the garden's development was a young woman named Sasha. I met with her in July 2009 in order to learn more about the garden's establishment at Rabbittown, and her recollections about how and why it was organized. In 2009, Sasha was no longer participating in community gardening; however, she was considered to be someone who could recall the garden's history due to her participation in planning the initiative. Sasha described herself as

someone who has a passion for food security and is quite active in the local food movement. She is in her thirties and was a student at Memorial University at the time of our interview. Sasha also holds a certificate in farm management from McGill University, and a Master's of Humanities. She became interested in community gardening while residing in Montreal. She had previously participated in community gardening there, but downplayed her involvement, mentioning that she was there to learn how to grow food, rather than to organize the initiative.

Sasha was born and raised in St. John's, and returned there in the fall of 2007. She recalled that: "There was a general feeling that a lot of people here don't care about local food and huge reliance on grocery stores and unhealthy foods." In reference to her own history with growing food or gardening, she discussed growing up as a "grocery store baby" who did not know where the food that she consumed was coming from until she began to study theories of dependency during her Master's degree. Although her grandparents grew up gardening, Sasha clarified that this was not an enjoyable activity for them. In consideration of her studies, as well as her involvement with local food organizations, she emphasized the importance of knowing how to grow food as an insurance against food insecurity. When I asked her about her interests in gardening, she made connections between the activity, and her concerns with food insecurity on the island of Newfoundland - specifically as they relate to reliance on grocery stores:

If you're 100% dependent on chain grocery stores, and all of a sudden the grocery store can't supply you with fresh food and potatoes and carrots and greens, then all of a sudden- do you know how to grow your own food? And, will you be able to

survive the winter if you haven't grown it that year? Just the dependency. The risk associated with dependency on large grocery stores. And the loss of knowledge is also important. Like if you don't practice those skills that are in our population then they'll just disappear.

Sasha's articulation of her food security concerns indicate the significance of this issue throughout the region. It is estimated that 90% of fresh produce that is sold on the island is imported (Food Security Network of Newfoundland and Labrador 2008). The Food Security Network estimates that there is only a 2-3 day supply of food available here (ibid). Sasha's concerns with food production, and her sense that it is important to practice gardening skills correspond with her awareness of provincial food insecurity. Upon her return to St. John's, Sasha became involved with food security related organizations, including FEAST and the St. John's Farmers' Market. Like Steve, who described the garden as it is situated within a foodie movement, Sasha indicated that there was a small group of persons who were involved with several food-related initiatives at the time: "It seemed like the same people were in every group. Like, the first FEAST meeting was Imogen and Steve and Dane and Gloria and Kyle. And then the first St. John's Farmers' Market meeting, Steve was there again, with some other, different people. So it just seemed to be the same people starting a million different things." This shows how an expanded network of involved activists grew as plans to organize the garden, and other food security-related initiatives progressed. Steve and Sasha shared the perspective that the Rabbittown Community Garden was established as a result of the connections that were developed among persons who share interests

in food security, rather than among those residing in the neighbourhood. Sasha also expressed that, during the meetings that occurred over fall 2007 and winter 2008: "Everyone around the table was, I think, more intense about having a garden than about having a garden in Rabbittown. Like I didn't go there expecting it to be in Rabbittown for sure, I just knew wherever this garden was, I wanted to participate." Sasha was interested in helping to organize the community garden at Rabbittown so that she could learn how to begin such an initiative. While she indicated that she did not attend early meetings out of a specific interest in constructing a garden in Rabbittown, she did mention that she felt it was a good idea to locate a garden there and, further, that she hoped to play a role in establishing more community gardens in St. John's.

Sasha did not consider herself to be a leader within the organization, nor did she understand herself to be someone who had enough expertise or experience to contribute to planning and developing the garden in 2007. While she told me that she supported the initiative and attended meetings regarding its development, she compared and contrasted her participation in community gardening in Montreal with her participation in organizing the community garden in Rabbittown. She recalled:

In the community garden in Montreal, I was learning to plant stuff. I wasn't like coordinating anything. I was part of the community that would, you know, learn a little bit about how plants grow. And. So I had never been on a kind of non-profit that was trying to put stuff together. So when people came to the table, and they really knew what to do, you do just kind of shy back and like, OK I'm going to learn from these people and help as I can, but there's obviously going to be people who are doing what they need to do.

Sasha stopped herself at one point in our interview in order to offer her sense that she might not be the best person to interview, because she was not as involved in planning the community garden as Steve, Dane, Gloria or Kyle were. Further, she did not see herself as someone who had played an important role in establishing the community garden. Offering her my sense that her attendance at early meetings, and participation in community gardening at the beginning of the season allowed her to develop an insight into how and by whom the garden was organized, she recalled:

A lot of people seemed to bring a lot of interesting things to the table. Like Dane had the relationship with Michael and the eyes on the spot for the garden. And Gloria had a whole lot of experience writing grants and brought it right to the table, right at the beginning. Like 'I bring you this skill' and she knew exactly what to do. And then Steve brought this knowledge of what kind of implements and materials you would need.

The sentiment that everyone played a role in establishing the garden, by utilizing a specific skill or social connection, was common among those I spoke to about the history of the garden. Rabbittown residents were often described as persons who could benefit from the garden, but for the most part, their skill sets were not known by garden organizers.

Among neighbourhood residents and officials, Dane and Steve were considered to be the initiators of the garden's establishment, and the CGA became an entity that was responsible for its ongoing development. They understood the organization to be led by Gloria and Kyle. The narratives of those who participated in meetings and events

that were held between 2007 and 2008 also indicate the significant role that Gloria and Kyle played in establishing the garden within the neighbourhood. The couple, who were in their early thirties in 2009, became heavily involved with planning the initiative over the course of fall and winter 2007-08. They moved to St. John's in 2006 and expressed interests in food production, cooking, and gardening. They described themselves interchangeably as foodies and hippies. When I met with her to speak about her interests and experiences with the community garden, Gloria told me about her interests in local food, and the role that establishing the community garden has played in her transition to life in St. John's.

Gloria grew up in an agricultural region of Ontario, and Kyle grew up in a small community in northeastern Ontario. The couple met while attending university in Waterloo, Ontario, and had more recently resided in the United States where they both completed PhDs. For Gloria, gardening was a relaxing activity. She suffers from a physical ailment, and is not always able to garden, but she enjoys doing so when she is feeling well. Gardening is something that she began doing as a form of stress relief while completing her Master's degree. After purchasing the book Container Gardening for Dummies and necessary supplies, including pots, soil, and seeds, she planted on the balcony of a rental apartment that she shared with Kyle while they completed their Master's degrees in Waterloo. She has planted a garden in each place that she has lived ever since. While living in the United States, Gloria planted a larger garden with the help of her mother and sister who came to visit in order to help her settle in. Kyle began his

own forays into gardening while living there, and described a friendship made with a man named Nate - who managed a large public garden - as the instigator of his own gardening activities. While Gloria planted at home, he worked with Nate and learned many of his growing skills from him.

Gloria recalled the early stages of the couple's transition to St. John's as a challenging time in their lives. Although she was excited about her new job, she emphasized that the couple experienced social isolation, and were also somewhat shocked at differences in food availability in St. John's as compared to Southern Ontario or the part of the Southern United States where they had lived:

I remember going home for Christmas in 2006 and coming back and Kyle and I like crying. Like I actually cried. (Laughs) I went to the grocery store and just because in Kitchener-Waterloo local food is really probably very taken for granted. But it's really part of the culture if you're into that. And... Then in [the Southern US] there wasn't even, like [where we lived] there wasn't really a Farmers' Market or anything like that. But you could still buy local stuff? And I wasn't all into that. Not because I didn't care about local food. Or supporting people, it was just totally environmental issues. Like how to tread lightly and leave a better footprint on the earth. So coming here was just like, oh god. And I just felt like everyone here was *so behind* environmentally. And I just felt really isolated in my views, to be honest. And so meeting people and talking to them about these, like, kind of common. It was really about just meeting people who were like minded.

Throughout our interview, Gloria referred to a history of sustainability-related community organizing activities, and a family history that included purchasing food from Farmers' Markets. Over the course of my fieldwork phase, she made attempts to limit her use of disposable products, and shared stories with me about days spent without coffee when she accidentally forgot her travel mug. This seemed to indicate her

interests and commitments to leading a sustainable life (or trying to). Gloria made reference to her early involvement with sustainability projects. As an elementary school student, Gloria also coordinated a waste-reduction program at her school.

In an effort to maintain their commitment to securing produce from local farmers, Gloria and Kyle became members of a Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) program that Steve was coordinating in 2007. The couple was in frequent contact with him, as he delivered fresh produce to their house throughout the summer and fall. Gloria described Steve, and the CSA, as aspects of the couple's food culture. Her acquaintance with him as a consumer of the produce which he grew on an organic farm just outside of St. John's eventually led them to establish a professional relationship. She would go on to meet Dane as a result of this connection.

So he brought a friend, which was [Dane], and, again, I didn't really know who [Dane] or [Steve] were, to be honest?

And then Dane kept sending me emails about forming a group. All of fall 2007. And. Uhh.

Anyways so, to be honest I. I guess I went for two reasons. One was, I felt obligated? (Laughs) To go. [Because they'd assisted me with a work activity about community gardening] And second, I. You have to know I'm mostly like a leisure person, so. Matt and I were lonely and didn't have any friends, and so we decided, like, we should probably start volunteering for something so that we could meet people. We had a hard time meeting what I would call the hippy, alternative thinking thirty-year-olds (laughs).

Gloria's discussion of her reasons for becoming involved with the garden call attention to her sense of obligation to the initiative, which was developed as a result of her

affiliation with Steve and Dane, as well as her personal interests in participating in community gardening. For her, what began out of an interest in developing relationships with other persons who share interests in environmental issues and food security eventually became a larger commitment to help coordinate and develop the garden. Interviews with Steve, Dane, Sasha, and Gloria as well as informal conversations with Kyle draw out the events and activities that occurred in the months leading up to the garden's establishment. Their narratives describe the changes in leadership that occurred in 2008, specifically, how responsibility for the garden shifted from Steve, Michael and Dane to Gloria and Kyle. These interviews also indicated that although the original idea was to develop a garden that would benefit persons residing in the neighbourhood, garden organizers also had their own personal interests and, in some cases, needs, which they hoped to satisfy through their participation in developing the space.

A series of informal meetings and gatherings occurred in fall 2007 in order to move garden planning along. By all accounts, the first official meeting for the Community Garden Alliance occurred in November 2007, at The Ship, which is a popular St. John's pub. According to Sasha: "There was some talk at the meeting, like should we have multiple gardens or should we focus our attention on one garden? And the consensus was that it's better to do one garden well than to try to do multiple and not do any of them well." By focussing on the construction of just one community garden, the goal was to establish a space that could be a model for other neighbourhoods and

institutions in the city. Gloria indicated that Dane was in charge of calling and chairing these early meetings, and that he had begun to refer to the organization as the Community Garden Alliance. She explained that she did not know why he named it as such. This seems to indicate that, although there were regular meetings, and many discussions occurring about the garden, a common understanding of the organization's intentions and plans did not exist. Those present at the meeting included persons who would go on to form Food Education Action St. John's, St. John's Safer Soils, and the St. John's Farmers' Market. Sasha recalled that:

Dane was at that meeting, and he had mentioned at that meeting that him and Steve had been organizing getting a community garden on the go. And that was the first, like that was very much the only mention of a community garden that I ever heard of in Newfoundland. And so from that, after the meeting we all exchanged emails, so Dane mentioned in the meeting that he had sent out an email to NL Housing and was waiting on a response. But there was some mix up in emails and they hadn't responded.

Sasha was excited to discuss the community garden, and to be a part of its coordination and planning. For her, it was one of many activities related to food security development that she had been involved with since returning home to Newfoundland. Although she fostered the development of the Community Garden Alliance, leadership changes occurred shortly after this first meeting in fall, as plans to develop the space were shared with the larger group, and Gloria, Kyle and Sasha became more actively involved with its coordination. Gloria acknowledged that, soon after this meeting, she and Kyle began to play an active role in organizing and planning the garden. Gloria considered her

ability to apply for grants and research funding, as one way that she could contribute to the garden's development. She said that her involvement began at the first meeting:

Next thing I know, out of my mouth they were talking about funding? Dane had the idea to apply for the Eastern Health Community Development Fund? Which was for a thousand dollars. And I said "Well, I can help with that" (Laughs). So Kyle and I wrote it, and submitted it to Dane? It had to be. That was in December. It had to be organized through the Food Security Network. Because we weren't actually a not for profit organization?

Gloria considered the garden to be a good cause, and one that she was happy to help out with. When I interviewed her, she mentioned that a grant had been applied for in 2006, but that Steve, Dane and Michael were not successful. She utilized this initial application as a base upon which she was able to apply some fundraising strategies. This included mention of in-kind donations, such as gardening and farming skills (offered by Dane and Steve) as well as the support of the neighbourhood, and her own PhD. Much of her own, and Kyle's, work as garden organizers focused on raising money and making connections necessary to physically construct the space.

Soon after the first meeting, Gloria and Kyle began to play an active role in organizing and planning the garden. According to Sasha: "Gloria, having had experience with writing grants, she put together a grant for the Wellness Coalition really quick, and, you know, asking for very logical- asking for money for seeds, and tools and everything you would need to start up the garden. And she also knew how important it would be to start meetings with the Community Centre, and making sure that people from Rabbittown were going to be on board and stuff." While their work was said to have

been crucial to the garden's development, there were others still playing key leadership roles. For example, Kyle secured a meeting with the Deputy Mayor of St. John's in order to generate civic support for community gardening activities, but it was then not clear to all who should act as a representative on behalf of the Community Garden Alliance. Gloria emphasized that Kyle had the support of persons who were attending meetings, and that his professional demeanour gave him the social skills necessary to forge connections with the City of St. John's. Although Dane wished to be there in order to represent the CGA, he was unavailable at the time of the meeting. Kyle and Sasha represented the organization, and secured City Council support for the garden's establishment. Dane did later cease to participate in planning and organizing the garden after the meeting occurred. When I spoke to him two years later about the garden's history, Dane recalled that he was upset about this at the time, but has since realized that it was for the benefit of the garden. He cited his work, other interests in solar panels and clean energy, as well as his sense that Gloria and Kyle were capable, and active, members of the organizing committee as reasons for his cessation in garden planning.

Leadership and responsibility for the garden transitioned quickly in winter 2008. Although interviewees tended to emphasize that everyone who attended meetings, or was involved with planning the initiative contributed in some way, by spring 2008 Gloria and Kyle had taken on much of the responsibility for the garden's establishment, and focussed their energies on raising funds to secure materials, which Kyle later utilized in

order to construct the garden beds. Gloria described her own activities as they referred to her personal skills and abilities, and her sense that the garden was a good cause. Kyle and I were unable to meet for an interview, however, Gloria also shared her sense that his construction activities closely related to his own skills and interests. From the earliest stages of the garden's development, a gendered division of labour began to take shape, with women taking on social organizing and fundraising activities, and men performing more physical tasks, such as constructing the garden beds. Not only did gender contribute to the ways in which men and women participated in its development; university backgrounds, and physical capacity were also key factors. Gloria and Kyle's recent relocation to St. John's and desire to meet new people also encouraged them to become involved and, as such, their identities as persons who had grown up in Ontario and lived in other parts of North America also contributed to their activities. The remainder of this chapter will attest to the ways in which gender, educational attainment, physical capacity, residence in Rabbittown, and regional identities affected women's and men's participation in the early stages of the garden's organization. In Chapters Four and Five, I will continue show how this unfolded at the community garden in 2009.

From Gloria's perspective, Steve and Dane were essential to the garden's development due to the vision that they had for the space, and their sense that it might be of some benefit to persons residing in the neighbourhood. Their initial contacts with the Rabbittown Community Centre, as well as the Tenants' Association generated

impetus to allow for the idea to be shared with a larger group of people and, to locate the garden in that specific space. According to Steve, it would not have been developed were it not for Dane's connections, and the support and early involvement of Rabbittown Community Centre officials and Michael, especially. Without the support of these individuals, and Lee-Anne, the idea that he and Dane shared would not have been grounded in Rabbittown. As Dane's narrative suggests, the garden was originally intended for Froude Avenue, but was developed in Rabbittown as a result of the Community Centre Alliance's sense that it would be well-received by persons residing there. This indicates that the garden was not an initiative that was developed solely or mainly by persons residing in the neighbourhood, but rather, was seen to be something that could be for them, or might benefit them in some way, supposing they would become involved once it was constructed.

In the months leading up to the first season of community gardening, Sasha emphasized that Gloria and Kyle were particularly important to its establishment. Funds, materials, and formal permission to utilize the space were all necessary to the garden's construction. Gloria discussed her sense that it was important to maintain a professional approach (which involved creating presentations, hand outs and information documents and selecting representatives based on their ability to network with politicians and be seen as responsible) to developing the community garden. She prepared a written mission statement and plan that could be shared with neighbourhood and city officials in order to give a sense of legitimacy to the project and

to describe some of the long term plans for the space. This document was shared with persons who could grant permission for the garden's establishment over the course of winter 2008. Gloria's grant-writing skills secured \$1,000 worth of funding from the Wellness Coalition. Kyle and Gloria met with Community Centre employees, as well as Newfoundland and Labrador Housing Officials once more in order to secure formal permission to construct the garden. After finding the proper email address, a proposal to construct the garden was sent to Len Simms, Executive Director of the Newfoundland and Labrador Housing Corporation. When I met with an official from Newfoundland and Labrador Housing in order to discuss how and why permission was granted, she explained: "They originally wrote to Mr. Simms about it, and so he consulted with us at the Community Centre because of working regularly with the community. And the Community Centre and the Tenants' Association here both backed it quite strongly, thought it was a good idea, and so. We went back then and had our lands people check [land] title." After determining that they were in a position to grant permission for the Community Garden Alliance to utilize the land, Newfoundland and Labrador Housing responded positively to the CGA's request. Elaine emphasized the importance of the Community Garden Alliance's well-developed plan, and existing funding as reasons for their support of the initiative. Elaine indicated that NL Housing was willing to allow the CGA to utilize the space because they had the sense that the garden would be independently funded and that they would not have to do much more than remove the refuse that had become piled there over the years. She recalled: "They didn't ask for

much. They had a well put together plan, and they had their funding in place, and they had a good, workable operating plan. So all they really asked for was the space.” Similar to employees at the Rabbittown Community Centre, Elaine also offered her sense that the garden would be a benefit to persons living on low incomes due to the availability of fresh produce that would exist once the garden was constructed in the neighbourhood: “We were saying great, because it’s fresh food, and there’s fresh vegetables available to people who might not be able to afford to buy them sometimes.” Although she shared the sense that it could benefit neighbourhood residents, she was careful to note that there were no arrangements made between the Community Garden Alliance and the neighbourhood, or Newfoundland and Labrador Housing in regard to a necessary number of participants who reside in the neighbourhood. Further, although Steve and Dane discussed the idea with Michael, Lee-Anne and members of the Rabbittown Tenants’ Association, there were no further discussions or attempts made in order to involve residents in planning and constructing the community garden. While there was an expressed sense of the possibilities for the community garden to benefit persons residing in Rabbittown, there were no explicit agreements or arrangements made in order to ensure that persons who reside there would participate in these activities. Rather, a more liberal approach was taken toward the garden as a space that could benefit residents, as well as persons who live elsewhere in St. John’s. Elaine shared her relaxed sense toward the necessity for inclusion of neighbourhood residents in gardening activities by indicating:

If everybody that was involved in the garden was somebody up the street in private housing that had lots anyway then that might be a concern. But if it's a mixed group, and it's an integration of our people in our community and what not, and people are working together in good faith, we're happy about that. We feel that they go out of their way to make it available to our clients, so. You know. And then they have their choices and. You know, if 10 families benefit from it, then it's still something.

After securing permission to construct the garden in the neighbourhood, two types of activities began: one involved physically preparing the garden beds, and the other involved making attempts to raise awareness of the garden's existence within the neighbourhood and the city. In the following section, I discuss the ongoing fundraising efforts, and awareness-raising strategies that were organized after receiving permission to construct the garden in 2008.

3.4 Constructing the Community Garden

Fundraising and awareness-raising activities occurred over the course of spring 2008. Along with securing the grant for \$1,000 from the Wellness Coalition, Dane, Imogen and Gloria sold seeds and baked goods at environmental events in order to generate participation in community gardening, and to secure extra funding in order to construct the beds. Fundraising activities at local events helped to raise awareness of the garden's location in Rabbittown. Gloria recalled that she and Kyle prepared an information booth on community gardening and the CGA in order to offer more information about the garden, and that the two have conducted presentations to student groups. As they continued to secure funds and spread the news about the garden, Kyle drafted plans for the size and shape of raised garden beds. Steve indicated

the sense of excitement that securing the grant produced among those who were involved with the garden's development:

We ended up getting money for the wood, which was sort of a big incentive. For here, any of the people involved in the foodie movement were like "A grant?! That's amazing!" Because there's so much volunteering going on. Especially two years ago. To get a grant for something as innovative as a community garden in St. John's was phenomenal!

During our discussion in 2009, Steve would go on to emphasize how the amount of volunteering that was taking place eventually contributed to his lack of involvement with the garden that year. Due to a number of simultaneous commitments, and his sense that he needed to take better care of himself in order to avoid burnout, Steve stepped back from the community garden in 2009.

At first glance over the space in 2006, Steve, Dane, Michael and Lee-Anne hoped to turn up the soil in the lot where the garden is located and planned to remove the car parts and sod in order to expose the earth. However, a project led by another woman in St. John's, which tested soil for lead content, indicated that planting directly into the earth might increase gardeners' exposure to lead. The St. John's Safer Soil Project began in 2007, and has instigated the construction of many raised bed gardens in the city in an effort to ensure that, if people do grow produce, they will not consume toxins from downtown St. John's soils. Following the results of soil samples, Kyle began to prepare new plans for the garden that would feature wooden framed garden beds. His design was a simple rectangular shape, narrow enough for people to reach into the centre. This would allow people to kneel around the garden bed, and also made community

gardening an activity that persons in wheelchairs could perform. Kyle insisted on constructing the garden beds with cedar, which would withstand climactic conditions and allow people to grow food for many years to come. He had the sense that, if the garden was going to be constructed, there should be a conception of longevity in mind. It was better to spend money on good wood than to cut costs and wind up with garden beds that needed to be replaced in only a few years' time. According to Sasha, once permission and funds were secured to construct the garden, Kyle set out to do so, and worked continuously at this task throughout the first summer. In spring 2008, Newfoundland and Labrador Housing removed the largest pieces of refuse that had been deposited in the space. This included the truck cab, old car parts, and other metals and glass. In May 2008, persons who were involved with the garden's development visited the space in order to remove the remaining garbage, and prepare the way for the construction of the raised beds.

In an interview that occurred after gardening season in 2009, Gloria indicated that she and Kyle shared some tasks, such as developing permission to construct the garden, presenting to officials from Newfoundland and Labrador Housing as well as the Rabbittown Community Centre, and giving public presentations at some environmental events. She also said that they had embraced a divide and conquer strategy in 2009, which included Kyle's presence at the garden, and her ongoing activities that were meant to raise funds and awareness of the space within the neighbourhood and the city at large. Although there did not seem to be a definite gendered division of labour,

interviews with persons involved with planning and constructing the garden during the first year indicate that women tended to perform many of the tasks that were meant to develop connections between the garden and the neighbourhood. Sasha, for instance, recalled going door to door during the first few weeks of the summer in order to tell neighbourhood residents about the garden and invite them to participate in these activities. In print materials meant to encourage people's participation in these activities, there was an emphasis placed on the garden being open, accessible, and free for those involved. Gloria and Imogen were also described as persons who played an active role in working to strengthen connections between the Rabbittown community and the community garden. They helped to organize and facilitate children's activities as well as an After School Program that ran at the neighbourhood community centre, which was meant to get children involved in community gardening. At the beginning of the gardening season in 2008, Steve attempted to generate interest in these activities amongst neighbourhood residents by playing songs on his trumpet. Early into the season, Kyle was depicted in a newspaper article in The Scope. While the article expressed the location of the garden and the sentiment that all were welcome an image of him working to construct a garden bed does well to represent the work that he did throughout the first season. Kyle was regarded as a physical labourer and gardener. He arranged for materials to be delivered to the site, and organized the purchase of supplies that were necessary to construct the garden beds. He then set about to build

them within the space. Sasha indicated that he worked throughout the week to prepare soil and maintain the garden during its first year.

