



**London  
South Bank  
University**

EST 1892

**HOW DO YOUR GARDENS  
GROW? UNEARTHING  
MEANINGS IN AFRICAN  
AMERICAN CHURCH  
GARDENS**

**ISABEL EDWINA LAMPTEY**

<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-8974-9573>

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the  
requirements of London South Bank University for the  
degree of Professional Doctorate in Education

January 2020

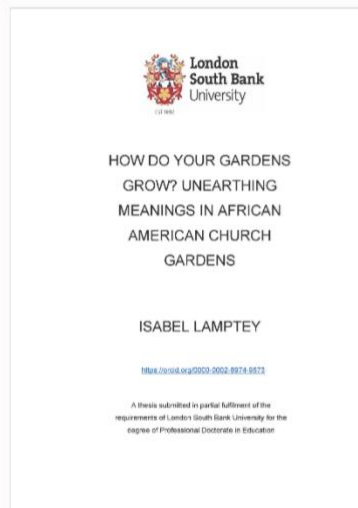


## Digital Receipt

This receipt acknowledges that Turnitin received your paper. Below you will find the receipt information regarding your submission.

The first page of your submissions is displayed below.

Submission author: Isabel Lamptey  
Assignment title: test  
Submission title: How Do Your Gardens Grow?  
File name: Full\_Document\_w\_TOC\_5\_Jan\_202...  
File size: 9.7M  
Page count: 265  
Word count: 62,407  
Character count: 315,915  
Submission date: 06-Jan-2020 10:27AM (UTC-0600)  
Submission ID: 1239563106



## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

I should like to express my gratitude to the following people for their help in bringing this study to life:

I am grateful to the pastors and the members of the two churches of this study who agreed to allow me access in order to carry out my research. I would also like to thank all of the participants, both adults and children, who walked and talked me around their gardens and showed me the spaces through their eyes.

To my church contacts, without you this would not have been possible. I appreciate your help, advice, care, and enthusiasm from start to finish.

Many thanks to Kevin Singh at Louisiana Tech's Community Design Activism Center for granting me permission to use the drawings of the gardens in this study.

To Regina at Prescott Memorial Library, thank you for finding all the different interlibrary loan books that I needed to complete this task.

Despite the solo nature of the writing endeavor, there were also many others who supported me over the years so that it did not feel so lonely:

To my supervisors at LSBU, Sue Adler and Andrew Ingram, I appreciate your patience and guidance. I will miss not seeing your smiling faces beaming back at me during our Skype tutorials.

Being part of this EdD cohort under the leadership of Nicki Martin was a very special experience. I so admire the resolve and kindness of my classmates and wish you all the very best in your future projects.

David—Thank you for your collegiality and assistance, especially at this time.

I am grateful to those friends and family members who kept pushing me forward and cheering me on from the sidelines and am looking forward to catching up with you all and thanking you personally.

To my dear Kev, who found the course at LSBU and felt that it would be a good fit for me. How right you were. Thanks for keeping the faith.

## **DEDICATION**

This work is lovingly dedicated to my parents, Margot and Edward Lamptey,  
who instilled a joy of gardening and learning in me from an early age,  
and to my brother Christopher Lamptey.

*~ For everything there is a season.*

## **AUTHOR'S NOTE**

In order to maintain the authenticity of the participants' voices of this study, I have chosen to write this in American English. Some quotes have been cited from a British source, and I have kept them in the original. I trust this will not be too distracting for the reader.

## ABSTRACT

This research sought to discover the kinds of meanings that were attributed to two rural African American church gardens, which were created through a university-community educational outreach project. Using Lefebvre's (1991) spatial triad, the study first acknowledged that community gardens, like the ones of the study, can be regarded as sites with multiple and often contested meanings. Then drawing on a phenomenological perspective, the purpose was to find the lived meanings of the gardens for the individuals at the churches.

Data was collected through the use of mobile interviewing methods. The adults at the sites took part in walking interviews, and the children carried out garden-themed activity focus groups. All participants were given the use of a digital camera, and photography-elicitation occurred during this time. Garden notes, which recorded specific details and significant observations, were also kept. As the gardens were rich in sensory experiences, ranging from animal sightings to expressions of spiritual wonder, opportunities for different kinds of meaning to arise were rife. Data was analyzed using Vagle's (2018) whole-parts-whole approach, and themes were also explored to see what the two church gardens had in common and how they differed.

Three key findings emerged about the lived nature of these church gardens. The first theme examined the *genius loci*, or spirit, of each site. Each garden had its own unique personality in relation to the natural setting, the material

structures, and the human needs of those at the churches. Next, two shared themes were also discovered. One was regarding the way in which different garden skill-sets had evolved differently across three generations. The other joint theme concerned issues of garden sustainability. Both churches had reached a turning point where they were seeking to define a clearer role for their gardens. Participants explained some of their concerns regarding people, plants, and structures and shared how possible solutions to sustain the gardens might come about. While many studies have been conducted inside African American churches, few have explored gardens at such settings. This study contributes to the literature around rurally situated African American church gardens.



## TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS .....	iii
DEDICATION .....	v
AUTHOR'S NOTE .....	vi
ABSTRACT .....	vii
TABLE OF CONTENTS .....	ix
LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS .....	xv
CHAPTER ONE—INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY AND SETTING THE CONTEXT .....	1
1.1 University outreach .....	1
1.2 Background—introduction to the Youth4Health project .....	1
1.3 Planting myself in the university garden community .....	2
1.4 African American churches as outreach partners and sites of education.....	4
1.5 Introduction to the churches of the study .....	4
1.6 Introduction to the gardens—the stages of the gardens' development over the years .....	6
1.6.1 Phase I: the demonstration grow-tub garden at Hope Baptist Church (March 2012 to August 2012).....	6
1.6.2 Phase II: the grow-tub gardens at Hope Baptist and Grace Baptist (February 2013 to October 2014) .....	7
1.6.3 Phase III: re-designed gardens (March to October 2014, March to October 2015).....	7
1.7 Project departure .....	9
1.8 Overview of chapters.....	11
CHAPTER TWO—REVIEW OF LITERATURE .....	12
2.1 Introduction to the review of literature.....	12
2.2 The spatial turn in education .....	12
2.3 Framing the study spatially.....	14
2.4 The spotlight on the perceived realm (spatial practice).....	16
2.4.1 Community gardens as perceived spaces .....	17
2.4.2 What is a community? The challenge of physically finding community in the garden.....	18
2.4.3 What to do with community in the garden?.....	26
2.4.4 What is a garden?.....	27

2.4.5	The challenge of identifying gardens in community: less of the what and more of the where.....	29
2.4.6	Perceived section summary .....	33
2.5	The spotlight on the conceived realm (representations of space) ..	33
2.5.1	Seeking justification .....	34
2.5.2	The connections between community gardens and health—statistics .....	36
2.5.3	Food-related factors.....	37
2.5.4	Food deserts—grocery gaps .....	38
2.5.5	Privilege in the rhetoric .....	40
2.5.6	Planting whose power in the garden? .....	41
2.5.7	Structural issues .....	42
2.5.8	A call for changes in policy .....	44
2.6	Conceived section summary .....	45
2.7	Spotlight on the lived realm (representational spaces) .....	45
2.7.1	Finding meaning in the lived.....	46
2.7.2	The lived in community gardens.....	48
2.7.3	Locating the study in the literature .....	49
2.7.4	Revisiting the questions of the study.....	51
2.7.5	Lived section summary .....	54
2.7.6	Review of literature chapter summary.....	54
CHAPTER THREE—METHODOLOGY .....		56
3.1	Introduction to research design.....	56
3.1.1	Posing phenomenological questions.....	56
3.1.2	What is phenomenology? .....	56
3.1.3	Link to Lefebvre .....	57
3.1.4	Phenomenological research approaches.....	58
3.1.5	Reconstituting the lived garden .....	59
3.2	Renewing relationships .....	61
3.3	General ethical considerations.....	62
3.4	Walking Interviews.....	63
3.4.1	Interviewing in context .....	64
3.4.2	How walking enhances the interview situation .....	64
3.4.3	The different types of walking interview .....	65
3.4.4	Plotting this study on the typology—the garden amble .....	66

3.4.5	The preamble to the study.....	67
3.4.6	Interview protocol.....	69
3.4.7	Transitioning and positioning.....	71
3.4.8	The punctuated garden amble.....	73
3.4.9	Sensory significance.....	74
3.4.10	Sharing with others.....	80
3.4.11	Details of ethical considerations and risks.....	81
3.5	Children’s garden-activity focus group interviews.....	86
3.5.1	The suitability of activity-based focus groups.....	86
3.5.2	Considering the numbers for the group.....	88
3.5.3	Issues of safeguarding.....	88
3.5.4	Focus group protocol.....	93
3.5.5	Learning while doing.....	94
3.5.6	Making changes.....	95
3.5.7	Questioning techniques.....	97
3.5.8	Discovery through movement and the senses.....	101
3.5.9	Gardener as researcher.....	103
3.5.10	Researcher as multi-tasker.....	105
3.5.11	Further ethical issues and practical concerns.....	106
3.5.12	Documentation.....	107
3.6	From photo-elicitation to photography-elicitation.....	108
3.6.1	Introduction: using photographs in research.....	108
3.6.2	Photo-elicitation interviews.....	109
3.6.3	A different take on the face-to-face interview experience.....	110
3.6.4	It often changes the traditional dynamics between the interviewer and the interviewee.....	110
3.6.5	It makes for a more relaxing environment.....	111
3.6.6	It is a more empowering experience for children.....	111
3.6.7	It promotes talk.....	112
3.6.8	It helps create the conditions for a deeper type of interview..	113
3.6.9	It contains a trigger moment.....	113
3.6.10	Gathering ideas for my own study.....	114
3.7	Ethical considerations using photography.....	117
3.7.1	Protecting the privacy of participants.....	117
3.7.2	Protecting the privacy of places.....	118

3.7.3	Reducing the threat for participants unwilling or unable to use the camera.....	118
3.7.4	Gaining consent—clarifying long term use .....	119
3.7.5	Making changes to the original plan.....	122
3.7.6	The impact of photography on the study.....	125
3.7.7	My role behind the camera—positionality .....	134
3.7.8	Drawbacks and challenges.....	142
3.8	Garden notes .....	145
3.8.1	A variation to field notes .....	146
3.8.2	Ethical considerations.....	148
3.9	Transcription .....	149
3.9.1	Protecting the data.....	150
3.9.2	Interpreting the data.....	150
CHAPTER 4—FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION .....		152
4.1	The <i>genius loci</i> at Hope and Grace Baptist Churches .....	152
4.2	Hope Baptist Church garden—a garden on the move rooted in history.....	153
4.2.1	Introduction—garden spatial flow .....	154
4.2.2	Rootbound: living with a garden that doesn't feel right.....	154
4.2.3	Regeneration: increased movement in the garden.....	156
4.2.4	Resurgence: the winds of change blowing through the garden space .....	160
4.2.5	Renewal: change rooted in history .....	162
4.3	Grace Baptist Church garden—a garden that grows people through relationship.....	165
4.3.1	Introduction—a new relationship with the outside .....	165
4.3.2	A relationship with self: just sitting; a lost art .....	167
4.3.3	A relationship with nature: a garden with a view.....	170
4.3.4	A relationship with each other: a gathering place .....	172
4.3.5	A relationship with God: a sense of wonder.....	179
4.4	Hope and Grace Churches: garden skill-sets across the generations .....	181
4.4.1	The seniors—the skill keepers (ages 65–94).....	181
4.4.2	The children—the schooled skill-set (ages 9–18).....	189
4.4.3	The millennial adults—a missing skill-set (ages 25–45).....	193
4.5	Hope and Grace garden sustainability—a perennial challenge....	196