Although no one discussed a clear gendered division of labour, narratives about the garden's eventual construction indicate that women tended to perform social development activities, and that men played a role in constructing the garden as a physical space. Gloria's efforts secured funds and permission that were necessary to construct the garden, and Kyle utilized these resources in order to construct the raised garden beds. Gloria gathered rocks for the construction of rock-framed garden beds, and later painted one of the stones in order to signify the hopes that garden organizers had for the initiative. Although many of the organizers did not know each other very well, they hoped that it would be a space where they could grow together.



Sasha spent some time at the beginning of the garden's first season going door to door within the neighbourhood in order to invite people to participate in these activities. Rather than citing this as a particularly gendered activity, she described a history of fundraising and being involved with community groups, as well as her comfort with speaking to people and attempting to develop community as part of the reason she participated in community gardening in this way. Although Sasha was present at many of the organizational meetings, and visited the garden during its first season in 2008, she acknowledged that her participation in community gardening waned after the end of its first month. She began to support the initiative by telling people about it at the St. John's Farmers' Market, which she also helped to establish:

Last year, I would be at the Farmers' Market telling people about Rabbittown. So a lot of people who heard about it were super excited and wanted to know where it was. And any time you would say to anyone who had some kind of affinity towards gardening that there was a new community garden starting in Rabbittown, they were like "Show me where it is!" and "I want to learn more!" So it was really the seed, I think? To the growth of this gardening movement or community garden idea in St. John's.

Interviews with those who were involved with the garden's development indicate that most of the work that went into coordinating the garden's establishment was carried out by Gloria and Kyle. Steve and Imogen, who have extensive backgrounds in farming and producing food, contributed to the development of gardening workshops that offered tips and tricks on growing food as well as composting practices and sustainable living strategies. While Gloria and neighbourhood officials expressed that some persons

who reside in the neighbourhood participated in community gardening activities, many organizers had the sense that it was a space that held particular importance to the local food movement, rather than the neighbourhood specifically. According to Steve: “It was a place where we could practice doing our workshops to some degree, too? Almost to ourselves, as the food community? But with people from Rabbittown there as an audience. To be able to share this knowledge.” He expressed his sense that the construction of the Rabbittown Community Garden helped to establish gardens in other locations, and that the activities of those who were involved with the garden, as well as FEASt, the St. John’s Farmers’ Market and St. John’s Safer Soils, has instigated a provincial movement:

So down in Burin, they’ve got community gardens, they’re getting grants, they’re getting all kinds of cool stuff down there. And in Corner Brook, for instance, I mean, they’ve got a big Farmers’ Market over there. And there was really no Farmers’ Market in the whole province for the most part. You know, in the same sort of way the mainland might see a Farmers’ Market, like in Fredericton or Halifax. So I think in some ways we’ve stepped back as individuals, but there is momentum still carrying, that things are moving.

While it is difficult to say whether this is or is not the case, it was commonly remarked that, in the past five years, a number of grassroots initiatives had been developed in various parts of the island, as well as St. John’s. By the end of the gardening season, Gloria and Kyle remained as the only members of the early organizing committee that regularly participated in community gardening at Rabbittown. In an effort to push forth a number of initiatives simultaneously—such as the St. John’s Farmers’ Market, St. John’s

Safer Soils, and eventually, the protection of land in Pippy Park for the purposes of gardening- many of those who attended the early meetings moved on to other initiatives. Burnout was discussed as something that people wished to avoid. Sasha, Dane, and Steve all indicated that they had the sense that they could cease participating in community gardening at Rabbittown because Kyle and Gloria were both proficient at these activities, and seemed to have plans well underway. Said Steve, citing his sense for why persons who were involved with the garden's organization have stepped back from participating in these activities: "So I think in some ways, we've stepped back as individuals, but there is momentum still carrying on, that things are still moving" At the end of our interview, he acknowledged that, shortly before I arrived at his home, Sasha had called him to speak about plans for the following year. This included attempts to secure more space for community gardens. She was successful in doing so, and helped to establish two more community gardens in 2010. While many of those who were involved with organizing the garden in 2008 moved on to other activities, Kyle, Gloria, Michael and Lee-Anne remained connected to the space in 2009. After the end of the garden's first season, Gloria was successful in securing a second grant, this time, funding would be directed towards hiring a recent university graduate. In fall 2008, a young woman named Rebecca was hired on with the CGA. She helped to generate further funding for the initiative from Walmart's Evergreen fund, and worked to develop workshops and plans for upcoming seasons. This further exacerbated class tensions, specifically among gardeners with formal postsecondary educational backgrounds and a

connection to food security networks who did not reside in the neighbourhood, and those who resided in the neighbourhood, or were not formally affiliated with food security organizations in St. John's. Dane argued that there should be more grants available for older persons seeking employment, rather than only recent university graduates or young people. Another woman who participated in community gardening during its first year, who also lives within the neighbourhood, expressed similar sentiments.

In 2008 the Rabbittown Community Garden became a space where all are welcome to participate in growing and sharing produce together. The idea that was initiated in 2006 blossomed into three wooden framed and two rock-framed raised garden beds where a variety of greens, vegetables and legumes are grown. By 2009, many of those who helped to organize the community garden were no longer participating in these activities, and many of those who arrived at the garden were unaware of the garden's history, or how it came to be developed within the neighbourhood. During my interview with Laurie, she discussed some of the responses to the garden that she has received from neighbourhood residents. She also described people from the neighbourhood going to visit the garden-an activity she is able to see from the window of her office: "I notice a lot of people come over to see what it is. To see what's happening over there. You got interest. Even just people coming to visit other people, they will walk over. Just to say "What are they doing over there? What is this?"...We feel like it's a part of our neighbourhood, and we're very proud of what you

guys have done up here.” Although she had the sense that the garden is a part of the neighbourhood, neighbourhood residents’ questions about the space indicate that, in 2009, not everyone who resided in the neighbourhood knew that it was there, or if they could enter the space. She mentioned that some persons who stumbled upon the garden, or noticed community gardening activities occurring on Sunday afternoons, would ask her if they were allowed to go into the garden or not. This suggests that the garden is an ongoing development. Although it is located in the neighbourhood, its history as a space that was constructed by persons who reside elsewhere in St. John’s, and are affiliated with a local food movement, has contributed to its establishment as a garden within a neighbourhood that may benefit persons living on low incomes. Developing connections between the garden and the neighbourhood is an ongoing project.

3.5 Conclusion

The Rabbittown Community Garden is a space that is located within a social housing neighbourhood that was produced by persons who are involved with a food security movement that is underway within the city of St. John’s. While some garden organizers cited their interests in seeing the garden become a space *for* those residing in the neighbourhood, which they hoped would be taken over by Rabbittown residents upon its construction, others expressed general interests in participating in community gardening, or helping to foster development of these spaces in St. John’s. This chapter has sought to consider the garden from a number of perspectives. In doing so, multiple

possibilities about what the garden would become were described by those who helped to organize the initiative. Their narratives also begin to describe some of the different reasons why people participate in these activities, which I will discuss more intently in Chapters Four and Five. What becomes clear in consideration of the history of the garden's development is that people played a variety of roles in the early stages of its organization, and that these roles related to their gender, educational background, regional identity, previous experiences gardening and affiliation with the neighbourhood.

According to neighbourhood officials and persons who reside in Rabbittown that were aware of the garden's establishment, it is a space that members of the Community Garden Alliance (CGA) are responsible for. In 2009, Gloria continued to lead the organization through the title of Executive Director. Kyle stood as Treasurer. This gave the couple access to financial resources, and also circumscribed them as responsible for garden planning and activities. In the early stages of the garden's establishment, connections were fostered among Steve and Dane (who share interests in food security), Michael, Lee-Anne and community centre employees, who shared the sense that the garden would be a good idea, due to its potential to benefit neighbourhood residents who live on low incomes. The garden would go on to serve a double role, fulfilling the desires of those involved with food security organizations, who wished to see a community garden located somewhat centrally in St. John's, and the hopes of those who considered it to be an aspect of the neighbourhood that would benefit persons residing

there. It was constructed as a result of the energy of persons who shared these interests, rather than a group of persons who share a common sense of identity. Those involved had grown up in a variety of places in Canada, and had lived in a number of cities throughout North America and Europe before settling in St. John's. For the most part, those affiliated with the CGA and other food security organizations defined themselves as foodies. Although I have considered this term in relation to the ways in which it was articulated by those who were self-described in such a way, it seems important to clarify that it is not necessarily the case that persons residing in the neighbourhood are not foodies. Furthermore, it was not necessarily one's identity as a foodie that contributed to their participation in organizing the community garden. Rather, those with previous gardening or farming experiences were instrumental in its development; those who were physically able to carry out construction tasks helped to make the garden a physical reality; and those who were connected to the neighbourhood in some way, had grant-writing skills, or previous experiences working with community organizations were also instrumental to securing permission, funds and encouraging participation in these activities.

Of those who were involved with planning and constructing the garden (that I spoke to or met as a result of my research), Steve, Gloria, Kyle, and Sasha identified themselves as foodies and also discussed their involvement within a local food security movement. Gloria and Kyle eventually led the organization of the garden, through their association with the Community Garden Alliance. Neighbourhood officials, Michael and

Lee-Anne expressed an understanding of the garden as a space that was developed through the energy of persons affiliated with the Community Garden Alliance. They did not describe themselves, or others, as foodies. While Johnston and Baumann emphasize that there may be an association between foodies and social class, in consideration of the history of the Rabbittown Community Garden, it seems that the act of growing food and one's involvement with food security organizations is fundamental to this descriptor in St. John's. Following Johnston and Baumann, who discuss foodies in reference to their consumption habits, it is my sense that, due to the existence of a particular Newfoundland cuisine, which includes a variety of local vegetables and dishes, and people's desires to maintain food consumption traditions that have been passed on to them by parents, this research indicates that conceptions of what it means to be a foodie may have regional connotations, and, in this case, do not solely refer to one's social class or economic ability to consume foods at gourmet restaurants. Rather, enjoying family meals, consuming carrots, potatoes, cabbage, turnip and other Newfoundland dishes also positions one as a person who cares about the foods that they consume, and derives some aspect of their identity from their consumption habits. Each person who helped to organize the garden was a foodie in some way, whether it be formally or informally. Growing food at the garden, or helping to construct it as a result of their previous experiences gardening and farming also associated persons with this terminology.

Persons residing in the neighbourhood were seen to be potential beneficiaries of the produce that was grown there, and neighbourhood residents and officials were essential to the garden's establishment as permission-granters for the initiative. For garden organizers, shared interests in food production activities, including gardening, and a desire to construct a garden that might be of some help to persons who may not have access to locally produced vegetables, guided their participation in its development. Prior to the garden's establishment, it was not known whether persons residing in the neighbourhood had interests in gardening, or previous experiences with these activities. Further, although there was speculation that the garden could be of benefit, individual experiences of food insecurity within the neighbourhood were not known. In this way, the production of the garden space occurred as a result of the availability of space in Rabbittown as well as a perception that those who reside on low incomes have a need for the food that is grown there.

The significance of gender, along with physical capacity, may be seen in the social and physical activities that led to the garden's construction. For instance, Lee-Anne played a role in securing permission to construct the garden, and visited the space with Michael, but she was not able to participate in physical construction activities due to a physical disability. Women contributed to the garden's development by securing funds, going door-to-door with information about the garden within the neighbourhood and establishing children's programming activities within the neighbourhood. Men, especially those who were physically capable, constructed the garden beds. Men and

women sought permission to construct the space, attended meetings, and performed networking activities with municipal and neighbourhood officials. While I contend that some roles did appear to be distributed through a gendered division of labour, this division was not a hard and clear one. Rather, men and women shared some activities, women with previous gardening experiences contributed to its establishment and offered their support for the initiative, and men also expressed interests in and performed social development activities. While an identification as a foodie was commonly offered as a sentiment with regard to people's participation in organizing the garden, their narratives indicate that previous experiences farming and gardening better describe their ability to develop this initiative. Further, while there were notions that the garden would benefit persons residing in the neighbourhood, for the most part, those involved with its development were persons with formal educations who also expressed interests in environmentalism, and leading sustainable lives. While one garden organizer offered her sense that gardening allowed her to return to a practice that had been carried out by her grandparents, allowing her to consume locally produced foods, which are not often sold in St. John's grocery stores, she also described coming to this perspective as a result of her undergraduate and graduate studies. It is worth noting that four of the seven persons who were closely involved with the early stages of the garden's development had carried post-secondary studies at university. Although Johnston and Bauman emphasize economic status in their analysis, my research did not consider people's economic backgrounds. As such, my analysis is limited in some ways.

However, this research does attest to the importance of one's affiliation with food-related organizations and university education to people's participation in community gardening in Rabbittown, as well as their identification as a foodie. Although not everyone who identified in this way had completed a university degree, most persons had completed some form of post-secondary education at a university, or had been involved with food security organizations. Most persons who identified as foodies had also been growing food for a considerable amount of time, in gardens and on farms. In the next chapter, I will continue to explore the significance of gender, physical capacity, previous experiences gardening and educational background to people's participation in community gardening there, and will explore how these related to food sharing, community affiliation and identity.

CHAPTER FOUR: Food and Community

In this chapter I will consider the ways in which food is utilized in order to create a sense of community at the garden and within the neighbourhood. My conception of community follows the work of Iris Marion Young (1990), who follows Sandel (1982), Foucault (1980), and Benhabib (1986). She argues:

In community, persons cease to be other, opaque, not understood, and instead become mutually sympathetic, understanding one another as they understand themselves, fused...This mutual intersubjective transcendence, of course, makes sharing between us possible, a fact that Sartre notices less than Hegel. The sharing, however, is never complete mutual understanding and reciprocity. Sharing, moreover, is fragile (Young 1990:231).

In consideration of Young's work, I will show how sharing within the Rabbittown Community Garden also related to individual interests and needs, which, themselves, relate to one's gender, social class, regional identity, and previous experiences gardening. It is not only that sharing is fragile, but rather, that the foods that are planted and shared amongst those who garden at Rabbittown, are differently desired on the basis of some aspects of individual identities. Sharing, then, is contingent on interest as well as need, and these values are themselves bounded to the identities of those who participated in community gardening. This is especially true of those who wished to grow and access particular foods. The ability to share food is, as Young argues, dependent on knowing the interests and needs of the other. A community garden, then, may facilitate the formation of social bonds that allow sharing to occur. A community

that is able to share food may share more than food items, but a sense of common identity and taste.

By utilizing ethnographic insights and interview material, I will consider the food preparation and sharing activities that occurred in summer 2009 (my fieldwork phase), focussing on the types of foods that brought people together, and the extent to which community gardeners began participating in these activities as a result of their interests in particular foods. In the previous chapter, I began to explain the significance of various aspects of people's identities to their participation in community gardening. In this chapter, I will continue this analysis by examining the ways in which food expresses Newfoundlander and community gardeners' identities. As I do throughout my thesis, I will focus on gender, social class, regional identities, physical capacity and previous experiences gardening to men's and women's perspectives and activities. Although the term foodie was often utilized by garden organizers to describe persons who were involved in food security initiatives, persons who regularly participated in community gardening in 2009 did not identify themselves in this way. Rather, one's recent arrival to St. John's, previous experiences gardening, student status and, in some cases, residence in Rabbittown were often discussed as important aspects of their identities which led to their participation in community gardening. In this chapter, I will focus on these aspects of gardeners' identities, and will also consider existing food studies that examine the significance of gender to food preparation and offering.

Feminist authors (DeVault 1991, Van Esterik 1999) have asserted that an aspect of American and Canadian women's (for Van Esterik, women across cultures) identities and domestic roles, have included preparing food for their families, as an act of care. In their article "Farmwomen's Discourse on Family, Food Provisioning, Gender, Healthism and Risk Avoidance" McIntyre et al (2009) define food provisioning as "...the acquisition, preparation, and consumption of food that draws on personal, family and community resources and supports" (80). Through interviews completed with Canadian married farmwomen in Alberta, Ontario, and Nova Scotia, they attest to the significance of women's roles as food providers within the family, specifically, as consumers at local grocery stores, farm workers, and food preparers for their husbands and children: "...women described a primary role in almost all aspects of food provisioning. It was rare that the husband was a substantive participant in food preparation or preservation beyond his role in growing/raising the farm commodity, which was often one of many food sources for the household" (2009:86). Not only did they take responsibility for ensuring that their families were fed, they also believed the health of their husbands and children to be related to their food provisioning activities. In their article "The Dynamics of Alternative Food Consumption: Contexts, Opportunities and Transformations", Terragani et al. define an alternative food consumption as: "...A rather heterogeneous group of initiatives such as the organic movement, fair trade initiatives, slow food or farmers markets" which have in common, "a critique of conventional models of production and consumption, claiming that they are neither

sustainable, fair, healthy, nor tasty" (2009:2). Following Murdoch and Miele (2004) they argue that: "Alternative consumption provides new perspectives, languages and symbols, which may challenge the mainstream consumption and production system" (2009:3). A focus on fresh, tasty, healthy food is considered alongside people's abhorrence for genetically modified food, and ethical as well as environmental outcomes of produce are considered to be crucial to the development of an alternative food system (2009:6). Although these authors do not consider the gendered dynamics of interests in organic, fair trade and local food, elsewhere, other authors have suggested that new gender arrangements may be occurring among those who place a particular importance on, and locate aspects of their identities in producing and preparing quality, sustainable food (Cairns et al. 2010). In her article "Televised Treatments of Masculinity, Femininity and Food" Rebecca Swenson examines Food Network programming, and argues that: "The gender division of labour – in and outside of the kitchen – is no longer as definite as it was in Julia Child's day. A gender segregation of tasks within the domestic domain still exists; however, there are signs of a convergence in certain areas of the home – especially in the kitchen" (2009:37). Although she attests to the ways in which masculinity is represented through programming that places men within cooking competitions, or, as trained professionals, while continuing to represent women as cooks who entertain or care for family and friends, Swenson goes on to argue: "If men are doing more work in the kitchen, our cultural ideas about what is and is not strictly women's work might also be shifting" (2009:37).

Focussing on the interests that women and men shared in community gardening provides insight into the significance of context in considerations of gender and food provisioning tasks. My research did not endeavour to determine whether foods produced at the garden were prepared by either men or women at home. However, I was curious about whether gender would affect people's participation in community gardening. Before beginning my research, I questioned whether there would be more women than men involved? Would they share tasks or would these be divided between men and women?

An almost equal number of men and women participated in the Rabbittown Community Garden in 2009. Male and female community gardeners had similar sentiments about their interests in consuming and producing fresh food, and framed these activities within a conceptualization of local, organic food and sustainable consumption. Three persons under the age of thirty (one of whom was male) said that community gardening fit within their conceptions of sustainable living, which they had learned about in university courses. Thirteen others (five of which were men), indicated that they had a general interest in consuming locally produced, organic food as a result of an increasing personal awareness about the negative effects of industrial agriculture on personal and environmental health which they had acquired through media representations of these issues. Leo, for instance, referred to the CBC program *The Nature of Things* when he explained why he was trying to consume more locally produced, organic food. Jane, his wife, also mentioned reading about these issues in

magazines, newspapers and books. Students and university graduates also referred to coursework focused on sustainable living, which had allowed them to learn more about the connections between personal consumption activities and sustainability. One person also cited her parents as contributors to her gardening activities, as they had raised her with the notion that one should consume produce from local sources in order to support area farmers. Four heterosexual couples participated in community gardening, and they expressed that these activities were a common pastime that they could perform together. One person who participated in community gardening also expressed her interest in sharing these activities with her husband; however, he was not able to attend the garden on Sunday afternoons as a result of his work with a local church. Those who did not have a partner at the time often brought friends to the garden in order to share the space with them.

Those gardeners who were also parents of minor children (two men and three women) described the importance of providing their children with fresh produce, and those who told me that they were living on a low, fixed income indicated that the community garden's provision of food allowed them to develop access to produce that they were not able to consume by shopping at grocery stores or the St. John's Farmers' Market. An inability to procure fresh, local (and, for some) organic food, was a result of the limited sale of agricultural products within the St. John's region, as well as interviewees' income status, gender, and interests in sustainable consumption. These factors led to people's participation in community gardening. Beyond these interests in

accessing fresh, local, and sometimes organic food, gardeners also shared an interest in meeting new people.

The Rabbittown Community Garden is located within a low-income community, and is tended by persons who live in various parts of St. John's. Although it remains open to anyone and everyone who wishes to participate, a small group of people do so on a regular basis, and do not conceive of themselves as members of a distinct community within the city. Six people who regularly participated in community gardening expressed a Newfoundland identity; however, most persons who regularly participated in community gardening had resided in various parts of Canada, including Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island, New Brunswick, Ontario, Saskatchewan and British Columbia before settling or re-settling in St. John's. Many who regularly participated in community gardening at Rabbittown did so out of an interest in growing food, meeting new people, and developing social connections within a city that they were only beginning to call home. All of those who participated in community gardening were English speakers, most were white, one was of Mi'kmaq and another of Hopi descent. Planting vegetables, and finding a way to secure access to fresh, organic, local food was considered to be one way of maintaining one's identity as a person who places importance on consuming these types of food. Although community gardeners were not foodies in the sense that they spent money on gourmet dining (Johnston and Bauman 2009), they were interested in and passionate about growing food and preparing it, making them similar to foodies that have been described elsewhere (Ambrozas 2003).

Ambrozas discusses the consumption habits, shopping, reading, and cooking activities of Vancouver foodies, whom she considers part of a social group (2003). Her emphasis on their interests in preparing food are notable, and extends an understanding of foodies as persons who are particularly interested in consuming what they deem to be good food. At Rabbittown, people's interests in food related to consumption, preparation and production.

For persons who regularly participated in community gardening, producing and preparing food was a significant aspect of their life, something they looked forward to, took pride in, and cared about. Interests in fresh, local, organic food and community gardening activities attracted people to the space, and facilitated their connections with others who participated in these activities. Community gardeners' discussions on Sunday afternoons often focused on food preparation styles, and recipes for the items that were grown within the garden beds. Men and women shared their recipes with one another, and asked each other questions about how to prepare produce that they had not consumed before. One young woman explained that this was an important part of her community gardening experience at Rabbittown, and cited Trevor as a wealth of information about food preparation ideas:

I learned a lot from Trevor. Trevor is just a wealth of information! I asked him a lot throughout. And he offered a lot of recipes, and ideas. Like Thai Sai (an Asian green that is similar to bok choy). I would throw it out there, like "What am I going to do with this?" And everyone would toss an idea.

For most persons who participated in these activities, community gardening at

Rabbittown introduced them to new foods which they did not necessarily know how to prepare.

In this chapter, I explore the ways in which food consumption and production constructed and facilitated the maintenance of social bonds within the neighbourhood and beyond. Sharing food, and producing it with others also encouraged the development of social bonds at the garden. I also consider literature with regard to food and regional identities, placing an emphasis on the importance of food to Newfoundland identity, and the maintenance of identities for migrant peoples. I show how Newfoundland food traditions are being maintained and altered within the neighbourhood, and focus on the significance of personal taste to people's participation in community gardening. I consider the Rabbittown Community Garden as an intersectional space within the neighbourhood, and the city of St. John's where people who have resided in various parts of Canada, and were residing in various parts of St. John's at the time, participated in community gardening in order to learn or practice gardening skills and gain access to fresh, local, organic produce.

The next section of this chapter will provide an overview of literature related to food and identity, focussing specifically on the significance of food to Newfoundland and migrant identities. In the following section, I will explore the significance of food to the production of community within the neighbourhood, placing a special emphasis on the foods that were consumed at neighbourhood events, and during interviews with community members. Following this section, I will examine the garden's location within

the neighbourhood, by discussing the extent to which persons residing in Rabbittown were gardening independently, and were aware of the garden's establishment. Following this discussion of food consumption and gardening within the neighbourhood, I will consider the ways in which food helped to form social bonds among persons who participated in community gardening by focussing on potlucks and socials that occurred at the garden and in the community centre in 2009. In this chapter, I provide the reader with a fuller introduction to the neighbourhood in which the garden is located, as well as the interests that persons who participated in community gardening expressed in 2009 with regard to food production and consumption activities.

4.1 Food and Identity

It is a commonly expressed sentiment that food has the capacity to bring people together. Georg Simmel argues: "Of everything that people have in common the most common is that they must eat and drink" (1994:346). This shared necessity, to consume in order to sustain, marks a part of what may be conceived of as the human experience. Food has been utilized as a method of developing social bonds and is instrumental to religious, regional and national identities. One's ethnic background, geographic location, and income status influence the types of food that one consumes, as well as the ways in which one prepares and enjoys their meals. Following Van den Berghe (1984), Tuomainen indicates: "Our food habits are a symbolic expression of our sociality and along with language they are an emblem of our ethnic or cultural identity" (2009:525). Anthropologist Mary Douglas' research into food taboos (1965) indicates the ways in

which food has been utilized in order to differentiate those who do not express similar religious identities from one another. Her discussion also clarifies the significance of food traditions within families and indicates that within each culture, people share systems of food preparation, common ingredients, as well as agreed upon rules of etiquette that affect the timing, amount and ways in which food is consumed.

Food is often an aspect of what grounds a person to a particular place, and, for migrant communities, it also creates an opportunity to remember where one comes from (which is also true for non-immigrants). Toumainen demonstrates food's significance to the maintenance of cultural identities within migrant communities by examining the experiences of Ghanaian immigrants in London (2009). She shows how, in the years preceding the development of a thriving Ghanaian community there, people improvised while cooking, and utilized processed foods available in Britain in order to imitate traditional tastes, such as *fufu*. "For example, the mixing of instant mashed potato 'mash', with potato starch, *farina*, and water resulted in sticky dense dough, very much like the real *fufu* in Ghana, suitable for eating soup with fingers and swallowing without chewing, evoking a familiar feeling of eating and providing a similar level of satisfaction or satiety" (2009:531). This allowed tribal identities to be maintained despite migration, and, even after traditional Ghanaian foods began to be imported to the UK in the 1990s, these preparation techniques were maintained in London. She notes: "...the resulting staples were close enough to the real ones, especially with respect to consistency and heaviness, thereby symbolizing Ghanaian food...They could be

eaten in a similar fashion to staples at home, providing migrants assurance and comfort in the new environment, and sustaining their ethnic identities..." (2009:531). In this way, the consumption of food can be seen as both a universal experience, and an individualized activity that expresses and maintains one's cultural identity. Within anthropological considerations of the universal importance of food, Appadurai (1981:509) has challenged universalist assumptions about the notion that *everybody eats* by emphasizing the particularities of cultural consumption habits and regional availabilities to people's abilities to consume the types of food that they desire and need to in order to sustain themselves.

Food has contributed to the development of a distinctly Newfoundland identity throughout the island's history. The consumption of cod, other types of seafood, hard bread, as well as root vegetables, wild game and wild fruit has led to the production of what is now conceived of as a traditional Newfoundland diet. Carrots, cabbage, potato, beets, parsnip, onion, moose (even though it is not native to the island), salmon, cod, trout, salt beef and salt pork, as well as wild berries such as blueberries, partridgeberries and bakeapples comprise what has been conceived of as traditional, 'local food' on the island. Toutons (a fried bread) and molasses; fish and brewis (salt cod and hard bread); pea soup, seal flipper pie and baked beans are commonly conceived of as traditional fare. Probyn (1999) argues: "...Food is imbricated in nation-building, the reproduction of the family, constitutes as a major site of the division of labour, and is central in the production of geo-political inequalities" (216-217). Cod was essential to the island's

colonization and economic development, and its production and processing exemplified a gendered division of labour within the inshore fishery. Porter (1995) has shown the significance of women's roles as 'shore crew', or domestic and fish processing labourers in Newfoundland.

The sentiment that food enables migrant peoples to maintain ethnic identities while living away from home communities is exemplified with respect to food traditions among Newfoundlanders no longer residing in the province. As fishing stocks declined throughout the 1990s, it became common for young men and women to leave the province in order to seek employment in other parts of Canada and the United States. Now, as a result of population decline and forced migration to other areas of the province, some communities have been abandoned. Newfoundland food shops have been established in other parts of Canada and the United States in order to serve communities of Newfoundland expatriates. In his dissertation Come From Away: Community, Region and Tradition in Newfoundland, Cory Thorne indicates that food has been important to the maintenance of a Newfoundland identity for those living 'away' (2004). Newfoundland convenience stores in Cambridge, Ontario, for instance, provide a large number of Newfoundlanders residing there with access to familiar items that are not available in other Ontario stores. A recent edition of the *Newfoundland Quarterly* indicated the maintenance of Newfoundland food traditions, despite recent changes to food production and purchasing trends. In a special online section, readers wrote in to share their conceptions of a Newfoundland meal (2009). Jigg's dinner (consumed on

Sundays), hand-picked blueberries, pea soup, bologna, salt beef and pork, moose, Purity products, and fish and, especially, cod tongues, were offered up as Newfoundland mainstays (Online Exclusive, 2009). While there remains a common sense about the foods that constitute a traditional Newfoundland diet, in recent years, the development of large commercial grocery stores has provided Newfoundlanders with more canned and processed food items and a wider selection of produce than were previously available. In much the same way that the island's grocery stores are providing new foods to provincial residents, organic farms are providing new varieties of local produce to those who are able to purchase them, and community gardens are also providing access to other types of produce for those who participate in these activities. Indicating the ways in which community gardening activities have altered the availability of fresh, local produce for those who participate, in 2009, the garden in Rabbittown was planted with celery, green and yellow beans, snow peas, dragon beans, beets, carrots, icicle radishes, red radishes, Swiss chard, kale, thai sai, mixed greens, mizuna, spinach, parsley, rosemary, pansies, nasturtiums, mustard greens, marigolds and pumpkin.

Neighbourhood officials expressed their sense that persons residing in the neighbourhood would be familiar with traditional foods, and would be inclined to consume these if they were grown at the garden. Although there was a desire to make the garden a space that would benefit community members, most traditional vegetables were not grown within the space. Garden organizers, who, for the most part, were not from Newfoundland, said that this was not done consciously, but rather, that they had

utilized seeds that they had on hand, or those that had been donated by organic farmers in the area. Potatoes and carrots were deemed to be foods that one could purchase locally without much problem, and for a modest price. Further, potatoes were considered to be an item that would take up too much space in the garden. Turnip, parsnip, and cabbage were not mentioned in their reasons for growing other foods. Although there were discussions about what foods would be grown among all community gardeners in attendance on two Sunday sessions, Gloria and Kyle took on responsibility for the garden's planting, and utilized what remained from Kyle's farming endeavours, and what was donated by other farmers and garden attendees in 2009. Gloria told me that planting the garden was a balance between utilizing what was available, and listening to what people wanted. Although there was no formal leadership structure, she also said that Kyle's sense of what should be grown contributed to how the garden was planted. "Most people, if you ask people in the community, they want carrots, turnip, cabbage, and potatoes. And I feel *badly* that we don't have that stuff. It's just that, we didn't have those seeds. And those things are really hard to grow in raised beds...Although we didn't mean to do this, we introduced people to a lot of stuff that they never would have had before." Gloria had some anxiety about balancing interests and possibilities among persons involved with the garden, and was only beginning to learn about people's food preferences since most community gardeners did not know each other before the season began, and she and Kyle were left with responsibility for seed selection due to their roles with the CGA. Another organizer also mentioned that

persons involved with food security had different perspectives about what constituted a vegetable, citing greens and salad mix as popular fare among those he worked with in food security organizations. While one gardener, who is a parent, said that she had some challenges encouraging her children to eat some of the greens that were produced within the garden (thus indicating her role as a food provider for her family), four others expressed that they looked forward to trying new foods, and enjoyed this aspect of the garden.

In recent years, food has been theorized in reference to its geo-political dimensions, which highlight social injustice with regard to economic inaccessibility to food, as well as the unsustainable nature of industrial food production and globalized food trade. According to Hayes-Conroy and Hayes-Conroy (2000):

...global food realities weigh on the possibility of a just and sustainable future...critical questions emerge when scholars move past the suggestion that worries about what to eat are elite concerns, along with the question of who can afford food (economic inequality) and who prepares the meals (gender inequality). Scholars have begun to ask: what counts as quality, who controls knowledge about food, and how are power hierarchies in food chains reinforced (2000:462).

Drawing upon the work of agri-food scholars who attest to the unsustainable aspects of industrial food production activities (Guthman 2004; Hassanein 2003; Nestle 2002), Hayes-Conroy and Hayes-Conroy (2000) articulate the attempts that contemporary scholars are making in order to politicize individual food choices, and advocate for more sustainable and equitable food production and distribution.

The Rabbittown Community Garden's establishment in a social housing neighbourhood also exemplifies the continued attempts that persons involved with food security organizations in St. John's are making in order to create accessibility to fresh produce for persons living on low incomes. The garden may be seen as a response to an awareness of food inequalities amongst those of differential economic means, and an attempt to localize diets.

The authors mentioned thus far Guthman 2004; Hayes-Conroy and Hayes-Conroy 2000; Hassanein 2003; Nestle 2002), have contributed to an increasing awareness of the connections between personal food choices, the maintenance of cultural identities and environmental sustainability. In contemporary Newfoundland, there is increasing interest in the re-localization of diets, so as to improve personal health and environmental well-being within the province. While hunting, fishing, berry-picking and gardening provide access to fresh, local food for those who continue to carry out these traditional activities, large groceries stores in St. John's also carry some local vegetables when they are in season. Family-owned shops such as Bidgood's, Belbin's, and the Lester's Farm Market offer many traditional Newfoundland food items, but much of the food that is sold in St. John's is imported from other parts of Canada, the United States, South America and China. The Fagan Farms truck, which sells produce six days a week in Churchill Square (located close to Memorial University), also remains a popular venue for people who wish to purchase fresh food. Throughout the year, however, it is difficult to find consistent access to locally produced foods in the city's largest grocery stores. For

those who do not grow, preserve, hunt or gather their own foods, special arrangements with farmers and friends with hunting licenses are often made in order to maintain local food supply overwinter. In summer and fall, since 2008, the St. John's Farmers' Market has also offered a selection of fresh produce, some of which is grown by the region's organic farmers. Kohlrabi, mustard greens, arugula, mizuna, microgreens, basil, salad greens, tomato and garlic are sold there on Saturday mornings along with turnip, cabbage, potatoes, beets and carrots. The cost of these items is higher than the foods that are sold in most grocery stores, and persons who struggle to afford to purchase fresh produce are less likely to procure their foods from this location as a result of these food prices. The market does, however, provide persons who are especially interested in sourcing their food locally with the opportunity to do so in one location. The St. John's Farmers' Market is also becoming increasingly popular place for people to gather with friends and acquaintances. On the grass beside the building that houses the market, young people and families often linger well into the afternoon, sharing meals of Indian, South East Asian and Jamaican food; soups that are made with fresh vegetables; glasses of lemonade and cups of coffee; vegan ice cream; and a selection of gluten free and traditional baked goods. These offerings exemplify the ways in which food produced and prepared on the island reflect its changing social and cultural dynamics. For a large number of persons residing in St. John's, the Farmers' Market is a part of their weekly routine in summer, and the cost differentials between foods sold there and at the grocery store exemplify the price of high quality, fresh produce. A willingness and ability

to pay more for fresh, locally produced food items attests to personal perspectives on the importance of supporting area farmers and organic food production. Lester's Farm and the Fagan Farm truck in Churchill Square offer produce for fees that are comparable to local grocery stores. The Farmers' Market is also home to gardening and food preservation workshops throughout the summer months. Persons are invited to enjoy these activities free of charge.

4.2 Food Sharing and Community

In their book Consuming Geographies: We are What we Eat authors David Bell and Gill Valentine provide an overview of existing literature on food and community development. Like Toumainen (2009), they note that authors (Brown and Mussel 1984) have discussed the significance of food within migrant communities, and also consider the ways in which food is utilized within neighbourhoods in order to increase social interaction and feelings of belonging. This latter form of community development, which occurs through food consumption, typically takes place at neighbourhood barbecues, at food shops and convenience stores, as well as pubs (Bell and Valentine 1997:15). The sense that the neighbourhood is a distinct community was often articulated by persons who are employed at the Rabbittown Community Centre, connoting the significance of one's place of residence and economic status to people's membership within it. According to one employee, who is also a community member, "When the community comes together, the community really does come together. And, I mean. It sounds cliché but in that respect, I gotta say. Rabbittown is. We're pretty tight knit for the most part."

While he expressed some reservations with regard to describing the neighbourhood as a community that every resident feels a part of, or experiences as tightly knit, he did express that there are times when this is the case.

One of the clearest indications that a tight knit sense of community does exist among persons residing in the neighbourhood came during an anniversary party that was held for two community members who also participated in community gardening. On a warm evening in July, Michael and Lee-Anne invited neighbours, friends, family members and persons affiliated with the community garden to celebrate their wedding anniversary with them. The occasion was held in the front yard of their home, which is located in Rabbittown and is covered in concrete. Chips, pop, light refreshments, chili, and other finger foods were offered to those in attendance. Cooked foods and sandwiches had been prepared earlier on that day by Lee-Anne and one of her friends, who also lives in Rabbittown. When I arrived at the party, I was not sure what to expect. I was nervous that I would not know very many people, and would feel out of place. However, I found that I was greeted warmly, made to feel welcome, and was included in conversations that occurred among the group of people that had formed in order to celebrate the occasion. Most persons in attendance resided within Rabbittown and their stories expressed some of the ways in which they helped one another, specifically with regard to purchasing food. One woman shared stories about carpooling to the grocery store, and the extent to which they had come to know one another over the years was also mentioned in reference to people's abilities to decipher each other's tastes and

know what each other would and would not like to eat. When it came time to serve chilli, for instance, Lee-Anne offered a bowl from a pot that was made specifically for one of her neighbours. "This one's for you", She told a man who resides on the same housing block, "It doesn't have any beans in it." Standing to receive the bowl, he smiled from ear to ear. After his first spoonful he let out a deep sigh "Mmm. Thank you." He said. Lee-Anne offered him a smile and a "I know you don't like those" in response as her daughter brought out a tray of bacon-wrapped hot dogs for party guests to consume. "We made these together" said a woman who said that she was a neighbour, as well as a friend. She described an afternoon of food preparation which involved applying lessons she'd learned from her mother while preparing food for the neighbourhood dart league while she was growing up. She stood to act out the way that she'd prepared a tall stack of sandwiches, piling up slices of bread, topped with filling, one on top of the other. Punctuating the lesson, she moved her hand through the imaginary sandwich pile, crossing it once, then twice, diagonally. "So, I'm used to preparing food for a lot of people" She said. "You were a great help, I really couldn't have done it without you." Lee-Anne told her.

As the evening went on, more people arrived to wish the couple well. The recent return of a young man who had grown up in the neighbourhood and came back with the wedding party in order to show them where he lived as a child was recalled with a sense of excitement. Two women, in their thirties, expressed their appreciation for the groomsmen's attire and their desire to follow the party after the visitors left the

neighbourhood. Although no one knew who the young man was, the persons residing in the home in which he used to live allowed him to photograph the unit, and seemed happy to show the wedding party around. This offers some insight into the friendliness that community members express amongst themselves and visitors, as well as the jovial nature of the evening's activities. Stories about Michael and Lee-Anne's wedding reception, which took place in the same yard, the recent goings on of neighbourhood children, and some women's struggles to raise them on their own formed the basic topic lines of much of the conversation that occurred that night. In a neighbourhood where the majority of household heads are single mothers (Newfoundland and Labrador Community Accounts 2009), discussions about child-rearing, dating, and balancing work with parenting attest to the social constitution of the neighbourhood. Lee-Anne's ability to cook foods that she knew her guests would enjoy also exemplifies the significance of food as a social lubricant and a method of caring for others, as well as the longevity of the relationships that she and Michael had formed with their neighbours during the twelve years that they had resided in Rabbittown.

Conversation continued to occur throughout the night while pop music spilled into the yard from inside of the couple's home. Some people sang along to it, some danced for a short period of time while others clapped and laughed, or continued speaking to those around them. People moved between the front yard and the kitchen throughout the evening, standing to mingle with friends, or to meet members of Michael and Lee-Anne's families. Due to my affiliation with the community garden, and

my role as a researcher, those I sat with at the party and I discussed the garden for a short period of time. "This is Laura" Michael told the guests "She's completing a Master's degree on community gardening." Most of those within the yard offered polite hellos and waves of the hand, but were rather indifferent to the project, expressing that they had heard about the garden, and knew that Michael and Lee-Anne attended. Since many of the guests and I had not met before, it was quietly acknowledged that they did not participate in community gardening. Although some persons that I met that night were familiar with the garden, others had not heard about it before. Further, although some expressed an interest in the space, conversation moved onto other subjects, such as child-rearing, romantic relationships, and life in Rabbittown, generally.

As a volunteer with the garden-themed after school programming and summer camp activities, and as a participant in community gardening in 2009, I spent some time within the neighbourhood and became familiar with persons working at the community centre. Eventually, community centre employees invited me to participate in neighbourhood events and activities, and it was common for me to engage in conversations with residents whom I recognized while passing through the neighbourhood or participating in these events. Although I did not set out to study the neighbourhood, my research activities allowed me to develop insight into the community that neighbourhood officials, and some residents, described to me. Like Michael and Lee-Anne's party, neighbourhood events, organized by employees and volunteers at the Rabbittown Community Centre, frequently offered community members free lunch or snacks, and

the community centre's barbecue was a popular place for men residing in the neighbourhood to hang out with each other on these occasions. Hot dogs, hamburgers, pop and chips were common fare at these events, and persons who attended them often enjoyed food and company within the community centre, or in the playground that stands immediately behind the centre. Although the garden can be seen from the community centre, persons did not venture into the garden space during these events and activities, but tended to remain within, or close to the centre. A Thanksgiving Dinner was also held at the community centre in October 2009, and the meal featured some traditional Newfoundland foods, including boiled carrot, parsnip, turnip, and dressing cooked with savoury (an herb that is grown locally) along with turkey. About thirty people shared the meal, and at this occasion, I learned about the only recent introduction of Thanksgiving to Newfoundland society - an event which occurred as a result of Confederation. The meal was quite similar to those that I had enjoyed while residing in Ontario and New Brunswick, however, those I shared it with at Rabbittown were careful to mention the significance of savoury as a distinct aspect of Thanksgiving in Newfoundland. Throughout the summer and fall, I noticed that the most popular food items that were enjoyed at these events included hot dogs, hamburgers, potato products and pop. Throughout the summer and fall it was commonly said that carrots, potatoes and cabbage would attract community members to the garden. Many residents of Rabbittown also reported that they continued to consume traditional meals such as the Jiggs dinner.

Community centre employees expressed their sense that community members' participation in community gardening would have to coincide with an increased interest in the foods that were grown within the garden, including fresh greens, varieties of beans, herbs, and radish. Although attempts were made by persons affiliated with the garden to increase participation among persons residing in Rabbittown (including the development of garden-themed programming for children, held at the Rabbittown Community Centre, and the creation of events such as the Annual General Meeting and the end of Season Harvest Party) this was also complicated, to some extent, by the types of food that were grown within the space, and the differences between the types of food that were grown there, and those that are commonly consumed at neighbourhood events and activities.

4.3 Gardening Activities in Rabbittown

Due to the concrete that covers the yards within Rabbittown, most housing units do not provide space that one might utilize for gardening. Some residents have taken creative approaches to gardening, by constructing garden boxes, which they placed within their yards, or, in one instance, by transforming an old chair into a miniature flower bed. Flowers were more popular than vegetables within those gardens that had been planted, and most yards remained covered in concrete and were utilized for social gatherings, or storage purposes instead.



Earlier that summer, Michael and Lee-Anne had planted two gardens in plastic fish boxes, which they'd acquired from another community gardener named Sam. On the evening of their anniversary party, one man, Martin, who is in his forties, sat on the edge of a garden that was planted with lettuce. After introducing ourselves to each other, he mentioned that he resides in the same housing block as Michael and Lee-Anne, and noted that he knew of a few gardens within the neighbourhood, but had not heard about the community garden before. After discussing this for a short while, I asked if he might be interested in being interviewed about his perspective on the space. He agreed, and we arranged for a meeting to occur at the home that he shares with his mother and father. He insisted that I come for Sunday dinner before the interview, in order to learn more about traditional Newfoundland food. He expressed his interest in showing me the

gardens that he knew of within the neighbourhood after dinner was over. Two weeks later, when I arrived at the home that Martin shares with his mother and father in order to conduct the interview with him about his knowledge of the garden's construction within the neighbourhood, and the history of the space where it is located, his mother shared stories about growing up in Calvert, Newfoundland, where her family kept a garden. Further indicating the ways in which food is utilized to develop social bonds, over a Jigg's Dinner, Martin, his mother, father, sister and brother-in-law, expressed how much they enjoy entertaining new arrivals to Newfoundland. At Christmas, the previous year, they had hosted two international students on exchange at MUN and shared their Christmas meal with them. The family shared these stories in order to attest to their own enjoyment of entertaining and meeting new people. They mentioned how sharing a meal can teach persons who are not from Newfoundland about the island's history, and allow guests to share some of their own culture and history with them.

After dinner was completed, Martin's mother began to clear the table, and shared some of her experiences gardening while she was growing up. While washing dishes in the kitchen with Martin's sister, she said that she has not grown any food since moving to St. John's, where she worked as a nurse and home care attendant. According to Martin: "When we were youngsters and we sat down and ate dinner that was where it all come from. We didn't buy it. They grew it all themselves." He described a system of food exchange, in which he, his mother, father and siblings would travel down the shore to collect garden produce and game that had been procured by his uncles and

grandmother, or would be given this food by family members traveling to St. John's. Along with garden produce, he mentioned: "We'd get berries, brought [by] the uncles. Specific types of berries, and fish. All kinds of wild game. Rabbit." Although this had provided his family with fresh produce for most of his life, he indicated that this arrangement was no longer functioning, since those who grew the gardens, hunted and gathered were too old to do so now.

Martin did not learn how to garden while he was growing up, and mentioned that this was part of the reason he would be interested in community gardening; however, as he expressed at Michael and Lee-Anne's anniversary party, he did not know where the garden was located: "Don't know where the garden is located! I didn't know about it from last week, Michael was saying there he got a new garden and then I met you and you was saying something about the garden over there." He told me, when I asked if he knew about the garden's establishment.

Martin described his own activities within the neighbourhood while he was growing up in order to explain his lack of familiarity with the garden space. The community centre had not been constructed during his childhood and adolescence, and so he and his friends often played road hockey in the parking lot that stands within the middle of their housing block:

Oh we, growing up around the neighbourhood, we used to play street hockey and soccer and you know a lot of sports. Basically, do something to keep out of the...to keep our heads together. We used to, like I said, play sports and stuff like that...We didn't have any familiarity because it wasn't there at the time. We'd

either go to the Aquarena and go swimming, or like I said, hang out around the court and play sports that was basically it, really.

Since the construction of the community centre, which occurred in the 1980s, it has become a place that is often a buzz of activity and was described by some community members as 'the heart' of the neighbourhood. It is a place where people may go in order to participate in special events and programs, visit a nurse, or chat with community centre employees. The two floor building includes offices for programming staff, a nurse, a web designer and the Tenants Association. A small kitchen and computer access centre are also located upstairs, along with an activity room. Each floor has a bathroom, which was often utilized by persons who participated in community gardening, and the centre's main floor provided a location for garden planning, and special events to take place. The garden's construction in close proximity to the community centre occurred as a result of the availability of space, as well as its central location within the neighbourhood. Although garden organizers anticipated that its central location would position the garden within a space that community members were familiar with, this did not seem to be the case. The goal of creating a space that would benefit neighbourhood residents was challenged by its location behind the centre, and social housing units, as well as the uncertainties about what types of food people wished to consume, how much space there was within the garden beds (for instance, potatoes could not be grown due to the amount of space that they utilize) and the interests and needs of those who regularly participated in community gardening. Further research, examining the

perspectives of community members, specifically, would provide a deeper analysis on the interests, needs, and gardening experience that exist among them. This might provide those involved with the community garden with a clearer insight into the reasons why persons residing in the neighbourhood do not participate in community gardening, or what might be done in order to make the space more appealing to them. As I will indicate in the following section, most people who participated in community gardening in 2009 did not reside within the neighbourhood.