4.5.1	Areas of concern.....	196
4.5.2	Grace Baptist—plants, structures, and people .....	200
4.5.3	Finding a garden rhythm for Hope and Grace .....	204
4.5.4	Sowing seeds—the gardens in potentia.....	205
4.5.5	Closing thoughts—garden sustainability.....	217
CHAPTER FIVE—	LOOKING BACK, LOOKING FORWARD.....	218
5.1	A look back at the research questions of the study .....	218
5.1.1	Review of research methodology .....	219
5.1.2	Review of findings.....	221
5.1.3	Discussion of findings .....	223
5.1.4	Limitations to the study .....	226
5.2	Contributions to knowledge .....	229
5.3	Suggestions for future action and research .....	231
5.3.1	Sharing findings .....	232
5.3.2	Digging deeper.....	232
5.4	Closing thoughts .....	233
REFERENCES.....		235
APPENDIX 1: Chart showing the main phases of the gardens during the Youth4Health project.....		251
APPENDIX 2: Hope Baptist Church garden.....		252
APPENDIX 3: Grace Baptist Church garden .....		254
APPENDIX 4: LSBU approval letter 2017 .....		255
APPENDIX 5: LA Tech approval letter 2017 .....		256
APPENDIX 6: Letter / email church pastor.....		257
APPENDIX 7: General recruiting announcement to church members .....		258
APPENDIX 8: General recruiting announcement to church notice board ..		259
APPENDIX 9: Information sheet for adult participants.....		260
APPENDIX 10: Adult consent form .....		264
APPENDIX 11: Adult contact information sheet.....		266
APPENDIX 12: Email accompanying transcripts .....		267
APPENDIX 13: Outline of agenda for talk to children.....		268
APPENDIX 14: Recruiting letter to children .....		270
APPENDIX 15: Recruiting letter to parents and guardians .....		272
APPENDIX 16: Children, parents, and guardians contact information sheet .....		273

APPENDIX 17: Child consent form .....	274
APPENDIX 18: Adult subjects consent form.....	276
APPENDIX 19: Adult photo permission form .....	278
APPENDIX 20: Child and youth assent form .....	279
APPENDIX 21: Human subjects consent form for parents and guardians	281
APPENDIX 22: Parents/guardians photo permission form.....	284
APPENDIX 23: Typology of walking interviews .....	285
APPENDIX 24: Adult walking interview protocol.....	286
APPENDIX 25: Focus group interviews with children protocol.....	288
APPENDIX 26: Garden notes template.....	291
APPENDIX 27: Reflection of the data analysis process .....	292

## LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

### List of Figures

Figure 3.1: Going around or threading through a garden .....	67
Figure 3.2: Thelma’s newly planted tomato plant cutting.....	76
Figure 3.3: Amber’s broken swing chair: .....	100
Figure 3.4: The visible—the fading sunflowers .....	129
Figure 3.5: Exposing the hidden hornworm .....	130
Figure 3.6: The bell—portal to the past.....	132
Figure 3.7: Joyce’s peach photo.....	139
Figure 4.1: Findings chart—How do your gardens grow? .....	153
Figure 4.2: Taneka—the tomatoes are growing pretty good .....	157
Figure 4.3: Cynthia’s photo of pink zinnias.....	158
Figure 4.4: Tamar’s photo of Gerber daisies.....	164
Figure 4.5: Angela’s shaded bench photo.....	169
Figure 4.6: Patrice’s photo of the woods .....	171
Figure 4.7: Simeon’s splash-paint photo .....	174
Figure 4.8: Tianna’s vibrant rose photo.....	176
Figure 4.9: Haven captures the field where she likes to run and play .....	177
Figure 4.10: Nadine’s peppers photo .....	179
Figure 4.11: Tamar’s peach tree roots photo .....	182
Figure 4.12: Trenton’s squash photo.....	183
Figure 4.13: Suggestions for the prospective garden rhythms given by participants .....	206
Figure 4.14: Merging church rhythm with prospective garden rhythm for garden sustainability .....	206
Figure 4.15: Priscilla’s flowers .....	210
Figure 4.16: Glynis’ raised beds photo .....	214

### List of Tables

Table 2.1: ACGA Community Garden Survey 2012 from Lawson et al. (2013, p. 30).....	30
Table 3.1: Timeline of Research Data Collection Phases and Analysis Process .....	63

## **CHAPTER ONE—INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY AND SETTING THE CONTEXT**

### **1.1 University outreach**

In *Community-based research and higher education: principles and practices*, Strand et al. (2003), discuss how university departments in the United States are seeking to find ways to bridge the gap between the learning of the classroom and the life of the community outside of the university walls. They point out that this move is part of a larger shift by the universities themselves as they are challenged to "... rethink their institutional missions" (Strand et al., 2003, p.1) to help broaden the knowledge-base of faculty and students as well as to engage more with community partners to seek solutions for issues that might be of concern to all parties. Consequently, it is now common to find faculty conducting community research or outreach work in a number of varied ways, one of which might include the building of community gardens.