During interviews and conversations with some persons residing in Rabbittown, I learned that some community members have a history of gardening and food production activities and are often given food by family members who continue to garden in rural Newfoundland. One woman was connected to a family farm, where she and her children would work at various points throughout the summer. At a summer barbecue, she expressed that they had more than enough vegetables as a result of this connection, and did not need to participate in community gardening because of this. While garden organizers had made an assumption about food need within the neighbourhood, some persons residing in the neighbourhood seemed to have access to fresh produce as a result of their family members' gardening or farming activities. Some persons that I met at Michael and Lee-Anne's anniversary party and other events and activities that I attended through the community centre were familiar with the garden; however, many others said that they did not know that it existed. Of those who knew that it was there, many also mentioned that they had not participated in community

gardening. These mixed sentiments indicate something of the garden's status within the neighbourhood as a recently constructed space, and one that was instigated by persons residing in various parts of St. John's, rather than in the community itself. Two persons I spoke to were uncertain about participating because they did not know who else was participating and did not necessarily wish to spend time with their neighbours. Some expressed that although they were aware of its existence, they were uncertain about how to go about participating, did not have time, or did not have an interest in these activities. While the garden is located in a neighbourhood that is conceived of as a community, as with all socially defined entities, there are varying degrees of close relationships among the residents. Rather than conceiving of the garden as a space where she could spend time with neighbours, one gardener from Rabbittown indicated that it was a positive addition to the neighbourhood because it provided her with the opportunity to meet new people, and to spend time within a neutral space where neighbourhood politics were not discussed. However, other residents of Rabbittown do share gardening identities as well as produce among themselves and have been doing so far before the community garden was initiated.

True to his word upon our first acquaintance, at the end of my interview with Martin he took me to see two gardens that he knew of, which are located in the yards of private dwellings on the street that is adjacent to his family's home. In the middle of a rainstorm, he insisted that we go and see them. With both of us donning rubber boots, his mother moved to hand me my jacket, and then held it back from me. "This isn't

warm enough.” She told me. “You’ll catch a cold.” Moving to the closet, she handed me a green jacket that she deemed more suitable than the light slicker I’d worn to their home. Lined with fleece and covered in a weather resistant shell, she insisted that I keep it, since she figured she hadn’t any need for it, personally.

After crossing the street from Martin’s family’s home, he pointed out a small greenhouse, where tomatoes had been planted by two women in their thirties and their elderly mother. Around the corner, he also showed me a large garden belonging to a retired man named Timothy. A hot house, home to tomatoes and recently harvested onions along with a few necessary gardening supplies, stood between two large garden beds where beets, cabbage, potatoes, carrot, and onion were growing. These items are common features of a Jigg’s dinner and are the kinds of produce with which neighbourhood organizers said Rabbittown residents were familiar. Timothy popped his head out of his back door shortly after we arrived. “Oh hi, Martin!” He called. “Hi Timothy! How are you? Just showing her the garden, like I said” he responded. “Nice day for it!” Timothy responded, with a laugh. Although he peeked his head out the door, he remained inside in order to keep out of the rain. “What will you do with all of this?” I asked him, pondering the success of his gardening activities. “Oh, give it to neighbours, family and friends” He told us. “Would never be able to eat it all on my own.” In a similar way that the Rabbittown Community Garden produces food to be shared amongst those who arrive there, and are interested in taking food home with them, Timothy’s garden is supplying some fresh produce to those with whom he is personally

acquainted with. Although gardening activities were challenged by the lack of greenspace available at housing units, Martin's tour showcased the existence of gardens in close proximity to the neighbourhood. On our walk back to his house, where I collected my belongings before returning to my own home, we spoke about whether he was interested in gardening. He said that he was, but that he preferred to unwind with other activities, like playing the accordion, or going to the gym. When I asked if he thought he would be interested in meeting other gardeners at some point that season, if we organized some musical activities, he said he would be. At the end of the gardening season in 2009, I invited Martin to come to the Rabbittown Community Garden Harvest Party, and asked if he might be willing to bring his accordion along. He and another gardener acted as musical entertainment, and at the end of the day, Martin said that he had a good time, and might be back again the following year.

4.4 Food and Community Gardening

Conceiving of the garden as a distinct 'community' is complicated by its relatively recent development within the city, as well as its location within a pre-existing community and its partial intention to benefit those residing there. Throughout my research phase, the garden stood in waiting for neighbourhood residents to arrive, and this remained a topic of discussion amongst some persons who participated in these activities. "Where is everyone?" was a common question, posed on occasions when few people arrived to the garden, especially on warm and sunny days. A lack of understanding about why Rabbittown residents were not participating led to some

feelings of frustration amongst those who had interests in seeing the garden become a space that would benefit persons residing in Rabbittown. Any attempt to answer this question would be speculative, at best, and so rather than directing my attention to these concerns, specifically, I endeavoured to understand the community that was beginning to come into existence at the garden on Sunday afternoons. Here, I will describe the types of food that brought people together, and the activities that were organized in order to develop bonds amongst community gardeners and attempt to generate participation among community members.

Community gardening has been organized in various parts of Canada in order to increase people's connections to each other, as well as the foods that they consume, so as to benefit themselves and the environment. Crouch (1991, 1989) has shown how allotment gardening provides a means through which persons who share interests in consuming home-grown foods are able to meet one another and develop a sense of community. He notes:

The fun of working an allotment is that you can do it alongside other people. This brings trials when neighbours are too friendly to let you get on with your digging, but there are many pay offs. Sharing seeds, plants, and produce go hand in hand with swapping hints and suggesting. The whole idea of allotment gardening is bound up with a community of shared ideals, if often contested opinion about how you should grow things (1991:38 in Bell and Valentine 1997:15).

In this way, a shared space where allotment gardens are located has the potential to become a community. In this style of community garden, participants tend garden lots in close proximity to one another. Although they do not collectively tend a common garden

bed, they do share produce from time to time, as well as gardening advice, conversation, and, depending on the setting, carry out social events and activities. Although one might imagine that participation in community gardening might lead, even more directly, to a sense of community, community gardeners did not express that this was the case. Rather, by the end of summer 2009, they were only beginning to learn each other's names, and maintained their sense that the garden was a personally significant space, rather than one that produced a sense of collective identity. Food sharing, and community gardening helped gardeners who did not know each other familiarize themselves with one another, and develop social bonds despite differences in gender, age, income status, physical capacity, levels of education, place of origin and previous experiences gardening.

The Rabbittown Community Garden differs from an allotment garden in that all beds were tended by all those who arrived there. However, the types of activities that occur within these spaces- such as seed-sharing, digging, and planting together, as well as discussions about how to grow things, bear much similarity despite the administrative differences between these styles of community gardening. At this particular community garden, assessing who participates in these activities draws out the significance of food preference to people's interests in community gardening. For those who regularly tended the garden in 2009, an interest in practicing or learning gardening skills, along with a taste for fresh, local, affordable produce, led to their participation in community gardening. Within the neighbourhood, barbecues, community meals and social events

that were organized by the Rabbittown Community Centre and neighbourhood residents frequently offered food to those in attendance. These events were common features of life there, and were utilized in order to promote a sense of community among those residing in social housing units. In contrast, the garden was a space where events and activities tended, for the most part, to focus on food production rather than consumption. Meals, however, were shared among community gardeners on two occasions that summer; the CGA Annual General Meeting, and the Rabbittown Community Garden Harvest Party. Both events were organized as potluck style events, and featured foods that could be sourced locally. These occasions offered gardeners and neighbourhood residents a chance to come together over a light meal in order to meet one another and generate wider participation in these activities.

My research on gender and food provisioning is limited due to my lack of attention to questions regarding who prepares garden produce once it is taken home. However, by considering the food provisioning work that interviewees made reference to, I am able to discern the ways in which gender contributed to people's participation in making and sharing food at these gardening events. I found that women, more so than men, prepared foods and organized these activities. Other aspects of women's identities also contributed to their participation in these activities. Women who did not express having a low income status or a disability, especially those who held a formal role within the garden organization, and had university backgrounds contributed food preparation and organizing activities more so than women with disabilities or persons

who identified as living on low incomes. One woman, who expressed a low income identity, contributed by decorating the garden for the Community Garden Alliance Annual General Meeting, and helping to raise awareness of the event within the neighbourhood and to plan the Harvest Party at the end of the garden season. Two men also prepared foods for the Annual General Meeting, including a rhubarb crisp and a bean dish. One gardener referred to the rhubarb crisp as one of her favourite parts of community gardening that year.



Planning for the Annual General Meeting occurred at the Food Security Network of Newfoundland and Labrador office, which was located in downtown St. John's at the time. Four women organized the event details, envisioned the activities for the day, and made arrangements to share these plans with other persons involved with community gardening over electronic mail. Bulletins were also placed in the free newspaper *The Scope* as well as radio stations in St. John's. Musical entertainment was provided by two men who participated in community gardening from time to time; others came forward

with their intentions to contribute food to the event, and on Sunday June 26, 2009 a white tent was erected in an open green space within the lot where the garden was located, and persons were invited to enjoy a light lunch and discuss the upcoming gardening season. An elected official, persons from the neighbourhood, and those who were interested in tending the garden shared their interests in these activities, and introduced themselves to one another. On this particular occasion, eight men, sixteen women and six children participated in community gardening. The garden was decorated with welcome signs, chain tree garlands, fireweed, and ribbons. A bouquet of wild flowers was also placed on one of two tables that had been borrowed from the Rabbittown Community Centre in order to provide a space for people to place food items that were shared that day.





One former gardener arranged for a tub of homemade hummus to be taken to the event; another also made hummus and a mixed vegetable tray; Gloria provided a carrot, sunflower seed and raisin salad; Rebecca provided sliced cucumber, tomato and crackers; Kyle and his friend Nate contributed the bean dish and rhubarb crisp and breads were donated by the Georgetown Bakery. Rosehip tea was also prepared for the occasion and juices were purchased with money that had been secured by Community Garden Alliance fundraising activities.

A second gathering occurred over food during the Rabbittown Community Garden Harvest Party. The event was organized at the community centre, and a BBQ meal was rounded out by homemade chili (which utilized kale that was grown in the garden), potato salad (made from ingredients that were grown on an organic farm just outside of St. John's and donated by those involved with the cooperative that oversees

the farm), carrot salad (also referred to by Gloria as Rabbittown salad, since it was commonly prepared for community garden events), freshly baked rolls, salad greens and quiche. An emphasis on healthy food was made during conversations about the types of food that should be offered at these events and, when possible, attempts were also made to utilize foods that could be sourced locally. Gloria Kyle, Rebecca, and I prepared foods for the second event. At the end of the garden season, Gloria also made attempts to ensure that foods prepared at the Harvest Party would be of interest to persons residing in the neighbourhood. She and Kyle arranged to utilize the Community Centre barbecue and also made plans to prepare hot dogs and hamburgers at the event. Kyle operated the barbecue on this occasion, and handed out hot dogs and hamburgers that had been secured through CGA funds. Receipts for food purchases that were utilized at these events were given to Gloria and Kyle, in exchange for money in order to cover the cost of foods that gardeners had prepared. A smaller number of people were involved with community gardening by the end of the season, and so Gloria, Jane and I worked together to purchase food items and plan the event. Other gardeners planned craft activities for the occasion, one secured pumpkins for a pumpkin carving activity, and one community gardener returned in order to provide musical entertainment with a community member named Brian. Like the Annual General Meeting, the Harvest Party was well attended. Thirteen men and thirteen women, and twenty-one children from the neighbourhood participated in harvest party activities.

At various points in time during the gardening season, some gardeners also offered snacks to be shared by those who participated in these activities. One community gardener expressed her sense that more food sharing would have helped to further establish relationships and make gardening plans:

On the first couple of times, people would bring some snacks and people would eat them just kind of whenever. But I think that would be really nice since. . . You know, I'm really organized, but. . . If we got there, and, you know, got a job done, and got whatever needed to be done that day, to finish it and then have some time for fellowship. Had time to sit down and have something to eat, or have something to drink and talk about whatever we got done and plan for next week. I think that would have been really nice.

For the most part, however, food items that were harvested at the garden were consumed at gardeners' homes. On some occasions, gardeners brought foods with them to share on Sunday afternoons. Lisa, for instance, often made bean dips, sliced vegetables, and fruit kebabs. On the first day of the garden's second season, Kayla also brought homemade muffins, nachos with guacamole and salsa, sliced veggies and fruit. Kyle and Gloria often brought juice and granola bars, and I also brought bags of Nova Scotian apples from time to time. Sam also prepared sliced vegetables and hummus to be shared amongst community gardeners on one occasion. On Sundays when foods were shared at the garden, a blue tarp was placed on the ground beside one of the beds, foods were spread out on its surface, and people were welcome to snack as they wished throughout the gardening session.



Lisa described her food preparation activities by emphasizing their informal nature, and her desire to contribute to the garden's development while she was completing her Master of Environmental Studies internship with the Community Garden Alliance:

The fruit kebabs are fun. I guess I had seen that someone brought food the first week. And then when I met with Rebecca and Gloria the first time, they talked about, you know, possibly setting up a schedule for people to bring food. And at the beginning, [my internship activities were] kind of slow to start up. They only had so many things to appoint to me, so I decided that I should bring food for the first few weeks.

Although she said that she did not notice much of a gender division of labour throughout the gardening season, Lisa added her sense that, when it came to food preparation activities, she did notice that more women than men contributed to these activities: "I didn't notice it so much, but I guess I did notice that it was generally the women that brought the food, like Rebecca, you, or I." Although not every one enjoyed snacks at the same time, they did provide gardeners with the opportunity to sit and chat with each other at various points in time on Sunday afternoons. Children who reside in

Rabbittown often enjoyed them along with gardeners on afternoons when they played games of hide and seek in the back section of the garden.

4.5 Conclusion

While it may be the case that, in both instances, food drew people together, the social constitution of neighbourhood events, and community garden activities, differed from one another; so too did the types that were prepared at neighbourhood and garden events. According to Elizabeth Dowler, “In the general public’s mind, food is more than a bundle of nutrients, it represents an expression of who a person is, where they belong and what they are worth, and it is a focus of social exchange” (Dowler 2003:572). Dowler’s research indicates the significance of income status to people’s capacity to purchase foods that are necessary in order to lead a healthy life, and she also attests to the ways in which food offerings express individual identities.

One’s ability to provide foods that others would enjoy at special events rested on their knowledge of guests’ eating preferences. Lee-Anne’s ability to serve her friends at her anniversary party, for instance, exemplifies the longstanding relationship that she has with her neighbours. Gardeners’ food provisioning activities, however, focused less on individual tastes, and more on healthy, local food. Since relationships were only beginning to be formed at the community garden, this kind of understanding about each other’s tastes had not been developed. However, due to gardeners’ interests in consuming fresh, local, organic produce, dishes that utilized these types of foods were met with great appreciation. Gardeners complimented each other on foods that were

prepared at gardening events that featured food sharing, asked each other for recipes, and shared ideas for food production methods that could be applied to produce that was taken home. In this way relationships formed on the basis of shared tastes were only beginning to be formed in 2009.

Persons affiliated with the community often emphasized the importance of securing affordable food, attesting to the low income status of persons who reside in Rabbittown. Efforts to make the garden an open and inclusive space were made during special events, and this included attempts to prepare foods that community members were used to eating at community celebrations, along with foods that were grown within the garden. Garden organizers maintained their hope that, over time, community members would become more familiar with the garden, interested in the foods that were grown there, and would eventually participate in community gardening and take on the space as their own. Neighbourhood children often attended gardening events and activities, and enjoyed the foods that were prepared by persons involved with the community garden.

The foods that are grown within the garden exemplify some of the ways in which conceptions of local food are also being altered by contemporary gardening activities. Rather than growing traditional Newfoundland vegetables, community gardeners planted some food items that had only recently been introduced to the island, some of which were new to persons who were used to consuming carrots, potatoes, cabbage, parsnip, turnip and beets. In consideration of people's general interests in community

gardening, and the social constitution of the garden group, gender was not an immediately significant aspect of people's participation in these activities. Nearly equal numbers of women and men regularly tended the garden, and expressed interests in doing so in order to develop or exercise gardening skills, and gain access to fresh produce. A low income status, however, did contribute to people's participation in some ways, and disability intersected with a low income status for two regular gardeners. For persons who were not able to afford to purchase fresh produce at area grocery stores or the Farmers' Market, the garden was an important place for them, since it allowed them to access fresh food items free of charge. Persons who had recently re-located to St. John's and those who had been living in the city for most of their lives expressed similar interests in meeting new people, especially those who shared interest in gardening, and accessing fresh produce. Like an allotment garden, participation in community gardening increased social bonds among community gardeners. For those who did not require access to fresh produce, their participation in community gardening specifically related to their interests in increasing food security on the island, helping to generate gardening skills amongst the population, and to carry out gardening activities in the company of others. For persons in wheelchairs, the garden provided them with a unique opportunity to participate since produce planted in raised beds allowed them to plant, harvest and weed from their wheelchairs. With regard to food provisioning activities that occurred during community gardening events, more women than men did contribute to food

preparation activities. There was no clear division of labour, however, since some men also assisted with these activities.

In this chapter, I have discussed the significance of food to the expression of Newfoundland identity, and the ways in which food is utilized to express and strengthen social bonds within the neighbourhood and at the garden. By exploring the extent to which persons residing in the neighbourhood garden at home, or outside of the city, I have endeavoured to provide the reader with an insight into the types of food and ways in which community members procure the foods that they consume, so as to consider the significance of consumption and identity to participation in community gardening. In this chapter, I have raised questions about the interests, needs and perspectives of persons conceived of as community members, with regard to their conceptions of good food, as well as their familiarity with, interests or needs for, the community garden. I have also shown some of the similarities and differences between the ways in which food is utilized in order to develop or maintain social bonds through consumption and production activities. In Rabbittown, food is utilized as a way to encourage the development of community among persons residing in social housing units. At the community garden, it has facilitated social connections among those who do not know each other very well, and those who had only recently relocated to St. John's.

While it may be the case that there is a common sense about what types of food may be conceived of as traditional Newfoundland food, the items grown at the Rabbittown Community Garden challenge the idea that the consumption of local

vegetables need restrict one's consumption to carrots, potato, parsnip, beets and cabbage. Foodies' interests in consuming non-traditional foods has expanded the range of items that may be grown in St. John's. The use of seeds from local organic farms, which include new types of greens, leeks, kale, and tomatoes shows how this movement has increased food selection at the Rabbittown Community Garden. Community gardening served to bring some community members and persons residing in various parts of St. John's together; however, the differences between the types of food that were consumed at neighbourhood events, and those that were grown within the garden signify the significance of taste and identity to the development of community through acts of food sharing.

CHAPTER FIVE: Community Gardening Narratives

What grew
 What grew
 And what grew
 And inside who?
 -Feist

("How My Heart Behaves" The Reminder, Track 13)

Jane drums her fingers on the table in her kitchen. Between sips of tea, she tells me why she is feeling hopeful and frustrated about the garden. We began our conversation mid-morning on a cold November day. Sleety snow scraped down from the sky, stinging my cheeks as I walked over to the house that she shares with her husband and two young children. "What a day!" I exclaimed, when her husband opened the door. He would soon be leaving for his job that involved outdoor work, and we agreed that it would be nice if the snow lost its edge, at least. The wind would nip and the air would almost certainly remain cold, but a softer snow would make some difference. I took my shoes off and left them in the front foyer. "Welcome, come on in" he said, ushering us toward the kitchen where Jane sat waiting for me. A children's TV program played in the background, and their daughter Sophia's small voice flitted out from the living room into the narrow hallway "Laura!" "Hello!" I called in response. She rushed to greet me and I knelt low to offer her a proper hug. The warmth of the kitchen, and the interview with Jane beckoned me. After making small talk, preparing tea and interview materials, Jane and I began to discuss the previous season of community gardening. We would go on to

speak for nearly three hours, with Jane playing the finger drums, and providing a steady beat.

After gardening with her all season, conversation with Jane about the garden felt natural, comfortable and I was not surprised by some of her responses; she had been airing her interests and grievances to me as the summer progressed. Seated in front of a basket full of drying seeds, almost ready to be planted next year, Jane emphasized her passion for community gardening and her desire to see the space become important to her community – by which, she meant the neighbourhood. Our conversation unfolded on its own terms, frequently diverging from the interview schedule.

From the moment that I met Jane at the beginning of the gardening season, it seemed to me that she had something she wanted to say. Not only about the garden, or community gardening, but about life in a low income neighbourhood and her attempt to participate in what she saw as a green movement beginning to take shape in the city. Early into the interview, Jane reached a point of exasperation. Taking a breath, she then exhaled: “I just figured the community garden would be, you know, a free opportunity for people to come and learn lots of things. Not necessarily just about growing in a garden.” Taking a breath again, she continued:

Like I said, we’ve spent so many years in Housing, and having to deal with every range of people, that most people get to the point where they’re like ‘There is no hope for change. There is no, you know opportunity to learn and grow.’ And I honestly figured the community garden would be a good chance for that to happen. You know what I mean? People could go up there and realize that if they gave their opinion, it mattered. If they came and gave their time then they would

share ideas and common perspectives about environmental issues. They both expressed their sense that it was an exciting development, but also articulated a number of challenges that they experienced there. These challenges attest to the significance of identity to people's experiences at the Rabbittown Community Garden. Narratives like Jane's illuminate the different ways that people participated in and experienced community gardening in 2009.

Community gardeners' narratives reveal the different interests and needs that lead people to participate in community gardening at Rabbittown. Some gardeners cited previous experiences gardening with their families as reasons for becoming involved in the initiative; others were interested in food security, healthy eating and organic food production generally. Various types of physical and gardening capacities played a significant role in the division of gardening labour, and gender affected people's caretaking tasks within the space, especially with regard to care for children. While some conveyed their interests in learning how to garden, or meeting new people, others stated that the garden held some importance to them as a space where they could go in order to secure access to fresh produce. Not only did community gardeners articulate the particular and personal meaning of these activities, they also documented and discussed the types of work that was performed in order to maintain and continue to develop the garden in 2009. This included planting, weeding, harvesting, constructing new garden beds as well as a brick path, leading workshops, organizing community events and caring for children. In this chapter I will utilize community gardeners'

narratives and photo narratives in order to provide multiple insights into the space from the perspective of those who were involved.

The Rabbittown Community Garden is a space that came to life in 2009 as a result of the personalities and activities of those who arrived there, even if they did so only one time. Multiple perspectives about the space provide a number of insights into the garden's significance to those who participated in community gardening. An informal organizational structure, of which there were no expressly determined roles and responsibilities, was to foster a sense of communal labour, but was regarded as somewhat confusing by most persons who were involved in 2009. Although there was no formal division of labour, people participated in very different ways throughout the season, with some persons taking on more responsibility than others, some hoping to perform tasks but remaining unable to as a result of shyness or out of respect for other gardeners.

Furthermore, some people gardened more frequently than others, and expressed greater attachment to the space than, for instance, those who only arrived from time to time. Although the garden is technically maintained by the Community Garden Alliance, the space itself was not managed by anyone in particular. Rather, all gardeners were considered to be equally welcome to make suggestions, perform various tasks, and benefit from garden produce. As previously stated, it is a space where everyone may go in order to participate in community gardening on Sunday afternoons.

Thus far, I have considered the history of the garden's development, and its previous utility as a play space and dumping ground within the neighbourhood. I have also considered the significance of food to the development of community within the neighbourhood, and the ways in which interests in local, organic food affected people's participation in community gardening in 2009. In the previous chapter, I sought to situate the garden within the neighbourhood, and the lives of those who regularly gardened there. In this chapter, I seek to focus more closely on the perspectives and activities of those who participated in community gardening in 2009. A richness and diversity of perspective on community gardening comes through in gardener narratives, and differences among the ways in which people participated in these activities warrant some attention.

Throughout this chapter I consider the garden as a space where persons arrived on Sunday afternoons in order to participate in community gardening, and focus on the different ways that community gardeners participated in and reflected on these activities. I will frame the garden as a space following the work of anthropologist Setha Low:

Thus, the social construction of space is the actual transformation of space—through people's social exchanges, memories, images, and daily use of the material setting—into schemes and actions that convey symbolic meaning. Both processes are social in the sense that both the production and the construction of space are contested for economic and ideological reasons; understanding them can help us to see how local conflicts over space can be used to uncover and illuminate larger issues (Low 1999:112 also see Harvey 2006 and Massey 2005).