### **1.2 Background—introduction to the Youth4Health project**

My research is set within the context of university-community educational outreach in north-central Louisiana in the southern part of the United States. Louisiana Tech University is located in the small city of Ruston, which is the parish seat for rural Lincoln Parish. The state of Louisiana is considered one of the unhealthiest in the country with a high concentration of children who are obese or overweight; this is especially high in rural communities of color (Murimi, 2011). The Youth4Health Project was established at Louisiana Tech University in 2012 as a result of a \$450,000 grant awarded to the School of



Human Ecology by the Health Resources and Services Administration. It was a consortium project that included an interdisciplinary team of university faculty from departments such as human ecology, nutrition, athletics, a university-based Master Gardener (myself), and leaders from two partner sites, both rurally situated African American churches some distance from the university. Based upon a needs assessment with the leaders, parents, and youth of these sites, a program was developed that promoted opportunities for healthier nutrition and physical activities for the youth through education and family involvement. Weekly activities were conducted at the churches and quarterly round-up sessions were held on Saturday mornings with children and adults from the churches where a program filled with nutritional activities, cooking, exercise, and garden tasks was offered. Every summer for three years, a Youth4Health camp was held over three weeks. As the Master Gardener, I was responsible for the educational programming for the garden-related aspects of the project. Small gardens were established at these two sites, and these will be the focus of my research.

### **1.3 Planting myself in the university garden community**

I teach English at Louisiana Tech University, and I am also a gardener. In 2010, I undertook Master Gardener training and Youth and Community Garden training. These are defined by the American Horticultural Society's website as programs that are, "typically offered through universities in the United States and Canada ... [they] provide intense home horticultural training to individuals who then volunteer in their communities, giving lectures, creating gardens,

conducting research and many other projects”. This certification provided me with the opportunity to volunteer as the garden educator on the Youth4Health project.

Master Gardeners are often regarded as the garden link to projects being carried out in a variety of settings. However, compared to the horticultural-skills of Master Gardening courses, there is comparatively less emphasis on gardening in diverse environments (Strong, 2011). Given that volunteering in the community is a mandatory aspect of becoming a Master Gardener, this creates a knowledge gap. When the Master Gardener is representing a university where community gardens are created, it becomes even more essential to understand both the wider context in which the gardens might operate in the university-community partnership and the more personal ways in which the gardens will impact those people who use them.

The discussion of literature that follows is my attempt to understand how gardens such as those that were created for the Youth4Health project fit within the broader literature of community gardens and to show that within this context they can be regarded as places with multiple, and oftentimes contested, meanings associated with them that function at different levels. The discussion will then lead to the driving question of this study about how the gardens grow; that is, what are the meanings of the gardens for those at the level who use them regularly? It is anticipated that this study will be of interest to other Master Gardeners who are also in an academic setting seeking to understand the context of community gardens for their work.

#### **1.4 African American churches as outreach partners and sites of education**

It is important to emphasize the significance of collaborating with African American churches in outreach partnerships, for these are often regarded not only as sites of worship, but they have also traditionally been and continue to be "... a central source of social, political, and educational advancement for African Americans" (Peele-Eady, 2011, p. 55). Hence there is often a mutual meeting of educational interests when university departments and African American churches work together on projects like Youth4Health. This was also written as a faith-based grant, which means that it incorporated Bible scriptures pertaining to health and wellness into some of the workshops and activities that were conducted by church leaders. In discussing such approaches, McCreary et al. (2009, p. 179) stress that "Cultural sensitivity to African American culture, in addition to the culture of the church environment, is essential for engagement". This establishes a more significant relationship between the two parties.

#### **1.5 Introduction to the churches of the study**

*(Note: church and participant names have been changed to protect the identity of people and places.)*

Hope Baptist Church is one of only a few African American churches in the immediate Ruston area. Its history goes back as far as 1864 when the church was established. It is located about 5 miles from downtown Ruston and the University. Today, its membership comprises around 200 people, with

congregants coming from Ruston and the local parishes in the surrounding area. The driveway leading up to the church passes through a tunnel of native cypress woodland, which opens up revealing a church campus set on about four acres that includes the church sanctuary and attached fellowship hall, where gatherings and bi-weekly meetings for the church seniors take place. Across from this is a large Family Life Center that hosts a day care, an after school care, a large gym downstairs, and a number of meeting rooms and offices upstairs.

Grace Baptist Church is positioned on the outskirts of a small town about 13 miles from Ruston. The church's history begins in 1893, but for its first seventy years it was located in two different places. During segregation, the building was used as a school for African American children. After integration in the late 1960s–1970s, the school was disbanded, and the church took on the property and established itself within it. The current enrollment is close to 125 people, with 50 to 60 active participants on any given Sunday. Every week, the church holds Wednesday evening Bible study and choir practice, Saturday intercessory prayer mornings, and two services on a Sunday. This church has a cemetery behind it and is flanked by a thicket of pine trees on one side, and large, old pin oak and persimmon trees on the other. It sits at the top of a small hill, which overlooks an open field of about five acres.

## **1.6 Introduction to the gardens—the stages of the gardens' development over the years**

Over the three years of the Youth4Health project, the two gardens passed through three phases of development, ranging from simple grow-tub containers to fully landscaped spaces. The objectives of establishing the gardens were to support the educational activities of the main project and to help teach about the different ways in which growing fresh vegetables and fruit for consumption could assist the churches' youth and their families to make healthier food choices. Consequently, much of the meaning of these gardens was determined by the demands of the project. The phases are detailed below.

### ***1.6.1 Phase I: the demonstration grow-tub garden at Hope Baptist Church (March 2012 to August 2012)***

The grant was awarded in spring 2012; it was decided to hold the first summer camp in July 2012. Given a limited operating budget for the garden, we relied heavily on assistance from local greenhouses and nurseries. Empty tree tubs, ranging from four to six feet in diameter, from a local landscaping business were donated and used as the main growing containers. Eight of these grow-tubs were established at Hope Baptist as a demonstration garden and were planted with flowers, herbs, and vegetables. During the camp, the children were able to walk around the tubs, observe some of the growth of the plants, and picked some of the produce as ingredients to use during cooking demonstrations. At the end of this, the original program director departed from the university and the project.