Before beginning my discussion and analysis, I carry out a brief overview of narrative-based research on community organizations. I will also consider Joan Scott's critique of experience. The purpose of this section is to provide the reader with an understanding of the contribution that narrative inquiry makes within current representations of community gardening. After completing this discussion, I move into photo and personal narratives about community gardening. I focus on people's gardening histories in order to show the variation in gardening skills that was present within the space on Sunday afternoons. Next, I discuss the significance of food to people's interests in community gardening, and the ways in which decisions were made about the types of food that were grown within the garden. After this section, I discuss the types of activities that people considered to be "community gardening" activities, which include physical construction tasks, planting, weeding, harvesting, leading workshops, performing child care tasks, and those related to community development (such as organizing events, fundraising, and welcoming people to the space). In consideration of gardeners' photos that depict various types of gardening labour, I will also consider the types of activities that constituted community gardening, and the ways in which people participated in these activities.

5.1 Narrative-Based and Experiential Research

In existing research on community gardening, a notable gap exists in the literature with regard to the inclusion of community gardeners' perspectives and

ethnographic descriptions and analyses of community gardening activities. As such, the extent to which community gardeners share perspectives, interests, needs and concerns is uncertain. Some of the nuances of community gardening are also elided by the lack of consideration of multiple perspectives on garden spaces and activities. Rather than assuming that all those who participated in community gardening in 2009 shared similar perspectives and interests, my research endeavoured to explore the potential differences among community gardeners. In doing so, I hoped to produce a nuanced discussion and analysis that would convey the significance of the space to those who were involved, as well as the potential significance of various aspects of individual identities to their perspectives and experiences.

In his essay "Narrative Inquiry and the Study of Grassroots Associations," Leisure Studies scholar Troy Glover argues: "The point of narrative research is to assist participants in telling their stories - giving them voice as it were - while also recognizing the analytical role of the researcher by discussing what the perceived intent is behind such stories and how they differ or contradict others" (2004:67). Taking a more critical stance on the use of narrative and experience in academic texts, feminist historian Joan Scott also discusses the use of narrative. In her essay, "The Evidence of Experience", she argues that historians must not only represent individual experiences, but also call into question how experiences come to occur. This may be achieved by considering the subject positions of those who have the experiences that are represented within texts, and the modes through which individuals' activities in their society are made possible or

impossible (1992:280 in Jaggar 2008). Her critique of experience is useful as a precursor to my own consideration of community gardener narratives, due to its incitement to critically examine how the stories individuals share are enabled through their social location or articulated as a result of their desire to alter their circumstances in some way. As discussed in Chapter Two, I have sought to involve community gardeners in the process of representing the space, and their experience, through ethnographic research and interviews. Although I will privilege experiential accounts of community gardening throughout this chapter, Scott's work is crucial in thinking about how community gardening images and narratives will be analyzed. Like Scott, I will take the perspective that:

Experience is, in this approach, not the origin of our explanation, but that which we want to explain. This kind of approach does not undercut politics by destroying the existence of subjects; it instead interrogates the processes of their creation, and, in so doing, refigures history and the role of the historian, and opens new ways for thinking about change (Scott 1992:280).

An intersectional approach to conceiving of identity is also an important aspect of my ensuing discussion and analysis since it will provoke careful consideration of subject positions, and the significance of various aspects of individual identities to their activities and experiences. In her article "Understanding Women's Work through the Confluence of Gender, Race, and Social Class", Nina Ginger Hoffman argues:

The literature that employs intersectional analysis offers insights into a range of structural inequalities in the lives of women, particularly in the fields of women's health and education. But this literature lacks the detailed empirical data needed to demonstrate what an intersectional analysis can reveal about women's work,

particularly their ability to balance the demands of unpaid household labor with their often concurrent participation in the labor market, including informal economies. The art and science of the ethnographic narrative employed here—that is, in depth interviews and observations of women’s lived experiences—fills that gap by showing how disparities between women’s working lives are reinforced and reproduced by differential access to education, social networks, and other forms of cultural capital, as well as through racism and class relations (2010:180).

While exploring women’s narratives about their work opportunities, goals, and experiences, with particular attention to the significance of social class, ethnicity and educational background, Hoffman attests to the ways in which gendered experiences correspond with other aspects of women’s identities:

...By examining the structural and personal forces that mediate women’s working lives, the intersectional approach lays bare the ideological content of women’s social capital (resources based on social networks acquired through one’s social class), cultural capital (resources based on knowledge acquired through education), and the structural – e.g. the social, economic, and political - content of their lives. (2010:181).

Hoffman achieves this level of analysis by focussing on particular narratives, later comparing and contrasting them with each other in order to draw out similarities and differences amongst her informants. For instance, in her discussion of a woman named Irene’s narrative about her desire to continue working later in life, Hoffman indicates: “Irene’s commitment about being ‘too young not to work’ expressed a powerful cultural value of the meaning of work in our society and of having control over her income and thus her life” (2010:185). Rather than asserting this as a truth among all women, she complicates her discussion of women’s perceptions of work by considering the narrative

of a woman named Latrice, who is described as an African American single mother. Latrice described her need to secure flexible employment that is close to her home, emphasizing: "First, the location, I can't drive far; I can't drive on the highway, [only] just like in my area I know I'm familiar with; umm...second, depending what kind of job it is; third, the pay"(2010:186). Hoffman analyzes this narrative by considering the ways in which her identity as a single mother contributes to what she is looking for in a job:

Latrice did not have a social support network for childcare. Having to relocate for a job proved particularly difficult for her. Job flexibility for Latrice meant being able to spend as much time as possible with her kids and having some say over her shift times. Ultimately, being able to negotiate the terms of her employment proved more important to Latrice than a pay raise (2010:186).

Hoffman also considers women's work activities within the home, and indicates that, for those of middle class standing, hiring someone to perform household duties affected their ability to balance work and home life (2010:187). While Hoffman does well to express the multiple perspectives on work that women shared with her, conveying a sense of the importance of conceiving of identity through an intersectional lens, she also clarifies that women did share some common concerns and perspectives:

We asked our interviewees about some of the obstacles they faced in meeting their employment goals. Abusive and jealous partners were mentioned on several occasions. Lack of support systems, including childcares and generally a lack of jobs were among the most important obstacles discussed (2010:190).

Similar intersectional analyses have been performed in a variety of social and cultural settings. Catrin Lundstrom examines the ways in which young Latina women negotiate white spaces in inner-city Stockholm (2010); Jacqueline Mattis, Nyasha A Grayman,

Sheri-Anne Cowie, Cynthia Winston, Carolyn Watson and Daisy Jackson (2008) examine the ways in which social structures and intersectional identities affect adult African American people's altruistic activities in a low-income neighbourhood in New York City; Griet Roets, Rosa Reinaart and Geert Van Hove (2008) explore the narrative of a single mother with learning difficulties as she attempts to support her children in Brussels, Belgium; Robert Kruise (2003) examines the experiences of American women with dwarfism, specifically with regard to their activities in public space; and Myra Marx Ferree and Silke Roth (1998) explore the intersections of gender, sexuality and social class in their analysis of the West Berlin Day Care Workers' strike. My discussion and analysis are informed by these models. Rather than focussing on discrete aspects of gardeners' identities, I seek to consider how gender, along with recent migration to St. John's, age, occupation, physical capacity and other aspects of individual identities contribute to their perspectives on and experiences within the space.

5.2 Coming to the Garden as a Result of Previous In/Experiences Gardening

Persons who participated in community gardening in 2009 arrived there with a variety of skill sets and a wide range of gardening abilities. While many participated in these activities throughout the season, some ceased participating before season's end, others participated infrequently, and a small number began gardening near season's end. There was considerable mobility amongst the garden group in 2009. Work outside of St. John's, visits with family members in other parts of the country, and moves to other cities meant that the garden group was constantly in flux. One never knew who

would arrive. Although this led to some uncertainties about who would be gardening with whom on Sunday afternoons, it also contributed to the garden's sense of openness and defined it as a space where all were always welcomed.

At the beginning of September, 2009, a young couple named Ashley and Eric arrived at the garden from their rented apartment that is located about two blocks away from Rabbittown. After re-locating to St. John's in order for Ashley to continue her studies, and having participated in a community garden at an East Coast university that summer, the couple were excited to find a similar initiative in St. John's and began participating in community gardening in order to meet new people and continue to practice their gardening skills. Ashley referred to her previous experiences at another community garden during our interview. "We had a plot there that we set up in spring, and then worked with, I guess, throughout the summer. And then we moved in [to St. John's] the very end of August, so we didn't get to harvest everything from our garden, but we passed it on to a friend there." Eric had planted his first seeds earlier that summer. Although his mother had a garden when he was very young, she had not continued gardening throughout his childhood, and he said that he did not garden with her very much as a child. Sneaking peas, however, was a favourite childhood activity. Ashley had become familiar with growing food as a result of her mother and uncle's gardening activities, which they performed while she was growing up:

My mom has always had a garden. And she loved gardening, and I've always, like she's always preserved food from the garden and made a huge batch of salsa and she always freezes our tomatoes and what not. So I've always had that, but I was

never really interested in it when I was living at home with her? So. I really wasn't interested in it, I guess, when I was in high school. When I went back [home] this year, she broke her hip this year so I set up the garden for her this year. But that was the first time I've ever been involved in it with my mom.

Reflections on early gardening experiences with mothers and fathers were common amongst those who participated in this research. Michael, who grew up in Newfoundland, recalled his father's interest in gardening as an inspiration to him:

Well, my father did a lot of gardening. He actually grew his own potatoes at his place. Dad, he's very much into the natural living. He used to go down and get kelp on the beach and we would get kelp and he would go out and get fish heads or whatever he could find, right? Eggs. Whatever he could slap onto the garden to make it grow, right? He would do that. You know, we had potatoes by the cabin. He would clear off the land and I think we grew as many rocks as we did potatoes, right?

Penney, from PEI, also described a childhood and youth where fresh produce was readily available as a result of her parents' gardening activities:

My dad's crazy about a huge garden. Like, it's not just a reasonable sized garden, he just goes overboard. That's his personality. But. I loved being able to go out and pick, you know, like a couple peppers for my lunch. Or, you know, harvest the tomatoes. Like you're making a toasted tomato sandwich and you just go outside and pick the nicest looking tomato. And, you know, you want to have corn for supper so you go out and pick it, shuck it, and it's in a pot of boiling water in less than five minutes. So it's, you know, that was, I had an appreciation for that as well? I wouldn't consider myself a lover of vegetables but at the same time I appreciate really nice produce. So.

This appreciation for fresh produce, and her inability to acquire what she deemed to be good produce at grocery stores led to her participation in community gardening. Not only did her father plant a garden, her mother also performed these activities and she

discussed weeding as a time when she and her mother would share conversations with one another as they worked. For this gardener in particular, the opportunity to grow fresh tomatoes and greens, in close proximity to her home, meant that she could continue to harvest fresh food for her family, now that she is an adult, wife, and mother. Two other gardeners also recalled their parent's gardening activities as a source of inspiration.

Lee-Anne told me:

My mother used to have her own little garden. We used to live in Regina, Saskatchewan so we used to have one little plot there where we used to make our own little garden. And she used to take me out there and watch her do, like how she planted the vegetables and stuff. And that's how I knew a little bit about it. And then, when we started here, I just knew a little bit? So I just learned from other people, basically .

As an adult, she began participating in community gardening by utilizing a wheelchair. As a child, however, she was able to garden with her mother due to having had a capacity to walk at a younger age. Another community gardener who also utilizes a wheelchair recalled a similar experience of learning to garden with his parents, however, he has utilized a wheelchair all his life and this affected his ability to carry out these activities with them:

Outside, my mom had a flower bed garden and Dad had his vegetable garden.

Laura: Did you work with him in the garden at all?

Not really, I couldn't really get the wheelchair into the garden very much. But I, from a distance, watched every move that he made and anything he done to the garden. I was aware of what was going on and why he was doing what he was doing. Same with my mother. Even now my mother will phone me in the spring of

the year and she'll tell me every detail of what she's going to do this year.

Laura: Hmm.

In the garden. And we'll discuss it.

Laura: Did your Dad tell you all the details as well?

Nnno. I sort of had to watch him. He sort of does his work and I just sort of watch him from a distance. Um. When it comes to stuff like that I guess he figures I will mostly learn by watching.

The big problem with doing the garden back home was just the areas in which the gardens were placed. My father's vegetable garden was up on a big ol' hill. There was not a paved road or anything up there. And so I just had to watch him from a distance. And then just ask him questions later as to what was done. That was about it.

My mother now. She had her flower garden in our own backyard and front yard. Still there was a problem getting close enough to actually get my hands in the dirt.

Laura: Because it was so low to the ground?

Yeah.

And also because it was around rocky area, big rocks, and I couldn't get my wheelchair past those areas. But I got close enough to watch every detail. And what was going on.

For Trevor, the opportunity to try his hands at gardening was a great one, due to the fact that he had only previously been able to watch his parents garden at their home.

He, too, gardens in a wheelchair and his previous experiences gardening were mediated by this device. Although he was interested in gardening, and had watched his parents carry out these activities while he was growing up, he was not able to fully participate. He was interested in joining the Rabbittown Community Garden so that he could have

the opportunity to grow foods that he commonly cooks with. This also fulfilled a lifelong dream of tending a garden. Lee-Anne, who also gardened in a wheelchair at the Rabbittown Community Garden, recalled a time before her mobility was affected by cerebral palsy, when she was younger and able to garden with her mother.

Those persons who grew up in households with parents that gardened recalled stories that raise questions about a gendered division of labour within these activities. Some remembered gardening with their mothers, and continued to speak with them about planting and maintaining tasks. Others were inspired by fathers, uncles and grandparents, and had learned how to garden from them while they were growing up. Gardeners' narratives about their earliest memories of these activities indicate that many had lived outside of Newfoundland and Labrador at some point in their life. Continuing to garden may be seen as carrying out familial traditions that occurred in Newfoundland and Labrador, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island, Saskatchewan and other parts of Canada.

For those who did not have parents that gardened while they were growing up, the community garden provided them with an opportunity to learn these skills from other people who had developed them over their life course. One young woman, who is in her mid-twenties, looked back on her youth and wondered why her family did not garden. She described a childhood and adolescent residence on a road where neighbours gardened and kept chickens but said that her family had never attempted to grow their own food. For her, bringing her parents to the community garden when they

visited her in St. John's was a special occasion. She was excited to share details of their visit, and her mother's pride in her daughter's work at the garden with me:

They took pictures to show everyone. (Laughs) But, I brought home lettuce and spinach and made a salad for them from the garden. So it was really cute. We had it for supper.

Laura: And what was that like for you? Because they don't garden, so...

Yes, it was exciting! Because you know, I said, I picked this! You know? A couple hours ago. I helped to plant these seeds, and now you're eating it! And, you know, no fossil fuels burned and no pesticides used. And it was really good! And they were, you know, they were impressed that it was so fresh and it tasted so good. It was exciting!

Participating in community gardening allowed her to generate skills that she planned to apply in her own backyard when she and her partner acquired a house. Although her boyfriend did not garden with her in 2009, looking toward the future, she said:

He's very aware that if we were to purchase a house we would definitely need some space for a greenhouse, and some raised beds. He's very aware of that and he's also excited about it. And I think it would be great. A really great family experience and something you could do as a family and share with other people. You know? The harvest.

And also my sister, she just built a new house so she wants me to go there next summer to help her with the garden. And I feel like I can now. I feel like I can grow some food and share that with my nieces and nephews. So that's exciting!

This indicates the significance of the garden as a space where persons who did not have previous experiences gardening could go in order to learn these skills, as well as persons who had grown up gardening with families, who were attempting to carry on these activities as adults.

Two young women planted their first seeds at the community garden. One shared her excitement about this during a photo narrative elicitation interview. Claudia had followed the progress of a row of lima beans and a row of snow peas throughout the summer, taking pictures of their growth as the weeks passed.



When I asked her about why she decided to capture their progress, she told me:

Claudia: Well, I guess because I had personally planted the lima beans and some of the snow peas. And, you know, it was like the first thing I planted. And then, I remember...

Laura: You mean the first thing you ever learned to plant?

Claudia: Really, yep.

Laura: Awesome!

Claudia: And I can't remember if it was you or Veronica but it was one of you who said "Your lima beans are coming up! Come look!" (Laughs) And it was so exciting! And then, yeah! I just thought it would be cool to see them as they grew. And it was just exciting, because everyone was telling me, you know? That these would, that the snow peas would grow all the way up the fence, and eventually they would sprout white flowers, and, so you know it was like nothing and then they would be a foot tall, and then they would be up the fence. It was exciting! I have to say.

Laura: What was so exciting about it for you?

Claudia: Just seeing, you know, we had put the dirt down, and just. I was so surprised that it was so exciting, but just, you know, within a week or two. Like planting the seeds, you know. It was just a patch of dirt and then coming back the next week and seeing something come out of it? I don't know. I guess I didn't really expect them to grow so quickly. But it really is satisfying to grow your own food (Laughs)

She was also captivated by the amount of produce that could be grown within the garden beds, and selected an image of a garden bed that was planted with salad greens as a way to depict the growing capacity that existed within the space.



I guess in my courses I had learned about urban agriculture and intensive plot gardening and stuff like that, but I just figured it would be too hard? Like for the average person to do. And you would have to research all this stuff and you would never be able to do it, like in your backyard, without reading all these books. So to see that you could do it relatively easily? Was just really exciting!

Naming her photo "The Bounty", Claudia exclaimed:

It just produced so much food!...It was a real meeting place. Because, I mean, like the tomatoes hadn't ripened yet, so not a lot of people have spent time around there, and, you know, the other one is really almost done. So this one was really the main one. And it was so pretty when I came back after the weekend [I was away] (laughs) It grew so fast!

Claudia's emphasis on the garden's productive capacity, as well as its significance as a meeting space where individuals could grow their own food clarifies several aspects of community gardening. Participating in community gardening showed her how much

food can be grown in a small space. The garden bed that she photographed was also a social space, where people chatted while weeding and harvesting, and often gathered in order to check in on the growth that had occurred between gardening sessions.

For those whose parents did not garden when they were growing up, the Rabbittown Community Garden was a place where they could go in order to plant, maintain and generate an understanding of gardening from those who had some experience with these activities. Most persons who participated in community gardening had gardened before. While some saw the community garden as an opportunity to reacquaint themselves with skills that they had developed when they were young, others expressed their sense that the garden was a space where they could learn to practice skills that they had watched their parents carry out, but had not developed themselves. Mothers and fathers had taught them how to carry out these activities, or had performed them when they were young. Most persons who participated in community gardening did not have backyards in which they could plant their own gardens.

5.3 Gardening with Significant Others and Family Members

For those who were in relationships, sharing these activities with each other was an important part of community gardening. One person who participated in research as a creative contributor-informant captured this in a black and white image (he and one other creative contributor took photos using black and white film), which he took of one family that regularly participated in community gardening.



When I asked him to tell me about the photo, he said:

I loved this picture. Because, it was like. They always seemed to be working together, you know? And then they would kind of branch off every once in awhile, but they always did seem to have, I don't know. Like going to the garden wasn't their way to get away from each other or anything, it was such a part of their life.

Laura: What gave you that sense?

I don't know. There was no discussion about what they were doing it as just kind of automated? Like they would just get there and then they would be doing something and it would be an efficient production line of two people (laughs). There was a lot of back and forth, And [pseudonym] Sophia would just run around and find Ashley or something. Grab tomatoes and run into the woods.

Their togetherness in the garden gave this informant the sense that it was their garden, and that they were people that he could look to for advice and direction. When I interviewed Jane and Leo, who are depicted in the image, they also described the

importance of gardening to their relationship. This was an activity that they began to perform together soon after they began dating. They planted their first garden together while residing in Ontario, where they lived for a short period of time. Leo had grown up gardening with his grandfather in Wabush, Labrador, and Jane came from a farming family. Both of them had familiarity with gardening, and thoroughly enjoy the activity. They'd transformed the backyard of their residence, formerly covered in concrete, into a thriving garden bed where Leo tended vegetables that the family consumed throughout the summer and fall. Jane reflected:

When my husband and I ended up with our own spaces, we started growing our own vegetables...we just got it in our mind we were going to grow something, and just dug a hole, bought a pack of seed, and tossed it in. And then, you know, basically researched what we'd bought to grow, and just went from there. Trial and error more than anything.

The couple tended to downplay their roles as guides and leaders within the garden space; however, several interviewees said that they often looked to them for advice and support throughout the summer. Although they did not understand themselves as leaders, they did recall their gardening experiences while participating in these activities. Leo, for instance, often shared stories about gardening with his grandfather while he was growing up, and kept us updated on the outcome of their backyard garden. One young woman said that interacting with them helped her feel like attaining gardening skills was possible. Mistakes became learning opportunities, and a trial and error approach to gardening was cited as that which she would utilize in years to come. Her

conversations with Jane and Leo helped her to feel at ease with gardening, and she came to view it as an activity that she would become better at over the course of her life.

While many community gardeners recalled stories about gardening with their families while they were growing up, the garden was also a space where young families shared these activities with each other. Emphasizing the garden's popularity among families with young children, another gardener commented on the family friendly aspect of the community garden during a photo elicitation interview. Depicting a mother and daughter playing together at the garden, Ashley gushed:

I just like this one.

Umm (pause) Because (pause)

Well...

I just like that she brought her kids there.

And her sister.

Yeah. It was nice!

And I loved her baby! Just. She was so chubby! Like she was just so healthy!

And they would always talk about how they would only feed her regular food, like not jarred, you know, baby food, what not. Like this baby ate only curry! Stuff from the garden! She ate better than any of us! And she was just so chubby. So healthy looking. And I just. Yeah, I loved it.

I do not include the photo here because the mother and daughter moved away from St. John's before I could develop consent to include the image in my thesis. For those gardeners who were parents, bringing their children with them on Sunday afternoons was a way to teach them about where their food comes from, and to encourage them to

play outside. One woman with two sons referred to these interests when discussing why she began participating in community gardening.

I'm always looking for stuff to keep...to keep them busy or to, you know, get them interested in. Especially David is very busy. He's at a busy stage now, and I want to try to focus him on certain things. And letting them run around outside, basically, you know every day they need to get some exercise or they'll go stir crazy and drive me nuts. So it's important to, you know, for them to get out and exercise as well.

For her, the fence surrounding the garden was an important physical feature, which allowed her to bring her children there on Sunday afternoons:

As a mom with two kids, I sort of have to spot out the environment first to see if they're going to run into traffic or anything. So I was really happy to see that it was a nice fenced in area with lots of trees, and sort of trails for David to go and explore at the same time that I was planting. And both boys really enjoyed digging in the dirt, so that. That was really great, I was really happy with that. So they were in there and grabbing handfuls of dirt and, yeah. And they feel comfortable, they're social. We're all extroverts (Laughs) so I feel really comfortable going in there and getting dirty. Yeah.

Teaching her sons where their food comes from as an important aspect of this gardener's decision to participate in community gardening, along with providing them with a space to play outside, and meet new people. Sharing these activities with children was important to persons who gardened with young dependents. Women emphasized the ways in which this allowed them to provide their families with fresh produce, and mothers and fathers shared the sense that their children were gaining an important understanding about where their food comes from and how it is grown. For those who gardened with significant others but did not have children, community gardening was an

activity that they could pursue together, allowing them to provide themselves with fresh foods. Students, especially, emphasized the garden's status as a space that allowed them to secure fresh, local, organic produce which they had difficulty affording at area grocery stores and the Farmers' Market.

5.4 New Foods and Decision-Making at a Communal Garden

Although everyone who participated in community gardening expressed that they were interested in securing access to fresh, affordable, organic produce, or volunteering their time in order to increase accessibility to these foods for persons residing in St. John's, not everyone shared the same perspectives on the types of foods that should be grown at the garden that summer. In existing literature on community gardening in Canada, little is mentioned about the ways in which decisions about what is grown are made. Participant observation allowed me to develop an insight into these processes at Rabbittown, and interviewees discussed their perceptions of food during interviews that occurred at the end of the season. In this section, I will discuss these themes.

On the first day of the community gardening season, an aspect of the day's activities were devoted to brainstorming about what would be planted that year. Three persons who helped to organize the garden were in attendance that day, and led the discussion. A young woman who was working for the Community Garden Alliance at the time took notes on the foods that people wished to grow that summer. Foods that people were interested in growing included carrots, onions, beets, turnip, potatoes,

broccoli, peppers, catnip, lettuces, spinach, tomatoes, tea leaves, herbs, and zucchini. Discussion occurred with people seated together in a circle, and one of the garden organizers moderated. There was a desire to grow foods that community gardeners would be interested in, as well as those that would be of some benefit to persons residing in the neighbourhood. Due to his affiliation with the Rabbittown Community Centre, Michael was called upon to speak on behalf of the organization, and expressed his sense that carrots and salad greens could be utilized during meals that occurred at special events. No consensus was formed on the exact foods that would be grown; however, at the end of the meeting those with formal roles within the Community Garden Alliance mentioned that they would do their best to acquire seeds for the produce that was mentioned. Some items, such as potatoes, were decided against at the meeting, since they would take up too much space within the garden. There were also some concerns about whether some of the items could be planted in time, since it was already the beginning of June.

Before the garden was planted, it was weeded, soil within the beds was turned and sifted and fresh topsoil was added in order to provide more nutrients to the produce that was grown there in 2009. Seeds that had been donated the year before and those that had been donated by local organic farmers were utilized. Snow peas, dragon beans, carrots, icicle radishes, kale, swiss chard, mizuna, spicy and mild mix lettuce, tomatoes, celery, petunias, nasturtiums, spinach, beets, onions, chives, pumpkin, thai sai, parsley and marigolds were planted on three separate occasions

between mid-June and July. Gloria and Michael transported seeds, seedlings and supplies to the garden, and arranged for soil to be deposited at the garden. Michael had readied some of the seedlings – such as the tomatoes and lettuces – at a nearby organic farm. In July, after two new raised bed gardens had been constructed, a small group of women who regularly participated in community gardening also brought seeds with them in order to fill the remaining beds. At the beginning of July, gardeners got together once more and discussed what would be planted. Beans, spinach, carrots and beets were selected since they were thought to be quick growing vegetables. Parsley, mint and rosemary were also planted. Although people discussed what would be planted on two occasions, final decisions were based on the timing of planting activities, and the availability of seeds within gardeners' seed stashes, and that which belonged to the Community Garden Alliance. Gloria and Kyle took on much of the responsibility for supplying the resources that were necessary for planting the garden, with contributions from other farmers, and gardeners who had access to seed. Everyone in attendance on planting days, however, helped with these activities.

Rather than growing only that which gardeners were familiar with, the garden introduced several people to new varieties of greens, and new types of vegetables that they had not eaten before. These were planted because they are well-suited to a Newfoundland climate, and due to the availability of seeds. For Ashley, leeks and kale were new foods that she had not eaten before participating in community gardening at Rabbittown.



She photographed freshly harvested leeks and referred to them in her photo elicitation interview at the end of the season, explaining:

That was a staple food, the leeks. We could get those every week. And that was, we didn't have those at the other garden, so that was the first time I really, like. Unless a recipe called for it, I guess. But I don't think I ever bought them, so. And I still haven't. Even though I don't particularly like the picture. It's. It makes me think about Rabbittown.

Ashley also selected an image of kale, and referred to it during the interview.



Ashley: And kale. It was sort of the same thing. First time I ever really tried it. And I didn't know how to pick it until I came here.

Laura: It's a beautiful picture

Ashley: Yeah, I like this picture too.

Laura: What do you like about it?

Ashley: Umm, I guess it's just the same kind of thing as the celery. Like. At first glance it might not be all that pretty. But. You know, when you take the time and think of it as something that is worth being photographed, or maybe even something worth being called art it just...

(Pause)

Laura: Yeah...

(Pause)

Laura: Do you think you'll grow kale in your own garden?

Ashley: I think so, yeah.

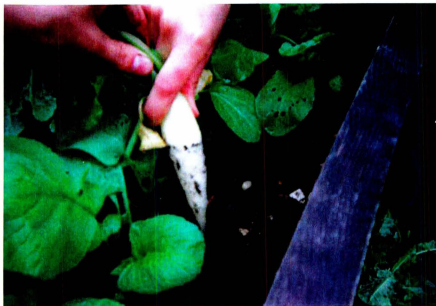
Her focus on food attests to the importance of this aspect of the community garden, as well as her own interests in learning how to grow produce that she could consume with her boyfriend that summer, and grow in years to come. Although there were some food items that were new to her, she shared the sense that she would most likely continue to grow these items when she gardened again.

Claudia also photographed greens, emphasizing their aesthetic quality. However, unlike Ashley, she was taken by the spinach that grew throughout the season.



...It was so pretty and symmetrical, which I didn't expect from the spinach. And also because I ate so much spinach! And, I'm a vegetarian and I eat healthy, but. And I bought a lot of it at the Farmers' Market, but. I have eaten more vegetables this summer than I have ever eaten. Which, you know, it made a difference in my health. So I just thought that was cool.

My research did not endeavour to measure the personal health effects of community gardening, however; Claudia's photonarrative also reports that there was a positive correlation between her participation, and her consumption of fresh vegetables and greens. She also told me about the importance of the garden as a space where she could access healthier foods for free, which was significant to her since she was a student at the time. Not only did she plant her first seeds at the Rabbittown Community Garden, Claudia also harvested food that she had helped to grow for the first time.



She had some difficulty recalling its name, but was excited about trying a new vegetable:

Claudia: This was the first thing I picked! Iceberg...ice...iceberg turnip? Right? Radish?

Laura: (Whispers) Yaaa, sssomething like that...

Claudia: Iceberg radish. Yes.

Laura: (Whispers) Icicle.

Claudia: Yes! Icicle! Icicle radish.

So, Veronica and I harvested this. My first plant grown!

This activity was an exciting one for her and another young woman who also frequently participated in community gardening at the beginning of the season. Veronica, whom Claudia mentioned in the interview, was also gardening for the first time, and the two frequently shared their excitement about planting, weeding and harvesting with one another.

Younger gardeners who did not have children to feed were more inclined to remain open to new foods than those who were gardening in order to feed their families. Two couples expressed some frustration with the foods that were grown at the garden, explaining that they did not eat items like kale, mizuna and some of the spicy greens and would have rather grown “regular foods” like broccoli, iceberg lettuce, cabbage and potatoes. One woman told me:

Kale. I don't even know how to cook it...If they're going to plant these things, they should have a little course there. How do we cook it? Because I don't know how to cook it. Someone said “You do a stirfry” I said “OK, what's a stirfry?” You know? Some people don't even know what a stirfry is. What they should do. Like, we got the Centre there, we got a stove there. We should, OK, now we'll stay and show you how to cook stuff. Because really, I don't...I'd never seen kale before. That's the first time I even heard of kale!

Another participant expressed her disappointment with the foods that were grown:

“Other than two food crops there is nothing up there I would eat. So. I think we brought home maybe two bunches of lettuce at the beginning of the season, and that’s it.”

When I asked her what she would have wanted to grow, she said:

Well, like, normal stuff!

(Laughs)

You know, carrots, potato, cucumber. You know? Some proper lettuce.

Laura: What’s that for you?

Well, you know, like all that. You know mizuna and wonky mixtures, and all that sorta stuff? The only one of that whole thing that came out even [a little] bit nice was the green leaf lettuce. Even the red leaf lettuce was crappy. Like all that stuff was just crappy. Unless you’re going to take it and put it in your bowl right then, you can’t take it home and put it in your fridge.

When I asked her why she was not able to influence what was grown at the garden, she said that she felt this was because there was no formal plan made for the garden that year.

Laura: So you wouldn’t eat the kale or the spinach?

Um. No. Because it’s not something I can introduce. Like perhaps [my husband] and ourselves could, for lack of a better term, get used to this better food and learn how to cook it and those sort of things, and choke it down, right? (Laughs) But there’s no way I could integrate it into my family, and get my son to sit down and eat cooked spinach. He is not going to do it. But he might sit down and eat some carrots. Or, you know, some fresh veggies with salad dip or something. You know? Those, like I said, those types of foods I just, we wouldn’t eat.

Some of her frustration also regarded her sense that she had made her desires clear to Gloria and Kyle, but planting had not occurred in response to gardeners’ interests. “We

did the surveys, we did the questionnaires. What do you want to plant? That stuff wasn't planted. So. You know what I mean? To me it was sort of inferred. You didn't plant what I wanted to eat, so what makes you think I'm going to eat what you planted, that I didn't want to eat?" Although she often harvested greens, she did so on behalf of a community gardener who had health concerns and was not able to attend every Sunday afternoon. Following Sunday gardening activities, she would take greens to him at his apartment, wash, chop and freeze them (if need be) so that he would have fresh foods to eat throughout the week. This caused some confusion during our interview, as I had to clarify about seeing her harvest, but saying that she did not take foods that were grown at the garden home with her. It became clear that, although she was harvesting, she was not consuming what was picked. Her narrative further articulates her concern about what is grown on behalf of her family, specifically her children. Although she offers the sense that she and her husband would be inclined to trying new foods, she counters this by explaining that she must consider what her children will and will not eat when offering suggestions about what is grown at the garden.

Differing perspectives on the food that was grown in the garden refer to people's eating preferences, and those of their children. While some were interested in trying new foods, others were concerned about a perceived lack of food choice. Those who participated in community gardening as a way to access fresh produce that they could feed their young children made it clear that other types of food would have been better to bring home. Those who made final decisions about what was planted did not have

children. In the previous chapter, I explored the differences between foods that were consumed at neighbourhood events, and those that were grown at the garden.

Interviews with community gardeners also revealed that there were some contentions amongst those who participated in these activities with regard to the types of food that should be planted, and would be consumed. While some expressed a lack of interest in the foods that were grown, others looked forward to trying new foods. One man said that he enjoyed some of the varieties of greens. He wished to plant some items that had been grown the year before, but articulated some of the constraints of communal style gardening by emphasizing that although he wished to grow them, others had not taken an interest in doing so. Like Ashley, Trevor enjoyed the leeks, but:

There were a few things I wanted to grow this year that they didn't plant. So I'll just push for that next year.

Laura: So what did you want to grow?

Ah, arugula. And basil. And I had some cherry tree seeds that I wanted to plant.

Laura: Can you say anything about? Like, I know those things weren't planted. But, can you say anything about. Like were there particular things that stopped that from happening? Why was it that those things weren't planted?

Well, the basil was. The seeds didn't show up until late in the season and it was too late to grow them. The arugula. I think last year nobody really knew what to do with the arugula. And they let it grow too long. And it got too bitter and nobody liked it. Arugula is one of those plants like dandelion. You have to harvest it when the leaves are smaller. And they're not as bitter. And I guess nobody knew that, and they waited too long, and nobody liked it so they didn't really want to plant it again this year.

Laura: And you said you use that for pesto, right?

I mix it with basil. Two parts basil, one part arugula. With about five or six other things added to it, but I needed the basil and arugula.

This narrative indicates that it was not only previous gardening experiences that contributed to people's participation in community gardening, and interests in the food that was grown there. For those who enjoy cooking, the garden was also a space where they could grow particular herbs and varieties of produce that are not easily found at area grocery stores. Trevor's narrative also indicated that he was living on a low, fixed income, and looked forward to the gardening season because it meant that he would have better access to fresh produce, which he could not always afford to purchase. For one gardener in particular, a love of cooking and an interest in gardening led to his participation in community gardening. During our interview, he shared his cooking techniques with me:

Pesto is something that you need a very small amount of. Like if I am making a soup, the amount that you would have, say, in an ice cube would be enough for one pot of soup. So, it's something you can make a fair bit of and keep for a long time. And you only use a small bit at a time. You can mix that same amount in a little bit of oil, and just mix it with some pasta and that's enough for three or four people.

Laura: And you keep it in ice cubes then?

I do it up in ice cube trays and freeze it. And so I take it a cube at a time when I need it.

Laura: Do you have to add any water to it, or do you just leave it?

I usually add oil to it. The recipe is arugula, basil, olive oil, two parts canola, one part olive oil and walnuts with a bit of parmesan cheese.

Laura: No garlic in it?

Well, I usually put garlic in the meal when I'm cooking

Laura: Okay.

I like my garlic as fresh as possible...And I'm picky with my garlic too. It has to be, in the meal, when I'm cooking it. Cooking time no more than three minutes. Any more than that and it gets bitter. So the last three minutes of my meal I put in my garlic. I learned the hard way.

This gardener's cooking expertise was called upon by other persons who participated in community gardening. For instance, one gardener recalled asking him for cooking advice on several occasions, especially for food items that she was unfamiliar with, like thai sai (an Asian green). Although some expressed an interest in seeing cooking workshops organized, so that they would know how to prepare the foods that were grown, others set out to learn how to prepare what was grown through informal means, such as conversations that occurred while weeding and harvesting.

Gardeners' narratives about the ways in which the garden was planted indicate that they were displaced from the processes of seed selection and planting to some extent. Even though everyone helped to carry out planting tasks, it was common to hear gardeners assign responsibility for the garden's planting to Gloria and Kyle, who were serving on the board of the Community Garden Alliance at the time. Gloria expressed sensitivity with regard to the ways in which people discussed the garden, and felt that

she had been blamed for the way the garden turned out, sometimes to an unfair extent. Although they were leading the larger organization that the garden was associated with, neither she nor Kyle understood themselves to be in charge of the garden. Furthermore, both of them maintained busy schedules and were doing the best they could in order to assist with its ongoing development. In an interview about the garden, Gloria explained:

To be honest, when I go there, I actually don't feel like I'm top dog. Like, I actually feel like it's more of an "in-age" kind of hierarchy. And try to make sure that it's. Like whatever hierarchy they have, and we kind of work it. Like people might look at me like I know something about how to grow vegetables, but other than that, they're experts, not me.

She wished that she had received more support from those who participated in community gardening, and shared her hopes of attaining more volunteers in order to assist with planning and maintaining the garden.

Laura: What sort of things would they volunteer for?

Oh, like even. Sending out emails, recruiting, going to cool workshops and reporting back to us about all the stuff and networking, doing presentations, helping to grow vegetables, like plants, fundraising. The children's programming stuff, in the workshops at Rabbittown or elsewhere, helping us set up schools, helping the Alliance part, like helping get other people aware of gardens or facilitating it. Developing a, like a whole, how to develop a community garden workbook. Grant-writing. I mean the list goes on...

Throughout the season, Gloria and I remained in close contact with one another, and I was also privy to the effect that some events in her personal life were making on her involvement with the Community Garden in 2009. Due to a health concern, she was unable to participate in community gardening on many occasions, and needed to take

time in order to rest. As I discussed in the previous chapter, neither Gloria or Kyle intended to push foods onto those involved with the community garden, but rather, were utilizing seeds that they had on hand, plants that had been started at a greenhouse that Kyle had access through his organic farming activities, and those that had been donated by other persons who were farming and gardening in the region. Items such as celery, pumpkins and parsley had all been dropped off to the garden by persons wishing to support its development. The remainder of what was planted came from seeds that were leftover from the year before, most of which had also been donated by area farmers and gardeners. Although there were two occasions on which people discussed what they wished to grow, there were no formal mechanisms that secured these choices, and no one in particular who was responsible, and as such, accountable to seeing that the foods that people wished to grow were planted.

5.5 Gendered Division of Labour

Gloria's description of potential volunteer activities with the Community Garden Alliance provide an insight into the variety of tasks that are associated with organizing and maintaining a garden space. Before the season could begin, more soil and seeds were needed, press releases about the garden's openness to all those who wished to participate also had to be written and sent out to local media outlets, and those who had participated the year before were contacted in order to let them know that these activities would be resuming. Throughout the summer a wide range of activities contributing to the garden's ongoing development were also carried out, alongside

those that helped to maintain the garden. In this section, I will explore gardeners' narratives about the types of activities that they performed during the 2009 season in order to provide an understanding of community gardening as it occurred at Rabbittown.

Out of an interest in increasing growing capacity within the space, those who had been involved with the garden the year before also made an agreement that more garden beds would be added to the space in 2009. This involved collecting rocks for their construction, and near the end of the season, materials were also acquired in order to construct wooden raised bed gardens. Expanding the garden as a physical and social space was important to some gardeners, especially for those who were involved with its establishment. With regard to its location in Rabbittown, one man said: "For me, I see that there's a very strong prospect of expanding it. I see it as going to increase more participation over time. The longer it's there the more established it becomes. I think the more people hear about it the more it becomes a picture in the community as part of their overall upkeep." Expansion was discussed on several occasions at the garden, and took on social and physical connotations. Interests in planting foods that would be of some benefit to persons residing in the neighbourhood, the organization of social events and children's activities corresponded with some gardeners' wishes to generate more participation in community gardening.

At the beginning of the season, Kyle mentioned his interest in building more raised garden beds, and set out to do so by the summer's end. In June, two groups of

youth who were taking part in a Katimavik program in St. John's assisted with collecting rocks for the construction of two new rock-framed garden beds. With direction from Steve, who had helped to start the garden, they assembled rough outlines of the frames which Kyle later re-constructed in order to be certain that they would withstand the pressures of soil and gardening activities. In October, three more wooden-framed raised garden beds were constructed. Kyle made the arrangements for materials to be delivered to the space, and was assisted by a group of volunteers from Memorial University over the course of two weekdays. These beds were planted in 2010. As part of her internship with the Community Garden Alliance, Claudia also arranged for flagstone to be donated to the garden, and in July construction activities began in order to create a brick path around one garden bed. Those who had worked with the CGA in some capacity – as a summer student or an intern, for instance – had some familiarity with the amount of work that was involved, and often performed by Gloria and Kyle in order to make preparations for community gardening activities to occur at Rabbittown.

One interviewee told me:

When they were building the brick path, Tony and Kyle brought clay for the garden. And, you know, I just assumed they had thrown some clay from a pile into some buckets and brought it. But Tony mentioned that the previous day they had sifted it all. So I was just, like I never would have known that any work, or any extensive work went into this. But they had sifted it. You know, to get the weeds and seeds out of it so that it wouldn't grow through the path. And, you know. It was just surprising that they had spent all this time the night before, and you never would have known.

And definitely, Gloria puts a lot more into it than people realize. Like, she. She has a lot of stuff at her office and a lot of things committed to it. Like I know she said

once that she had spent an entire day organizing her CGA stuff. So I think she puts way more into it than you would really see.

According to many of those who were involved with community gardening in 2009, Gloria and Kyle were the main persons responsible for its establishment and maintenance. They were looked to for plans, guidance and support. This status was challenging for Gloria and Kyle at times, since they were balancing their gardening activities with work, family life and other pursuits. Perceptions of their leadership caused them stress at times, and, even though most gardeners had the sense that the couple was 'in charge', some admitted that they were not sure who to look to for guidance and leadership. This offers an insight into some of the social and organizational dynamics within a communal garden space, where attempts were being made in order to ensure that everyone felt welcome to participate and contribute to the garden's ongoing development. Thus, not only was gender a significant factor in the distribution of gardening labour, previous experiences gardening, and involvement with the garden's organization also contributed to conceptions of who was in charge of, and responsible for the garden.

Throughout the early stages of the gardening season, men and women shared similar tasks and activities. For instance, men and women gathered large rocks that were utilized for two new garden beds, and deposited them within the space. Men and women helped to sift the soil, and transported it from a large pile that was placed at the garden's entryway into the garden beds. Men and women also helped with planting, and

continued to weed and harvest together throughout the season. For the most part, I would hesitate to describe a gendered division of labour within this setting. However, when the path began to be constructed at the end of the season, men and women began to perform separate work activities, and their narratives about the path's construction also indicate that they had different sentiments about the types of work that they wished to perform at the garden.

One gardener captured the work arrangement that occurred near the end of the season.



He selected the image because:

It gives a good impression of the garden. Like there's the raised bed, and there's the plastic bin, and there's the rock garden, and you can see the compost and obviously they're taking out the compost. And just. I like the way it looks. Just visually. Your eye is drawn in and you see them. And there is motion there and the

girls in front are framing it. The guys are taking out the trash and the girls are preparing the food.

The image was taken while weeding and harvesting together one Sunday afternoon in August. Shortly afterward, Gloria looked up from her work and motioned toward the group of men that were assembled around the brick path. Standing beside another female gardener and me, she sighed “I’m noticing a gendered division of labour here!” Due to my status as a Women’s Studies student, I wondered for a moment if she was pointing this out because I was standing with her, and due to her familiarity with my research questions. However, interviews with other gardeners indicated that this was something that was apparent to many of those who were involved with the community garden at the time the path was constructed.

5.6 Increasing Physical Accessibility and Social Inclusion at the Garden

While the new raised beds were meant to increase growing capacity within the space, a brick path was constructed in order to make the garden more accessible for persons in wheelchairs. Although Claudia mentioned that she tended to participate in community gardening without him, her boyfriend, who is from Conception Bay South, assisted with financing and constructing a brick path in order to make the garden more accessible to persons in wheelchairs. Claudia initiated the path’s construction, and the couple worked together in order to gather necessary resources for this activity, by contacting family and friends who were connected to a local concrete company. The

provision of flagstone that was utilized in order to build the path occurred as a result of the couple's efforts.

One woman shared her reflections on what it is like to participate in community gardening in a wheelchair:

It was great, because where I had a disability, it was challenging for me. Like, how am I going to plant seeds? How am I going to get into the garden? Because there's no way of getting into the garden, you have to lift me to get in there. And the grass was all bumpy and all that. It was just. All these questions kept coming to a head? But now, they're starting to come around and make it accessible for people in wheelchairs. So. But I have a lot of challenges. I still have a lot of challenges until they get that straightened up. Because I can't wheel myself in. Because the grass is so lumpy, it's just hard to get across there and you're afraid you might fall over or something like that. But once they get that stuff done it should be fine. I'll be able to do everything.

Due to the physical features of the space, which include its slight elevation from an adjacent parking lot, and the rough terrain within the space, persons who participated utilizing wheelchairs often required some assistance with entering and moving about the space. Along with a path, a ramp was also discussed as a potential construction project, since it would allow persons in wheelchairs to enter the space more easily. It typically took one to two people to lift a wheelchair into the space, and this presented some uncomfortable challenges for Lee-Anne and Trevor, who both expressed some anxiety about whether their chair would tip in the process. On several occasions, Jane would bring Trevor to the garden by herself. "I've got you. Trust me." She would tell him as she tilted his chair back and rolled it up and over the curb stone that stands at the garden's entryway.

Claudia, who arranged for materials to be donated to the garden, did not participate in the construction of the path, since she had to return to Toronto in order to complete her studies. However, her discussion draws out the processes by which it was constructed, and also indicates her role as an organizer at the garden. Without her work, it would not have been developed that year. According to Claudia:

I wasn't even particularly interested in accessibility issues beforehand, but then I guess just seeing that, you know, I think it's such a productive place, and it would be difficult for anyone to access it without help. And, you know, sometimes I see Lee-Anne there, and, you know, she has to wait for Michael [her husband]. And. You know? It just seemed, ah, that there might be some people who couldn't use it because of that. So I don't know. And yeah, it bothered me. So I thought that would be a good project to take on. So that is pretty cool.

One community gardener focused on the construction of the brick path during his photo elicitation interview. For him, this aspect of community gardening symbolized his struggle to fully participate in the garden's development. Since Kyle and Tony took the lead on its construction, it was difficult for him to know how or if he could help. Work was completed on the path over the course of a month, and constructing the garden path remained a one to three person job, depending on whether Kyle, Tony and Claudia's boyfriend, Tim, arrived to the garden on the same day. Other persons who participated in community gardening spent their time weeding and harvesting the garden beds that had produced large quantities of greens and veggies. A small group of men (and sometimes women) stood close to the path as it was constructed, watching the work progress, offering to help retrieve soil and chatting with each other. For the

most part, women focused on tending to the garden beds, and men who were not directly involved with laying bricks helped to rake the ground, gather gravel and deposit rocks at the back of the garden. After weeding and harvesting activities were completed, community gardeners stood around the path and watched its progression. When I interviewed him about his experiences at the community garden, one interviewee discussed the construction of the brick path, noting that it seemed to him to be a one or two man job, but offered up an image of me helping to lay a row of bricks as part of his photo narrative on community gardening. We spoke about this at length, and I shared my own sense of what was occurring in the image with him. After he showed me the photo, I was forced to recall my own sense of alienation from the construction activities, and desire to learn how to lay bricks and build the path. After watching people stand around its perimeter, witnessing its construction but not participating in it themselves, I decided to ask if I could contribute one Sunday afternoon, and approached Kyle about teaching me how to lay the path. Once I asked him, he was keen to teach me. It was my hope that, after seeing my participation in this activity, other gardeners who wished to do so might also ask if they could lend a hand. After beginning to lay the row, Kyle's wife Gloria also asked if she could try it out. The two of us spent approximately half an hour leveling gravel and applying bricks. Other gardeners continued to watch its development, but did not ask if they could help. I felt somewhat uncomfortable interjecting in this way, but was curious about how I would be received and whether others would follow suit or not.