### ***1.6.2 Phase II: the grow-tub gardens at Hope Baptist and Grace Baptist (February 2013 to October 2014)***

In the second phase of the gardens, and with a new program director, more emphasis was put on the role of gardening and more grow-tubs were placed at each site. This enabled us to carry out spring and fall planting days with the children and adults from the two churches as well as use the garden grow-tubs for garden-themed or garden-placed activities during the quarterly round-up meetings that were held at the churches throughout the year. During the second summer camp at Hope Baptist, the grow-tubs were used for garden demonstrations and garden-themed activities, and they also provided cooking ingredients such as squash (courgettes), tomatoes, herbs, and cucumbers for the children to choose from as they learned to prepare various dishes (see Appendix 1).

### ***1.6.3 Phase III: re-designed gardens (March to October 2014, March to October 2015)***

Whilst the grow-tubs were functional, they were more utilitarian in nature than aesthetically pleasing. In this last phase, extra funds (\$2,000 per site) were made available to landscape the gardens and new interdisciplinary connections were made between the Youth4Health team and Louisiana Tech's School of Design. As part of their senior-year coursework, architectural students, working through the architecture department's Community Design Activism Center, were commissioned, and in consultation with representatives from the churches, the garden spaces were re-designed.

Each church included certain features into their designs; Hope Baptist requested that some commemorative bricks (with names, Biblical verses, or special messages) that church members had purchased prior to this endeavor, and which they had had in storage, be incorporated into the design. This garden was set along a central mulch pathway with the bricks being used to line the outer rim. The garden was located between the church kitchen, a storage building, and the Family Life Center and ended at picnic tables and shading peach trees. The grow-tubs were placed at stations along the pathway but were hidden by small fencing structures. Concrete block planters were stacked near the kitchen doors and filled with herbs. The back-drop to the garden was a large five-foot-high steel shading structure in a cross and branches pattern (see Appendix 2A).

Grace Baptist requested accessible growing beds and shaded seating areas so that the seniors of the church could also enjoy the gardens. Planter benches were, therefore, incorporated into the design and the grow-tubs were placed into the center of these but hidden within the seating. This way, church members could sit and garden at the same time without having to lean over too far. In the middle of the pathway was a sign with the garden's name and shaded arbor benches where church members could sit without being in full sun. This garden had a water tower that was already a key feature on the property, and so the architectural students created a circular path around the tower and added standing raised garden beds in a semi-circle around the path and pallet fencing as décor and to create a visual ending to the space. They also placed

a large wooden picnic table and a swing seat on the outer edges of the garden (see Appendix 3).

## **1.7 Project departure**

My curiosity for this study, then, began to grow as the gardens were formally re-designed and the project prepared to depart. At this point, the gardens had changed in importance. The pilot study for this research showed that they had gone from playing a very minor supporting role to the wider food and nutritional focus of the Youth4Health project to one where they now came to symbolize an aspect of the project's sustainability—a more permanent structure was now being left in place in the wake of our departure.

Even though we had always been operating in partnership with the two churches, our presence and regular visits to the grow-tub gardens in their earlier phases gave them something of a programmatic feel and the sense that they were project-related spaces. This physical change and the Youth4Health's departure, with a transition phase built in, shifted this emphasis to the two churches and their garden space and moved the gardens' identities beyond the confines of Youth4Health. At the time of departure, only a minimal amount of information had been collected about the gardens and this was mainly project-focused. Therefore, in learning about how the people from the churches come into relationship with their gardens without the demands of the project upon them, this study is seeking to fill a genuine knowledge gap about these spaces.



The aims of this research are:

- to explore what the gardens established at the end of this educational outreach project called Youth4Health have come to mean at the African American churches where they are located, and
- to learn how are these spaces are being used, integrated into church activities, and experienced by the church members and to consider how these purposes hold individual and shared significance.

The following questions will help guide this research:

- What has become of the gardens established at the end of the Youth4Health project, and what have they come to mean to the participants of the churches where they are located?
- If they are still spaces of learning, then what kind of learning and teaching is going on there? What is the source of this knowledge? Who are the learners and who are the teachers? How does this complement the activities of these churches?
- What is drawing people out of the churches and into the gardens? Who is using the gardens and how are they being used?
- Has the presence of the gardens initiated any discussion or mobilization around wider social issues?
- What do my findings teach us about how people come into relationship with and find meanings in these rural African American church gardens?

## **1.8 Overview of chapters**

In this first chapter, I have provided background to the study within the context of university-community outreach and have introduced the African American churches and the church gardens of this study.

In chapter two, I introduce this as a spatial study and draw on Henri Lefebvre's (1991) spatial triad to explain the different ways in which community gardens can be perceived, conceived, and lived.

In chapter three, I present how I sought to find the lived nature of the two church gardens by adopting a phenomenological approach to my research. I describe how the use of walking interviews with adults, garden-based activity focus group interviews with children, and photography-elicitation helped me to learn about the different meanings that the gardens held for the participants at the churches.

In chapter four, I describe my findings and explore themes that the two churches had in common as well as themes that distinguished them from each other.

In chapter five, I summarize the study and discuss how it contributes to the literature about gardens established at rural African American churches.

## **CHAPTER TWO—REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

### **2.1 Introduction to the review of literature**

This chapter will introduce how space has become a vital factor to take into consideration in educational research and will show the importance of Henri Lefebvre's (1991) spatial triad as a way to reflect on how spaces can be socially created. Following this, the three realms of Lefebvre's spatial triad will be explored to show how community gardens are spaces that have a number of meanings associated with them that can be understood on a variety of different levels. The church gardens of this study will be included in this discussion. First, I will examine how the perceived material realm of community gardens helps us to think about the tangible elements that we associate with them. Next, I will discuss how the conceptual realm is often associated with the ideas that are behind the inception of community gardens. Finally, I will consider the lived realm of community gardens and the multiple meanings they are given by those who use and interact with them regularly at this level.

### **2.2 The spatial turn in education**

Over the last decade, there has been a substantial move by researchers to attend to the spaces of education—the classrooms, buildings, and other physical settings of learning and teaching—as key factors to be explored and critiqued. This is known as the “spatial turn” (Gulson and Symes, 2007, p. 2;

Middleton, 2014, p. 2). Rather than regarding these settings as part of the background to learning, and therefore incidental, researchers are increasingly starting to foreground their importance and are highlighting how these spaces impact the lives of students and teachers who use them. Middleton (2014) explains that many of these are turning specifically to the work of French, Marxist philosopher, Henri Lefebvre (1991) He is most commonly referenced within predominantly spatial disciplines. Merrifield (2006, p.102) states that this derives from the fact that Lefebvre's work was actually introduced into English in waves. After the publication of his book, *The production of space* (written in French in 1974 but translated into English in 1991), he became known within the "first wave" as more of an urban spatial theorist because his ideas were adopted, most commonly by geographers, architects, designers, and urban town planners.

There has also been a "second wave of interpreters" (Merrifield, 2006, p.102), academics like Brenner and Elden (2009), who have translated, introduced, and disseminated more of Lefebvre's writings and have provided further context and background for his life and thinking. Middleton (2017, p. 411) points out that this has meant that his ideas have spread into other academic disciplines. This would include sociology, political theory, and more recently, law, cultural studies, and education.

In education, Sue Middleton (2014, p. 1) talks of putting Lefebvre's concepts "... to work in educational inquiries". Whilst she encourages educators to engage with Lefebvre's ideas beyond *The production of space* (Middleton,

2014, p. 3), she also recognizes that a number of us come to him through some of the ideas contained in this book, namely his conceptual triad. This is an important starting point for many educational researchers' own personal and professional "spatial turns", and its relevance to this study will now be explained in further detail below.

### 2.3 Framing the study spatially

In *The production of space*, Henri Lefebvre (1991), presents the idea that space can exist on a number of different levels other than just the physical. He proposes that it can also be created through interaction and through thought. Hence, it is something that is produced. According to Elden:

Production ... is broader than the economic production of things (stressed by Marx) and includes the production of society, knowledge and institutions ... Production in Lefebvre's sense ... needs to be grasped as both a material and mental process ... produced by social forces. (Elden, 2004a, p. 184).

To illustrate these ways in which space can be created, Lefebvre (1991, p. 33) puts forward a "conceptual triad"—three realms that constitute the production of space:

- ***Spatial practice*** (the perceived realm)—these are the material manifestations of a space that make it recognizable.
- ***Representations of space*** (the conceived realm)—these are the ways in which a space is experienced ideologically and symbolically.

- **Representational spaces** (the lived realm)—this is how a space is experienced on an every-day level from the perspective of those who live or use the space.

Lefebvre (1991, p. 40) emphasizes that one realm does not necessarily beget the other and that they ought not to be regarded as moving sequentially from one to the other; rather, this triad must be considered as three “moments of social space” that are interrelated, but, “Whether they constitute a coherent whole is another matter”.

From this depiction, these spatial realms can almost be imagined as functioning like spotlights being projected onto a stage. Even though they may at times illuminate the stage together, they also operate independently of each other. At times, one spotlight might be brighter so that the others are barely noticeable. At other times they might converge, or they might shine at the same time but their beams may highlight different features on the stage. Lefebvre states:

It is reasonable to assume that spatial practice, representations of space and representational spaces contribute in different ways to the production of space according to their qualities and attributes, according to the society or mode of production in question and according to the historical period. (Lefebvre, 1991, p. 46).

Here we see how the realms all have a role to play in how a space might be understood, but they can lead to quite different understandings of the same

space. Lefebvre (1991) also emphasizes that his triad has a practical nature to it that requires application:

The perceived-conceived-lived triad (in spatial terms: spatial practice, representations of space, representational spaces) loses all force if it is treated as an abstract 'model'. If it cannot grasp the concrete ... then its import is severely limited, amounting to no more than that of one ideological mediation among others. (Lefebvre, 1991, p. 40).

Therefore, if community gardens are conceptualized as social spaces, then they too can be looked at through these realms. By examining some of the academic literature about community gardens and considering the church gardens of this study among them, it is possible to see how, when working within this triad, they might become places upon which multiple, and often contested, meanings can converge but on different levels, and often before we have even stepped into them.

Rather than illuminate a stage, the discussion that follows uses Lefebvre's realms to shine their spotlights onto community gardens and through them will also discuss relevant aspects of the church gardens of my study.

#### **2.4 The spotlight on the perceived realm (spatial practice)**

According to Lefebvre (1991, p. 40), the perceived is "the practical basis of the perception of the outside world". This means that there is a tangible component to the way in which we experience the world. "Thus, the *texture* of space affords opportunities not only to social acts ... but also to a spatial

practice (Lefebvre, 1991, p. 57). He emphasizes how we experience space through our sense of touch and movement. Middleton (2017, p. 414), expands on this by explaining that the perceived is "... the common sense, taken-for-granted, physical/embodied world". These are the material manifestations of a place that make it recognizable and, because of this, we know how to move in and through these settings. She provides an illustration of how schools can be regarded as "assemblage[s]" of various physical features like buildings, playgrounds, and gardens (Middleton, 2017, p. 414), and she describes how children have "spatial practices" where they know how to act in such places. In this section, I will shine the spotlight on the perceived to discuss the "assemblages" and the "textures" of the places that constitute community gardens and will explain some of the expectations that are built into them and how this might influence the gardens of my study.