The brick path had already begun to be constructed by the time Eric and his girlfriend began participating in community gardening. He recalled its construction with a sense of uncertainty, remembering his desire to help, but his inability to find a way to contribute:

I kind of always felt like I was...I was just trying to come in and ask if I could help with a task that someone else seemed like they already came into? Like with the brick laying, obviously that was such a one man job. And it's like, I'm sure that help was appreciated, but it still seemed like you were kind of intruding on their moment, or their thing?

...It was kind of being done in a way that was like "Don't worry about it. I'll get this so you guys can go about your way and do what you want to do?"

There was always. That path was always there. I don't know. You didn't kinda wanna. I don't know. It was really hard to explain, but that brick path was a really prevalent aspect of it...Nothing else seemed so dedicated. Obviously, like in a good way. But it was always. It was pretty much just Kyle, right? And that other guy.

Eric's inability to recall the other man's name shows how relationships were only beginning to form at the community garden that year. His sense of wishing to participate in the construction of the path was shared by another man who often participated in community gardening. During a conversation that we shared at his home on afternoon, he expressed his disappointment that the activity had not been shared by more people who were involved with the community garden. This exemplifies the significance of gender, and masculine identity, to people's participation in this aspect of community gardening. Men, more so than women, articulated their desire to assist with this activity. For instance, Michael shared his frustration with me regarding his inability to find a way to communicate his desire to help construct the path, and his sense that he could have been a knowledgeable member of the construction effort, having worked as a brick layer in the past. In this way, his previous experiences as a manual labourer made him well-suited to the task, but he was not able to contribute because he felt as though it would entail stepping on the toes of those men who had already begun the construction effort. The processes of constructing the path were not discussed amongst community gardeners, and Kyle took on responsibility for this initiative, and ensured that it was completed before summer's end. The path was completed over a period of four weeks. He did so by asking for assistance from a man that he worked with on an organic farming cooperative.

One woman also referred to the construction of the brick path during our interview:

There was kind of a feeling of being removed from the process. But it didn't tarnish my experience there or anything at all. And, if I wanted to do it, I should have just done it. But it was, I guess, basically one of those situations where if someone was like "Hey! Lay one and be a part of it!" I would have been like "Yeah! Great!" but otherwise I didn't really put myself out there to do it?

For her, other types of community gardening activities were more enjoyable. Rather than seeking out a role in the process of constructing the brick path, she focused her attention on other activities, such as playing with children who came to the garden, or weeding and harvesting. In his photo narrative, Eric captured her gardening activities, which included playing with children.



Since participating in community gardening, Ashley has gone on to become a teacher, and she was interested in developing garden spaces at schools in order to encourage children to learn about where their food comes from. Referring to this as part of her gardening work, and attesting to the role that women played with regard to caring for children within the space, Ashley recalled playing with one of the children who regularly participated in community gardening the day after a tomato fight had occurred at the garden:

Well, I guess specifically, playing with Sophia. Even though every time we leave the garden I am always just like exhausted. (Laughs) I'm thinking of especially the time we picked up tomatoes. For um. That was like an hour I would say. We crawled around like dogs fetching tomatoes. And a couple times when she would start sniffing again I would be like no, I don't want to sniff out tomatoes anymore Sophia! (Laughs) But like. Um. I'm used to being around kids all the time. And she is the only kid that I know in St. John's. And I guess I don't even think about it until I'm going to the garden. And then I'd be like "Oh god, I get to play around and whatnot and hang around and have fun with a kid and whatnot. Be goofy!" But like. She is the only kid I know here. And I guess that's nice.

Another young woman who participated in community gardening also expressed her sense that playing with children who arrived there was part of her weekly activities. She described offering lettuce and greens to some of the boys who often played in the space, and teaching them how to harvest food for themselves. On several occasions, both women could be found playing hide and seek or games of tag with Sophia, depending on what she wished to do. Although Eric took notice of Ashley's activities with Sophia, he did not describe playing with children as part of his own gardening work. He did, however, help carry out children's craft activities at a Harvest Party that

occurred at the end of the season. These activities were important to social inclusion efforts that sought to connect the garden with the neighbourhood. By playing with children who reside in the neighbourhood, gardeners hoped that children might go home and tell their parents about their experiences, and encourage them to come with them on Sunday afternoons.

A discrete gendered division of labour did not occur with regard to social inclusion activities. One young man also regularly interacted with young children who came to the garden. It was common to see women and men paying attention to children who arrived there, and taking time out of their weeding and harvesting work in order to teach them about bugs, or produce, or to play. One woman came to the garden with two young sons, and also reflected on the extent to which taking care of them occupied her while she was at the garden on Sunday afternoons. Although she would have liked to participate more fully, by doing more planting, weeding and harvesting, she found that much of her time was spent making sure the boys didn't dig up any produce that they weren't supposed to; and that they remained within the space.

When Ashley discussed the type of work that she performed at the community garden, she referred to her sense that there was a gendered division of labour within the space, but that she participated in its formation:

There definitely was, sometimes, divisions of girls and boys or men and women. And what they, what we, like the tasks that they participated in. And probably the tasks that I like are.
Like, what, I don't know.

I don't even know! Because gardening. For the most part. In my. Like growing up it was always my mom that did it, not my dad. My mom did it all. There was no "Oh, Don, you want to come out and pull up the big clumps that I can't get?" or whatever. Like she did it all. And sometimes I know that I am just lazy. I know that [my boyfriend] will do those things. And I will be like (speaks in a softer voice) "Do you want to do them?" But I'm really just being lazy. But. Like sometimes I would see that at the garden, but usually I was participating in it. Like doing the stuff that was less, like about manual labour. Like when they were swinging that thing to get the grass up and what not? I was like "I really don't want to do that. I so would rather just pick through the spinach and find the good leaves." Kind of thing? So that day, that was when there was the most division I guess. When the men were working on that and the girls were over, the women were over in the beds harvesting what was ready and what not? But. At the same time, what I like about the garden is I only do what I want to do. So.

Ashley's narrative is of interest to me because it exemplifies her awareness of gendered activities within the garden space and others that she had tended before. It also characterizes her sense that she participated in a gendered division of labour, sometimes willingly. Although she says she would have participated in constructing the brick path had she been asked to do so, she was also happy to remain aloof from its construction, choosing to harvest and weed instead. The inclusion of children in community gardening activities meant that some work conducted within the space included teaching them about gardening, taking care of and playing with them. In order to generate an interest in community gardening within the neighbourhood, a children's program was set up with the neighbourhood community centre. During two summer camp days, organized by persons involved with the community garden, children from the neighbourhood decorated and planted fish boxes that had been filled with soil in order to become small garden beds. One gardener photographed these fish boxes, and

offered her sense that teaching children about gardening from a young age might affect their interest in consuming fresh produce, and encourage them to garden throughout their life course.



Although the brick path made some headway toward the goal of creating an accessible garden space, these activities were also meant to increase accessibility to the garden among persons residing in the neighbourhood. By organizing events and workshops, persons involved with the community garden, including some residents and supporters who were working at the Rabbittown Community Centre, hoped that neighbourhood residents would feel more comfortable entering the space that was only recently transformed. So too did they hope that children would become interested in these activities, and look forward to tending the garden on Sunday afternoons, perhaps with

their parents in tow. One young man and two young women (myself included) organized these summer camp days, and a larger group (one young man and five women) organized the garden-themed After School Programming that occurred at the Centre that year. Socializing also accompanied weeding, planting and harvesting activities, and although this may not be considered gardening 'work', it contributed to the ongoing development of the space as a social entity.

Most persons who participated in community gardening and this research, offered their sense that these activities were relaxing and leisurely. Along with the garden's potential to increase access to fresh produce, this was seen as a reason to attempt to encourage other people to becoming involved. Gardeners looked forward to gardening on Sunday afternoons. One gardener named Michael told me:

It's all about, really, it comes down, for me, in the end, it's just an act of love to do. To plant a vegetable that's going to feed somebody else. And it's an act of love and you give of yourself and you don't expect anything in return. It's a selfless thing to do...Knowing that I'm a part of building a social network. You know, I'm a portion of the puzzle. I'm a portion of that group that makes it all happen...Just by being present. Sometimes, you know, I may not do a lot of work. Physically. Sometimes at the garden. But my presence is benefitting someone. So I mean, it's either pleasing somebody to have me there, or it's, you know, just an extra set of hands when needed. It's all good.

Although my interests were in exploring the multiplicity of perspectives about the garden space, I found that community gardeners often downplayed their differences, and mentioned these as a positive aspect of the community garden. In her article "Coalitions as a Model for Intersectionality: From Practice to Theory", Elizabeth Cole

(2009) acknowledges that defining common interests, rather than shared identities, creates opportunities for broader social networks to be formed. "In practice, organizations that attempt to form productive and successful coalitions across constituencies that differ in power face formidable obstacles: obviously the first is to transcend perceptions of difference to make a common cause" (2008:447). While this clarifies the possibilities that exist in places like the Rabbittown Community Garden, where people with a range of social and economic participate in collective activities, Cole goes on to emphasize that this style of coalition forming is not without its challenges: "...Differences of power within coalitions may threaten the formation of working alliances" (2008:447). This was notable at Rabbittown. For instance, one young woman mentioned that she would most likely never have met those she gardened with were it not for their mutual interests in these activities. Due to her status as a student, she described a social life that included persons of the same age, who were also studying. She enjoyed gardening with those who were older than her, as well as families with young children, because it mimicked the social and familial networks that she has at home. Another person who resides in Rabbittown also mentioned his appreciation for the social dynamic at the community garden, while acknowledging his awareness of differences amongst persons who regularly participated in community gardening. His narrative provides an insight into some of the experiences that he had within the group, and well his own perceptions (as a person who identified as living on a low income,

without much formal education) about other gardeners (notably, those who were deemed 'academics'). At the start of the season, he had a hopeful outlook:

It's actually kind of cool, because you know, we have probably middle class, academic. You have grassroots groups, just a pretty well-rounded mixture of people. Right? Activists. And. You know, the ordinary community member who just wanted to enjoy the space and be a part of something. You know? And doesn't want to be overly recognized or anything like that. It's just. It's all about sort of just being...being there, I guess. Right? Being a part of something.

I mean, I hope that's not oversimplifying it or making it smaller than what it is. But it's. It's. It's a big thing! You know? It's huge!

When you've got that sort of mixture of people that can stand each other. That are building like a... you know. There's always been that sort of "Well, they're academics, and we're poor people." But that attitude is not present. There's no such thing as "Oh we're poor, and you're academics" Or. You know? It's like "We're all the same." There is no thought, of negative thought like that. It's like "We're doing something." You know? We're not as poor as we think we are.

Later on in the season, his perspective changed to some extent, as he often articulated his struggle to fully participate, to be heard and to feel like he was a part of something.

Although he maintained his sense that the social dynamic was crucial to the garden's success, he wished to utilize his skills more than he had done in the past.

One gardener also communicated his interests in seeing the garden to become more accessible:

I think the only challenge has been, you know, trying to get my, you know, seeing my wife benefit greatly from it. It's just. Her getting in that garden, and getting her out of that garden. Feeling at ease. You know? Like I can walk across that grass, but I gotta wheel her, right? And she can't really wheel herself in that grass. That extra bit of freedom would be so much more accomplished. That's why we need to

get that dealt with. Make it fully accessible to everyone. And I think you'd see more people come out.

Increasing accessibility to the garden, especially for persons in wheelchairs, remained an ongoing pursuit in 2009. Although gardener narratives reveal a number of different interests in the space, and a variety of skill levels, a common concern for persons who wished to participate in community gardening while utilizing wheelchairs came forth in gardener narratives. A gendered division of labour did occur at times, gardeners remained comfortable with this, and did not set out to change it in any way. Rather, it was hoped that all those who arrived to the garden would find an activity to perform that they were interested in and enjoyed. An informal distribution of labour, whereby gardeners chose their own tasks, was to facilitate their enjoyment of the space.

5.7 Workshops

Besides these construction activities, workshops were also organized in order to share knowledge of edible wild foods and gardening skills. One's ability to lead a workshop corresponded with their previous experiences gardening and harvesting wild foods, more so than gender. Gloria led one workshop on complementary planting, and another woman led one on medicinal uses for yarrow, which grows within the garden space. One gardener described the way this latter workshop unfolded:

She was kind of nervous about doing it? Like we were all standing around and she was like "OK, so I thought I would maybe do a workshop?" and then it turned out to be really cool, and we went home and we made some of the yarrow tea ourselves. But I think the workshops are great...Just intimate groups of people sharing ideas? And really really useful knowledge? That otherwise if you just kinda

came across you might be like “Oh that’s neat” but then someone’s showing you, and having their interest in it? Like seeing that. Being like OK maybe this is not only interesting, but important.

Laura: So what was she showing you? What was the workshop on?

It was basically native plants to Newfoundland. Like native wild plants that are native weeds, or basically uncultivated weeds. And what to do. So this was a tea that you would make and then you would sweat out toxins. It was like an immune booster kind of thing. There was also a face cream you could make. Or you could make oil out of it...And I remember telling a couple people about it days after.

Workshops were informally organized throughout the summer. This photo narrative indicates that women and men shared gardening knowledge within the space.

Information and skills were also shared informally around the garden beds, with more experienced gardeners offering tips and suggestions on proper harvesting techniques, pest identification, and proper maintenance activities. Rather than a gendered division of labour forming in this regard, persons who had more gardening experience than others were looked to for advice.

5.8 Conclusion

In the previous chapter, I explored the ways in which food has been utilized to express and maintain identities, and build community. I showed how a taste for fresh, organic food led people to participate in community gardening, and complicated notions of food consumption in Newfoundland that emphasize the traditional significance of cabbage, carrot, turnip, potatoes and beet to diets within the region. By emphasizing the significance of personal interests in local, organic produce to people’s participation in

community gardening, along with gender, education, a low, fixed income status, and recent migration to the city, I also sought to raise a consideration of the ways in which various aspects of individual identities affected their participation in community gardening. By exploring the significance of personal taste and interests in accessing fresh, local, organic produce to people's participation in community gardening I also attempted to show how migration, low income status and education contributed to their involvement with the organization. In this chapter, I have shown how people's articulations about their participation in community gardening referred to personal interests, hopes, and needs more so than a result of a sense of group attachment. In this chapter, I have utilized gardeners' narratives and photo narratives in order to draw out the types of activities that occurred at Rabbittown and people's experiences there. Although gender contributed to the ways that women and men participated in community gardening, specifically, with regard to harvesting and weeding activities at the end of the season, organizing neighbourhood events, and taking care of children (which were often carried out by women); some men did assist with these activities and thus challenged my ability to write the garden as a space where a gendered division of labour occurred. Gardeners' reflections on their previous experiences growing food, especially with parents, also contributed to a sense of gardening as an activity that men and women perform. Gardeners remembered mothers and fathers carrying out these activities while they were growing up and drew upon these memories as inspirations for their own gardening work. They also articulated recollections of a gendered division of

labour within these food provision tasks, to some extent. As a recently established social and physical entity, the Rabbittown Community Garden was fostering relationships among those of different age ranges, and occupational backgrounds, as well as those who have differential gardening and physical capacities and regional identities. While it provided a space where people could go in order to grow their own food, and learn how to garden, it also gave people an opportunity to develop social bonds, share tasks, and engage in these activities for free. All those who participated in community gardening and this research recounted their experiences with the sense that they were thankful for the opportunity to garden with others, even if there were some challenges along the way.

CONCLUSION

The Rabbittown Community Garden was organized in 2008 in an effort to create more space in which residents of St. John's could carry out gardening activities for persons to carry out gardening activities while residing in St. John's. The availability of space within Rabbittown, and the central location of the neighbourhood within the city of St. John's, are two reasons why the garden was eventually located there. In the years leading up to the garden's establishment, the space where the garden is located had become an aspect of the neighbourhood that was considered an eyesore, and a dumping ground. Refuse was often thrown over the fence that surrounds the lot on three and three quarter sides, and neighbourhood officials offered support for the garden's development due to their sense that it would make physical improvements to a dilapidated space. Garden organizers and neighbourhood officials also shared the sense that it would be of some benefit to persons living in social housing, who may have difficulty securing access to fresh, affordable produce at area grocery stores. From its inception until today, the garden has been organized and maintained by a small group of volunteers. While garden organizers dreamed of creating a space where persons from the neighbourhood would feel welcome, and hoped that they would participate in these activities, the garden's simultaneous openness to anyone who wished to participate in community gardening meant that persons residing in various parts of St. John's also went there in order to pursue these activities.

Those who constructed and maintained the garden between 2006 and 2009 held other jobs, volunteered at a variety of community organizations, and some were also balancing family commitments with their gardening pursuits. For the most part, persons who have become involved in community gardening were not familiar with one another before they began participating in these activities. Everyone I met throughout my research shared a sense of excitement about the garden, and were enthusiastic about community gardening. Multiple interests, needs, and perspectives on how the garden should be developed into a useful and enjoyable space came through in gardeners' narratives about their experiences there. Acknowledging these differences and explaining the significance of various aspects of individual identities to their perspectives and activities reveals the ways in which gender, educational background, low or fixed income class, physical capacity, regional identities and previous gardening experiences affected how and why people participated.

Among those I met and interviewed in 2009, some gardeners sought out a space where they could learn how to garden and others participated in community gardening out of a desire to continue to practice these skills. Most persons who participated in community gardening did not have spaces where they could grow food at their homes. Although all persons who were involved cited interests in consuming fresh produce, and a general appreciation for local, organic food; for some, the garden was a social space, which they traveled to in order to meet like-minded people. For those who had recently relocated to St. John's from other parts of Canada, community gardening was described

as a way to establish social connections in a new city. Those with children also hoped to teach them about where their food comes from, and participated as a way to give them an outdoor space to play in.

Community gardening is becoming an increasingly popular activity in the city of St. John's. In 2009, the Rabbittown Community Garden was one of five community gardens operating there; as of June 2011, ten community gardens are now providing persons residing in the city with a place to grow their own food, meet new people, learn how to garden, and derive a wide range of other personal benefits. Although I have mentioned some of the ways in which the establishment of the Rabbittown Community Garden fits within a wider food security movement that is occurring in St. John's, further research on the history of these organizing efforts would generate an even fuller sense of the ways in which food security issues have been framed and responded to within the region. Researching food security organizing activities that are occurring in St. John's serves to expand existing analyses of similar initiatives that are occurring in various parts of the country, especially Canada's major cities. Thus far, the organizational activities that are occurring in St. John's have received little academic attention. By focussing on a community garden in Canada's easternmost city, this thesis contributes to this expansion in some ways. Further research on food security organizing in rural Newfoundland and Labrador would also serve to expand existing analyses.

6.1 The Significance of Identity to Community Gardening: Responding to Gaps in Literature and Extending Existing Analyses

By employing an intersectional analysis of community gardening, which conceives of identity as an intersection of multiple vectors, I have developed a nuanced account of the significance of identity to participation in community gardening. I have also identified a number of interests and concerns that gardeners expressed in relation to these activities. My analytical chapters have considered the opportunities and challenges that exist for persons who regularly arrived to this space in 2009.

For persons who garden in wheelchairs, the garden provided them with a unique opportunity to carry out these activities. Raised bed gardens facilitated their ability to help with planting, weeding and harvesting, and two gardeners offered their sense that they would not have been able to participate were it not for some of the garden's physical features. Although they shared a sense of excitement about their ability to participate in community gardening, they also struggled with moving about the space as a result of the garden's slight elevation from an adjacent parking lot and the bumpy terrain within the space. Thus far, physical capacity has not been considered as an aspect of identity that contributes to community gardeners' perspectives and experiences. By documenting the interests and needs that were expressed by persons who participated in community gardening in wheelchairs, this thesis attests to the importance of developing physically accessible community gardens. This aspect of my research is particularly salient to community organizations that are working on

improving garden spaces. By sharing my research findings at the Canadian Association for Food Studies Annual Meeting in 2011, I attempted to raise awareness of physical accessibility issues amongst food security analysts and organizers.

Community gardens are considered to be spaces that increase food security amongst those who participate in these activities (Alaimo et al. 2010; Ogawa 2009; Dickenson et al 2003; Wakefield et al. 2007; Irwin et al 1999; Patel 1991). Thus far, special emphasis has been placed on community gardens that are tended by persons living on low incomes, as well as new Canadians (Baker 2004) and Aboriginal people (Mundel et al. 2010). Although the garden was intended to be a space that would benefit persons residing in the neighbourhood as a result of their low income status and perceptions of their food insecurity, persons from a variety of neighbourhoods in St. John's participated in these activities, and indicated that the garden did allow them to access some fresh food items that they were not able to purchase at the grocery store, or could not afford. This attests to the challenges that persons living in St. John's face with regard to accessing fresh, affordable, local produce. Even those who did not identify as persons living on low incomes - including students, parents of young families, and recent graduates - explained that they had some difficulties securing fresh food items as a result of limited availability of fresh, local produce at area grocery stores and the high cost of food on the island, generally. An interest in consuming fresh, local, organic produce was shared amongst those who participated in community gardening; however, those I interviewed had differing perspectives on the types of food that they

were interested in growing. Photo narratives conveyed the ways in which community gardening introduced some participants to new foods such as kale, thai sai and icicle radishes. For persons who had particular interests in growing foods that they could feed their families, and were not used to eating such products, growing more traditional Newfoundland foods such as carrots and potatoes; or staple items such as broccoli and iceberg lettuce were discussed as potential improvements that could be made in years to come.

Due to connections with local organic farms, or income levels that allowed them to purchase fresh, local, organic produce, some persons who participated in community gardening did not take the food items that were grown within the beds home with them. Although garden organizers made some attempts to determine which foods people were interested in growing, they explained that busy schedules kept them from purchasing new seeds, and thus they utilized those that they had on hand, or that were donated, in order to plant the garden in 2009. As such, not everything that people wished to plant was grown. Women with children emphasized the importance of growing food that they could feed their children, and this topic was a central theme in interviews conducted with them. Men with children also discussed their concerns about food choice and decision-making processes at the garden; however, they tended to focus on themes of leadership, rather than their family's food preferences. Young gardeners who did not have children were more willing to try new foods, and enjoyed this aspect of their activities. Gloria shared the challenges that she faced in her attempts

to locate seed and plant the garden in response to gardeners' preferences. This aspect of my analysis provides some insight into the challenges of collective gardening, which entails sharing space and resources like seeds with others. By discussing some of the decision-making processes that contributed to the ways in which the garden was planted, this thesis also provides a rare insight into the organizational and social dynamics of community gardening as a range of activities and processes.

Persons who participated in this research did not share a sense that gender was a particularly important aspect of the division of labour within the space. Through participant observation activities, I did find that such a division was notable with regard to physical and social development tasks. Over the course of the summer, some activities were divided between men and women; however, gardeners saw this as a "natural" phenomenon, which occurred as a result of people's particular interests. Because labour was not formally distributed, gardeners had the sense that men and women performed tasks that they enjoyed. A gendered division of labour was especially pronounced during the time that the construction of a brick path occurred. Three men took the lead on constructing this aspect of the garden, and women carried out weeding and harvesting tasks while they did so. Those men who were not directly involved in the path's construction attempted to assist with its production by preparing the ground for bricks by gathering gravel that was placed on the ground directly beneath the bricks; they also stood close to the path in order to watch construction activities unfold. Women, however, stood away from the path and continued to perform garden

maintenance tasks, such as weeding and harvesting. Throughout the summer more women than men also took care of children within the space, spent time organizing community and social events, and helped to carry out After School programming at the Rabbittown Community Centre.

6.2 Updating Existing Literature on Gardening in Newfoundland

Gardening has, traditionally, been an activity that people performed in order to secure access to fresh produce in Newfoundland (Omohundro 1985). Little has been written about gardening in Newfoundland since the 1990s; however, there has been some discussion about changes that have occurred to Newfoundland food provisioning in the past sixty years (Cadigan 1994; Omohundro 1995). Although there is some mention of gendered roles and activities in traditional Newfoundland gardens (Omohundro 1995; Porter 1995), a gendered analysis of gardening has not been completed to date. By utilizing an intersectional approach to analyzing community gardening, I have responded to this gap in existing literature.

Research on contemporary gardening practices, including community gardening, serves to document non-agricultural food production activities that are currently occurring on the island. Further analysis could be performed in order to consider the role that gardening plays toward the development of food security in Newfoundland and Labrador. Rather than focussing solely on agriculture, or considering gardening to be a folk tradition, there is reason to conceive of these activities as viable responses to food

insecurity, and they should be accounted for within conceptions of vegetable production and consumption activities in the province.

It is beyond the scope of this project to consider the extent to which community gardening in St. John's is connected to larger community gardening movements that have been documented in other parts of Canada and the United States (Alaimo et al. 2010; Baker 2004; Franco 2004; Friendly 2008; Glover 2003; Hancock 2001; Mundel and Chapman 2010; Ogawa 2009; Shinew et al. 2004; Wakefield et al. 2007); however, there do appear to be some connections amongst the development of community gardens in St. John's, and those that are being established elsewhere. For instance, five gardeners (three of whom were garden organizers) discussed participation in community gardening in other regions of Canada as part of their interests in community gardening in St. John's. For gardeners who counted university environmental studies courses as inspirational to their community gardening activities, a commitment to sustainable living, and an interest in environmental politics were fundamental to their community gardening activities. This also raises questions about the extent to which community gardening may be connected to environmental movements in the region. In consideration of gardeners' narratives about their parents' gardening activities, which they witnessed and contributed to while they were growing up, it is also conceivable to frame community gardening as an activity that is connected to traditional practices of securing access to fresh produce, or, carrying out a familiar pastime. Five persons who grew up on the island and were involved in community gardening shared stories about

their parents or grandparents' gardening activities, which they considered to be inspirational to their own. Similar stories about parents and extended family members' gardening activities were also shared by neighbourhood residents who do not participate in community gardening but were willing to speak to me. Two people in particular explained that their family was currently, or had at one time, been supplied with fresh produce by family members who garden and farm outside of St. John's. Another neighbourhood resident also recalled her mother's gardening activities while she was growing up. This seems to indicate that gardening remains a popular activity amongst some Newfoundlanders. Due to its historical significance to developing familial food security, more research on gardening activities and the extent to which persons residing on the island continue to secure access to fresh produce through these means would broaden understandings of food security throughout the province.

6.3 Participant Observation, Photo Narrative Elicitation and Interviews with Community Gardeners

By focussing on the significance of the community garden as a space from the perspectives of those who were involved in community gardening in 2009, I sought to document the experiences of those who regularly participated in these activities. The overarching goal of my thesis has been to consider the space from a number of perspectives, and to consider the ways in which various aspects of individual identities and previous experiences gardening affected people's interests and participation in

these activities. My own participation in and observation of community gardening at Rabbittown, as well as interviews with garden organizers, neighbourhood officials, residents and community gardeners allowed me to generate a number of insights into community gardening. By forging relationships with other gardeners, and contributing to the garden's ongoing development and maintenance, I was able to learn more about the work that is involved in community gardening, and the significance of this activity to those who were regularly involved.

6.4 Conclusion

There is no single story to tell about the Rabbittown Community Garden. From the earliest stages of its development, until the final moments of the second season, persons who have been involved with this initiative have participated as a result of a variety of personal interests, perspectives, and needs. Differential physical capacities and gardening abilities have also contributed to a wide range of experiences within the space. Multiple perspectives articulate something of the nature of the place, as one where all are welcome, but only a small number regularly participate, and where people are invited to carry out tasks and activities that they find personally satisfying or particularly rewarding, some of which occurring as a result of a need to secure access to fresh food.

Just as these perspectives serve to provide a nuanced conception of the space, so too do they reveal something of the people who participated in community gardening there. While some gardeners were able to carry out these activities as a form of leisure,

for the sheer pleasure of spending time outside, or meeting new people, others expressed more practical purposes for their activities, by discussing the significance of gardening to their ability to consume fresh produce. Food security organizations in St. John's continue to work toward developing better access to fresh, affordable, local, organic produce,. As they do so, some stories remind us of the fact of food insecurity in contemporary Canadian society, and the ongoing need to develop a food system where all people, at all times, have access to safe, nutritious, sustainably produced food so that they may lead a healthy and active life.

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Appendix One: Interview Schedules

"All for One Harvest, One Harvest for All! Exploring the Meanings, Processes and Outcomes of Community Garden Work in Rabbittown"

Investigator: Laura Nelson-Hamilton Tel. (709) 749-5700

Email: l.nelson-hamilton@mun.ca

Consent Form: Rabbittown Community Gardener Personal Narrative or Photo Narrative Elicitation Interview

You have been asked to take part in a research study. It is up to you to decide whether to participate in this study or not. Before you decide, you need to understand what the study is for, what risks you might take and what benefits you might receive. This consent form explains the study.

The researcher will:

- **Discuss the study with you**
- **Answer your questions**
- **Be available during the study to deal with problems and answer questions**
- **Provide you with the opportunity to review interview material in order to ensure the researcher represents you accurately**

Introduction/Background:

This research is part of my Master's thesis, in the Department of Women's Studies at Memorial University. I am interested in learning more about how and why individuals participate in community gardening work. I am interested the ways in which community gardens are developed, the personal or social significance that community gardeners relate to their work and their perceptions of what is produced as a result of community gardening.

Your participation in this research will involve the photos you took throughout the course of the gardening season which documented your gardening experiences. This interview will examine your photos as a way to focus discussion on the processes, outcomes and meanings of community garden work. You will be asked to share your photos and select five that you feel represent the community garden, community gardening work and the outcomes of your activities there. This interview will take approximately two hours, and will ask you to reflect upon the photos you took and explain your selective decisions regarding which five photos most clearly express your experience and understandings of community gardening activities.

1. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to represent your experience of community gardening and your perceptions of the outcomes of community gardening work. Based on your own roles and activities as a community gardener, and your own sense for why this work is

important, this study will seek to understand how and why community gardens are developed and what benefits are derived from community gardening work.

2. Description of the Study Procedures

You are being asked to participate in research by sharing your photographs and participating in a digitally-recorded interview session. Your participation is free and voluntary. If you consent to participate, what and how much you say are entirely up to you. It is also within your power to choose to not to be recorded. During the discussion you will be asked to talk about the history of your participation in community gardening, the responsibilities you took on at the Rabbittown Community Garden, the benefits you feel were produced by gardening and your reflections on the challenges or significance of community gardening work. Because discussion will focus on the photos that you took throughout the course of the gardening season, you will also be invited to express other themes, issues or areas of concern related to community gardening as represented by your photographs.

You may refuse to answer any of the questions and are free to withdraw from the research project during the fieldwork and prior to the writing of my thesis. Once the information from the recordings have been typed up, the audio CD's will be stored in a locked location for five years, and then destroyed.

The photos that you choose to represent community gardening will be scanned and included in the final product of this research, which will be the development of a thesis manuscript to be kept in the Department of Women's Studies and the Queen Elizabeth II library, both of which are located at Memorial University of Newfoundland.

3. Length of Time:

Our meeting today will take approximately two hours, depending on how much you have to say.

4. Possible Risks and Discomforts:

Given the small number of participants in the Rabbittown Community Garden, complete anonymity cannot be guaranteed. Individuals will be represented in photos, which will be included in the final thesis. As such, individuals will be photographically represented in research and writing, however names will not be utilized in captions and you will be given the option to be represented by your name or a pseudonym. You will have the opportunity to allow or disallow any direct quotes that are to appear in the finished draft. By selecting photos which represent your experience as a community gardener, you will be given some opportunity to ensure that your own photographic representation is satisfactory.

5. Benefits:

It is not known whether this study will benefit you personally. It will provide an opportunity for you to talk about your knowledge, feelings and ideas regarding the processes and outcomes of community gardening. This will allow you to express the

personal benefits of your work and to expand understanding on how and why community gardens are being developed in St. John's. In this way, your participation will help to produce knowledge about the challenges, benefits and outcomes of community garden work. You will also be encouraged to express your ideas related to improvements or changes that might be made to the structure or group dynamics of community gardening in order to improve gardener experiences in years to come.

6. Questions:

You have been given a copy of this consent form.

If you have any questions about taking part in this study, you may speak with the investigator who is in charge of the study at this institution. That person is:

Laura Nelson-Hamilton (709) 749-5700, l.nelson-hamilton@mun.ca

Draft Interview Schedule: (Subject to changes during the research process)

- 1) Welcome the individual and thank them for taking the time to continue their participation in research by agreeing to be interviewed.
- 2) Go over ethics.
Go over consent form and how information is stored.

REMIND THEM

Participation in the photo elicitation interview is voluntary.

That they can refuse to answer any questions.

That they can stop participating at any point during the interview and will be given a chance to alter their statements upon completion of the interviews when they are transcribed and given back to the participant. At this time they will be enabled to reflect on their statements and make revisions for clarity or precision of reporting.
That the interview will be assigned a random number and notes and transcripts will have names removed from them.

Access to the list of names of participants and their interview number will be limited to myself.

That the five photos they select as representations of community gardening will be utilized in the final product of research and public presentations at the Department of Women's Studies as well as the Newfoundland and Labrador Environmental Network Lunch and Learn. These documents may also be used in research publications and presentations at a later date.

That anonymity cannot be guaranteed because of the small size of the community of St. John's as well as the Rabbittown Community Garden Association, but that confidentiality

regarding which gardener chose which images will be protected in order to offer some privacy in the context of visual-based research.

Explain that they have the choice to refuse or allow the use of a digital recorder, but explain that taping the interview will help me to get more accurate and detailed information. If they allow the use of the digital recorder, they can ask to have it turned off at any time.

If they are uncomfortable with the tape recorder, I will happily take notes instead.

Collect Signatures

Show them where to sign the consent forms.

Explain that their signature means that they understand what research is about, that their participation is voluntary and that they consent to being interviewed and having their chosen five photographs utilized in the final product of research.

Explain that my signature means that I commit to following the agreements on privacy, information storage and on communication described in the consent forms.

Let them know that they are free to ask me any questions throughout the interviews, and are encouraged to speak freely about their experiences and understandings of the photos they took in order to represent community gardening. Remind them that they should feel free to guide the interview with their own reflections if it should happen that my questions do not allow them to express their understandings or observations of community gardening.

INTRO:

Thank you for being here and for taking the time to document your experience at the community garden this summer by utilizing the cameras that were given to you. I greatly appreciate the time that you took to do so and hope that completing interviews alongside their photographic images will allow for a fuller depiction of the meanings, outcomes and processes of community gardening as they perceive it.

Begin the interview by giving the gardeners their first set of photos. Ask them to spread the images out or arrange them as they see fit. Remind them that the interview is scheduled to last for approximately two hours but that they are welcome to take more time if they desire to do so.

Ask the gardener questions regarding how they first became involved with community gardening work:

Section One: Beginnings

I am interested in learning more about the interests that lead individuals to participate in

community gardening. I am also interested in hearing about your early experiences of community gardening at Rabbittown. In this section of the interview I would like to learn more about what drew you to community gardening and whether you understand your work with the Rabbittown Community Garden Association to fit within a larger understanding of the importance of food, health, or the creation of community.

100. Can you tell me a bit about how you came to be involved with the Rabbittown Community Garden?

101. Can you tell me about your experiences with gardening or interests related to food production before becoming a gardener at Rabbittown? For instance, was this your first time growing a garden? If not, can you tell me a bit about some of your previous experiences growing food, either on your own or with a community?

PROBE: When did you first become interested in growing food, and where were your early experiences with gardening or food production located?

102. Can you tell me a bit about some of your previous community activities or experiences in organizations, political groups or other social justice related activities?

103. Before becoming a member of the Rabbittown Community Garden did you know many of the individuals who were involved, and if so, can you tell me a bit about how you knew him/her/them? If not, can you tell me a bit about what it was like for you to join a community garden where you did not know the others who were involved?

104. Can you tell me a bit about any challenges that you faced in the initial stages of gardening work or any fears or discomforts that you felt in the beginning stages of the gardening season?

105. Can you tell me a bit about your knowledge of the Rabbittown neighbourhood before becoming a member of the Rabbittown Community Garden?

106. Has community gardening expanded your social networks in any ways? For instance, did your participation in community gardening develop any unanticipated relationships for you and if so, have you found these to be positive aspects of your experience in St. John's?

If the interviewee took photographs, encourage the participant to take their time to consider the images. Complete notes on the ways in which they select their images and encourage him or her to walk me through their decision-making process regarding which photos are selected as representative of their experiences and understandings of community gardening and which are left behind.

Allow time for the individual to express their own sense of what is represented in the images. Encourage them to set a larger sample of images aside which can be minimized after the other two sets of images are given over for contemplation and selection. When he or she is ready, offer them the second set of prints for their consideration and reflection.

Section Two: Individual Roles at the Community Garden

I am interested in learning about the roles that individuals played at the community

gardening, and how work was divided or shared among community gardeners.

200. Can you tell be a bit about the work you performed at the community garden?

PROBE: Were there any activities that you performed routinely?

201. Can you tell me a bit about how work was organized at the community garden?

PROBE: Did you notice that certain individuals performed certain tasks, and if so, do you have any recollection as to how these tasks became assigned or assumed by gardeners?

202. Overall, did you find that work was shared evenly within the garden group?

PROBE: Did you notice if leaders arose within the association, and if so, do you think you could speculate on how individuals came to perform the roles they did?

203. These images were taken in the middle stages of community gardening. Can you tell me a bit about whether your experiences of gardening with others differed from your perception of what this would be like? By this point in time?

204. Do you recall any moments in which you felt particularly comfortable or satisfied with your work at the community garden?

PROBE: Do any of these photos represent that feeling for you?

205. Do you recall any moments in which you felt uncomfortable or uncertain about your work at the community garden, and if so, can you describe or tell me a bit about that?

206. Can you tell me a bit about some of the work that you did that helped to develop the community garden but aren't represented in the photos that were taken there?

207. Can you describe or explain any of these activities and offer your sense of the importance of this work to the organization of the garden?

When the individual has narrowed the images to a smaller set, offer them the third set of images to consider and reflect upon.

Section Three: Outcomes of Community Gardening

300. Can you tell me a bit about what you gained from your participation in community gardening?

301. In what ways did growing your own food affect your diet or ability to consume healthy food?

302. Food is expensive in St. John's, did this have any relation to your interest in becoming involved in community gardening and do you anticipate that growing your own food will affect your grocery bill in any way?

303. I am interested in whether or not community food production activities offer individuals an opportunity to learn more about other individuals' experiences in St. John's. Did you find that participating in community gardening allowed you to learn more about the neighbourhood of Rabbittown, or other people outside of your normal social circle in St. John's?

304. After participating in community gardening, is this an activity that you would encourage others to become a part of, and if so, can you tell me a bit about why you would or would not encourage others to become involved in community gardening?

305. Can you tell me a bit about what challenges you think might exist for individuals to become involved in community gardening?

306. Can you tell me a bit about why you think community gardening might be an important initiative to further develop in St. John's?

307. After participating in community gardening this year, do you think this is something you will do again?

PROBE: Are there any changes you would make to the organization of the Rabbittown Community Garden that you feel would improve your experience or allow for other individuals to become involved?

308. Can you tell me a bit about what a 'successful' community garden is to you?

309. These are all of the questions that I have, are there any other aspects of community gardening that you feel were important but were not addressed within this interview? Please feel free to talk about any other issues, outcomes or benefits of community that you feel are important to developing an understanding of this activity and experience from your perspective

310. Do you have any other thoughts or questions for me?

Ask the individual to narrow their images to five photos that they would like to have included in the representation of community gardening at Rabbittown to be included in my thesis, research presentations, conferences and possibly publications. Remind them that these images will be utilized in presentations at the Women's Studies Speaker's Series and the Newfoundland and Labrador Environmental Network Lunch and Learn.

Offer the individual a thank you card for their participation in the interview and a copy of their photos. Let them know that you will be contacting them when the interview is transcribed so that he or she can examine it for mistakes or determine any corrections that might be made in order to ensure accurate representation within the thesis. Make sure that he or she has your contact information so that they are able to contact you with any questions, concerns, or further considerations. Make sure that you have their contact information as well.

"All for One Harvest, One Harvest for All!" Exploring the Meanings, Processes and Outcomes of Community Garden Work in Rabbittown

Investigator: Laura Nelson-Hamilton

Tel. (709) 749-5700

Email: lnelson-hamilton@mun.ca

Consent Form: Interview about the Development of the Community Garden

You have been asked to take part in a research study. It is up to you to decide whether to participate in this study or not. Before you decide, you need to understand what the study is for, what risks you might take and what benefits you might receive. This consent form explains the study.

The researcher will:

- **Discuss the study with you**
- **Answer your questions**
- **Be available during the study to deal with problems and answer questions**
- **Provide you with the opportunity to review interview material in order to ensure the researcher represents you accurately**

Introduction/Background:

This research is part of my Master's thesis, in the Department of Women's Studies at Memorial University. I am interested in learning more about how and why individuals participate in community gardening work. I am interested the ways in which community gardens are developed, the personal or social significance that community gardeners relate to their work and their perceptions of what is produced as a result of community gardening. Part of this research involves determining the personal and social outcomes of community garden work. I am interested in examining how these outcomes have occurred in the Rabbittown neighbourhood.

Your participation in this research is required in order to learn more about the history of gardening in Newfoundland, as well as your own impressions of the Community Garden in the Rabbittown neighbourhood. This interview will ask you to share your experiences as a resident in Rabbittown and will ask you to provide some information about what used to exist in the location where the garden is now. You will also be asked about some of your own experiences with gardening, memories you may have of family members' gardening activities, or your current connections to home or community gardens in Newfoundland and Labrador. These questions will help me to learn more about the historical and current gardening activities in the province. This interview will take approximately one and a half hours, depending on how much you have to say. It will not ask you for personal information, and you may decline answering any questions that you do not feel comfortable with, or do not believe are important in order to develop an understanding of community gardening at Rabbittown.

1. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to represent the processes, meanings, and outcomes of community gardening in Rabbittown. Your experience as a resident of Rabbittown is

important to include in this research because it may help to consider how this garden has affected your neighbourhood. Your reflections on previous garden experiences will help to construct an historical account of gardening in the region.

2. Description of the Study Procedures

You are being asked to participate in research by participating in a digitally-recorded interview session. Your participation is free and voluntary. If you consent to participate, what and how much you say are entirely up to you. It is also within your power to choose to not to be recorded.

During the discussion you will be asked to talk about your knowledge of the history of the Rabbittown neighbourhood and your reflections on the changes that the community garden has made within this location. You may refuse to answer any of the questions and are free to withdraw from the research project at any time. Each interview transcript will be stored in a secure location. Access will be limited to only the researcher. Once the information from the recordings have been typed up, the audio CD's will be stored in a locked location for five years, and then destroyed or utilized in further conference presentations and publications. You will be contacted when transcription of this interview is completed so that you may edit or change your statements. Once this research is completed it will become a thesis report which will be submitted to the Department of Women's Studies at Memorial University. Research will also be shared publicly at a Department of Women's Studies Speaker's Series event and Newfoundland and Labrador Environmental Network Lunch and Learn discussion. This research may result in publications and conference presentations as well. You will be contacted when the dates and times of these events are organized.

3. Length of Time:

Our meeting today will take approximately an hour and a half, depending on how much you have to say.

4. Possible Risks and Discomforts:

Given the small size of the Rabbittown neighbourhood, your participation in this research may not allow complete anonymity.

5. Benefits:

It is not known whether this study will benefit you personally. It will provide an opportunity for you to talk about your knowledge, feelings and ideas regarding the processes and outcomes of community gardening in your neighbourhood. This will allow you to express your thoughts on this initiative and the effects it has had in your community. In this way, your participation will help to produce knowledge about the challenges, benefits and outcomes of community garden work. You will also be encouraged to express your own experiences with gardening. This may help to consider how gardening occurs in St. John's or other parts of Newfoundland..

6. Questions:

You have been given a copy of this consent form.

If you have any questions about taking part in this study, you may speak with the investigator who is in charge of the study at this institution. That person is:

Laura Nelson-Hamilton (709) 749-5700, lnelson-hamilton@mun.ca

Draft Interview Schedule: (Subject to changes during the research process)

- 1) Welcome the individual and thank them for taking the time to continue their participation in research by agreeing to be interviewed.
- 2) Go over ethics
Go over consent form and how information is stored.

REMIND THEM

Participation in the interview is voluntary.

That they can refuse to answer any questions.

That they can stop participating at any point during the interview and will be given a chance to alter their statements upon completion of the interviews when they are transcribed and given back to the participant. After the interview they will be enabled to reflect on their statements and make revisions for clarity or precision of reporting.

That the interview will be assigned a random number and notes and transcripts will have names removed from them.

Access to the list of names of participants and their interview number will be limited to myself.

That anonymity cannot be guaranteed because of the small size of the Rabbittown neighbourhood, but they will not be represented by name in the final research report.

Explain that they have the choice to refuse or allow the use of a digital recorder, but explain that taping the interview will help me to get more accurate and detailed information. If they allow the use of the digital recorder, they can ask to have it turned off at any time.

If they are uncomfortable with the tape recorder, I will happily take notes instead.

Collect Signatures

Show them where to sign the consent forms.

Explain that their signature means that they understand what research is about, that their participation is voluntary and that they consent to being interviewed and having their chosen five photographs utilized in the final product of research.

Explain that my signature means that I commit to following the agreements on privacy, information storage and on communication described in the consent forms.

Let them know that they are free to ask me any questions throughout the interviews, and are encouraged to speak freely about the history of Rabbittown and their perceptions of the community garden there.

Section One: The History of the Community Garden in the context of Rabbittown

100. Can you tell me a bit about the history of the space where the Rabbittown Community Garden is now located?

PROBE: For instance, do you recall what used to exist there before the garden was organized?

102. Were there any particular activities that used to occur in the space where the garden is now located?

PROBE: For instance, did residents of Rabbittown ever gather there?

PROBE: In what ways did you or other members of the neighbourhood make use of the space before the garden was there?

103. Could you describe the sorts of materials or objects that used to exist in the space where the garden is now located?

104. Can you tell me a bit about your knowledge of how the community garden was organized in Rabbittown?

PROBE: For instance, before the community garden was developed were you made aware of the plans to organize a garden here?

105. Can you tell me a bit about how the organization of the garden has changed the look of the space where it is located?

106. Can you tell me a bit about how the organization of the garden has affected your own use of this space within your neighbourhood?

PROBE: For instance, is it a space that you now utilize but did not before?

107. Are there any changes to the garden space that you would make if you were able to?

108. Can you tell me a bit about how the changes to the space were made?

PROBE: For instance, did you know the individuals who altered the space?

PROBE: Are you able to recall how long it took to convert the space into a garden?

PROBE: Can you describe some of the activities that occurred in order to turn the space into a garden?

Section Two: Perceptions of Community Gardening

200. Can you tell me a bit about your own experiences with gardening?

PROBE: Do any of your family members garden or did they at one time?

PROBE: Can you tell me a bit about the items that you, or the individual you know who gardens tends to grow?

PROBE: Can you tell me a bit about where the gardening activities take place?

PROBE: In your experience, have you noticed if your friends and family are gardening more or less in recent years?

PROBE: Do you have any thoughts or opinions on why there is more/less gardening in Newfoundland these days?

201. Are there any particular reasons why you do or do not garden here in Rabbittown?

202. Can you tell me a bit about your knowledge of the individuals who have organized or participate in the Rabbittown Community Garden?

PROBE: For instance, do you know their names, or backgrounds or recognize them from any of your other experiences and activities in St. John's?

203. Have you participated in any of the events or activities that have been organized by those involved in the community garden?

PROBE: If so, can you tell me a bit about this?

PROBE: Have there been any activities at the garden that have been particularly enjoyable for you that you would like to share?

204. The garden is now in its second year. Have you found that your own knowledge about this organization has changed over time?

PROBE: For instance, did your perceptions of community gardening, or community gardeners change at all from last year to this year?

205. Do you think you will become involved in community gardening in Rabbittown?

206. Can you tell me a bit about some things that might encourage or discourage you from participating in gardening activities in your neighbourhood?

207. Do you have anything else you might like to say about the garden and its effect on your neighbourhood?

208. Do you have anything else you might like to say about gardening in Newfoundland?

Offer the individual a thank you card for their participation in the interview. Let them know that you will be contacting them when the interview is transcribed so that he or she can examine it for mistakes or determine any corrections that might be made in order to ensure accurate representation within the thesis. Make sure that he or she has your contact information so that they are able to contact you with any questions, concerns, or further considerations. Make sure that you have their contact information as well.