#### ***2.4.1 Community gardens as perceived spaces***

It is relatively easy to transfer Middleton's illustration above onto the idea of community gardens, and in Glover's definition below, with its practical elements, it is not hard to envision this kind of material space and the spatial practices that go along with it:

Community gardens, by definition, are organized initiatives whereby sections of land are used to produce food or flowers in an ... environment for the personal use or collective benefit of their members who, by virtue of their participation, share certain resources, such as space, tools, and water. (Glover, 2003, p. 191).



However, Pudup (2008), Firth et al. (2011), Rosol (2012), and McVey et al. (2018) assert that rather than being a straightforward concept, community gardens and their physical indicators are far more problematic. Firth et al. (2011, p. 556) observe that “Through their long history, community gardens have evolved and their definition has become somewhat unclear. Multiple meanings are often ascribed to them by organizers and participants”.

Through Lefebvre’s realm of the perceived, and in order to understand the complexities behind these definitions, it might help to start with the question, what does each half of this compound phrase look like? If we are to separate it into its component parts, we can now ask—what is a community? What is a garden? And, how is each half materially manifested in community gardens? Many who are involved in garden-based research (Kurtz, 2001; Lawson, 2005; Pudup, 2008; Firth et al., 2011; Pearson and Firth, 2012; McVey et al., 2018) have also deconstructed the phrase, which is helpful as it reveals a lot about the different ways in which the two halves can be interpreted, and the types of experiences contained within the practices of the gardens.

#### ***2.4.2 What is a community? The challenge of physically finding community in the garden***

What is a community? Noddings (1996) and Kurtz (2001) remind us that at its heart this question is a deeply philosophical one, with many varied answers. In her overview, Kurtz (2001, p. 661) recounts that “The notion of community has historical roots in the social thought of the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries”. But the philosophical also transposes itself onto the spatial in that traditionally

community referred to people who were often closely connected to a specific place and who were brought together through a sense of rootedness that came with belonging to that specific place. Lawson shows how this connects to the placement of gardens:

While the term *community garden* is probably familiar to many people and dates back to at least World War 1, it tends to be associated with one particular manifestation—the neighborhood garden in which individuals have their own plots yet share in the garden’s overall management. (Lawson, 2005, p. 3).

Kurtz (2001, p. 661) stresses that even in modern times, the idea of community gardens as belonging to those living in a specific neighborhood remains, despite the fact that “... the relationship between place and community remains deeply ambiguous”. Thus, the locality is often the first physical association with community that comes with such gardens, but there are others that also add to this confusion.

#### **2.4.2.1      *Community is more than local***

One another factor contributing to the ambiguity arises from where the community is to be found. A garden may physically be located in a neighborhood but not necessarily gardened by those who live there. Other factors, such as common interests, might bring people together to build a garden. Firth et al. (2011, p. 556) describe this as the difference between “place-based” and “interest-based” community gardens—this second definition would be closer to the kind of gardens that were built at the two

churches of this study. Furthermore, Pudup maintains that community gardens can also be created due to:

... a shared life circumstance (e.g., school enrollment; incarceration) that may and may not be of the gardeners' choosing. Under such compulsory conditions, 'community' can be invoked and even enforced as part of a 'strategy of moral reform,' which relies upon the re-introduction of responsibility in problematic sectors—youth, the poor and so forth ... (Pudup, 2008, p. 1231).

Thus, there is much variation in the composition of community in the gardens, and it is not always voluntary. There might also be the impression that they are to be found solely in low-income or marginalized areas and that their role is to provide something of a physical makeover for them:

By converting decaying urban spaces into ornamental or vegetable gardens or both, residents transform neighborhood liabilities, namely abandoned, dilapidated lots into tangible (e.g., fresh produce, beautification, sitting gardens for recreation) and intangible neighborhood assets. In the context of urban revitalization, therefore, these 'assets' reflect a collective effort for positive neighborhood change. (Glover, 2003, pp. 191-192).

However, in their studies, a number of researchers (Lawson, 2005; Chitov, 2006; Eizenberg, 2012; Aptekar, 2015) emphasize that community gardens are also established in gentrifying neighborhoods; whereas, Porter and McIlvaine-Newsad (2013) describe a gardening group of mixed social class where the garden setting acts as something of a social equalizer: "As people engaged in the act of gardening ... they had no idea of each other's backgrounds at first. All of the gardeners wore similar clothes and an ample amount of dirt" (Porter and McIlvaine-Newsad, 2013, p. 392). Thus, it is important to attend to the different groupings of people in a community garden.

#### **2.4.2.2      *Community is rarely idyllic or harmonious***

Pudup (2008, p. 1231) and Hill (2011, p. 551) observe that community is often associated with an ideal of people working harmoniously in their gardens. However, the reality of this as spatial practice is often far from idyllic as some people might find themselves included under this collective, while others, through the use of physical barriers such as locks, fences, gates (Kurtz, 2001; Glover, 2004), keep out or no trespassing signs, might feel unwelcome. Strunk and Richardson (2017) state:

While the term ‘community garden’ can imply that gardens are open to all residents of a neighborhood or city, access is limited in practice. Like the term ‘community’ itself, community gardens are contested spaces where membership is dependent on established norms and local ordinances that can exclude individuals and groups. (Strunk and Richardson, 2017, p. 842).

Therefore, instead of being naturally harmonious places, community gardens can become sites where confusion, confrontation, and contestation might arise with serious implications for those involved. A number of studies (Schmelzkopf, 1995; Glover, 2004; Lawson, 2005; Aptekar, 2015) have explored these themes. Schmelzkopf (1995, p. 376), introduces how “garden politics”, might occur between gardeners; for instance, there might be friction regarding the garden’s care and upkeep, or stemming from decisions about who should be allowed into the garden and who should be kept out, and who has the right to decide.

Further investigations dig deeper and examine the ways in which outside agencies put pressure on gardeners when they question the look of their gardens. For instance, L'Annunziata (2010) and Strunk and Richardson (2017) talk to refugee gardeners and discuss how the seemingly unkempt nature of their gardens leads to complaints from neighbors who then involve city officials. Both studies report that conflicting opinions about the gardens' appearance is actually rooted in culturally different gardening practices and expectations between the refugee gardeners and their American neighbors, and this leads to a discussion about perceptions of what is appropriate in regards to décor, support structure, and planting choices in these spaces; again, it raises the issue of who has the power to determine the outcome.

Other studies (Holland, 2004; Eizenberg, 2012; Purcell and Tyman, 2015; Ernwein, 2017) have expanded on the larger scale of the contestations, which often arise when developers or authorities seek to repossess the land where gardens are situated. Blake and Cloutier-Fisher (2009, p. 797) remind us that community gardens have "... become increasingly contested spaces as the value of urban land creates competing demands for housing and other services and amenities". Consequently, they point to the way in which community gardeners in the United States are often drawn into major protests when their gardens are under threat in this way.

### **2.4.2.3      *Community takes work***

When community is attached to a garden, it often takes work. This is not only the physical labor of digging and planting usually associated with gardening but the boots-on-the-ground work of community building. Pearson and Firth (2012, p. 149) highlight that “Communities are socially constructed... and hence they are a complex concept”. As a result, many (Chitov, 2006; Firth et al., 2011; Passidomo, 2016) stress that such endeavors are closely intertwined with community organization and development. To illustrate, Lawson (2005, p. 244) discusses the creation of the American Community Gardening Association (ACGA) curriculum, *Growing Communities*. She states, “The handbook rarely mentions gardening itself, addressing instead the broad range of skills needed to run a garden organization and empower local garden groups” Lawson (2005, pp. 244-245). In fact, the subtitle of the book is *Community building and organizational development through community gardening*, and it features in chapter two, “Leadership development” and “Meeting facilitation and group decision making” (Abi-Nader et al., 2005, pp. 65-84), while later in chapter three, it discusses “Strategic planning” and “Coalition building” (Abi-Nader et al., 2005, pp. 162-204). This acknowledges that there are often vital aspects of member mobilization included in this work, which go well beyond any horticultural endeavors and which often extend beyond the boundaries of the garden.

#### **2.4.2.4 Community as an urban phenomenon**

One physical factor that most of the research mentioned above has in common is that it situates the various forms of community where these gardens are located within an urban context. Schmelzkopf (1995), Kurtz (2001), Lawson (2005), and Walter (2013) add that this is unsurprising because in the United States they have historically always been part of the urban landscape and oftentimes were, and continue to be, created as ways to rally people and to address the specific social issues and needs of the day.

Walter (2013) explains that they were:

Originally focused primarily on urban and social reform, poverty relief and the construction of model citizens, and later on serving national war efforts, community gardens have evolved in recent times, first as a grassroots movement for community organizing and empowerment, and then as a pillar of urban greening policies and a critical stream in the urban food movement. (Walter, 2013, p. 524).

What is surprising, though, is that whilst it is acknowledged that they do exist in rural locations (Ferris et al., 2001; Lawson, 2005), there is actually very little written about them in the academic literature. For instance, in their article, *Review and Analysis of the Benefits, Purposes, and Motivations Associated with Community Gardening in the United States*, Draper and Freedman (2010) surveyed fifty-five articles over the decade from 1999 to 2010 but found only three that were rurally based studies (Waliczek and Zajicek, 1999; Armstrong, 2000a; Armstrong, 2000b). My own search utilizing keyword searches through Ebscohost and the Academic Search Complete databases accessed through London South Bank University and Louisiana Tech University yielded an

additional six since 2010, but with two from the same authors discussing the same project (McIlvaine-Newsad and Porter, 2013; Porter and McIlvaine-Newsad, 2013; Barnidge, et al., 2013; McCready and Durden, 2016; Kraml and Holben, 2016; DeMarco et al., 2016). The following observation provides some clues for this gap:

The urban garden gives its urban constituency the opportunity to express values associated with countryside and wilderness ... the garden also represents an opportunity to convey certain social values associated with nature ... it provides a bridge to virtues attributed to country living and the agrarian lifestyle. (Lawson, 2005, p. 289).

Lawson's statement paints a potentially romantic image of the way in which rural people might live in rural places and leaves questions about what these values and virtues might be that others critique (McIlvaine-Newsad and Porter, 2013; Porter and McIlvaine-Newsad, 2013; Reynolds, 2017). This absence from the literature makes it seem as if there is less need for community gardens in this environment. It also raises questions about how the rural setting of this particular study might impact the gardens being researched.

#### **2.4.2.5 African American churches as communities**

Moje (2000, p. 78) describes the term community as a "messy construct" because, rather like the task of weeding, it is never tidy, easy, or complete. As we have seen in the discussion above, once we start tugging at one aspect of it, we tend to unearth other possibilities that require further investigation. However, she encourages educators to engage with this complexity rather than trying to reduce it to its simplest form.



In this spirit, it is important to discuss if African American churches, like those of this study, might be regarded as communities. Firstly, it must be emphasized that there is no one monolithic African American church. McCreary et al. (2009, p. 178) state that the expression “encompasses any predominantly African American congregation, even if it is part of a predominantly white American religious denomination”. However, this definition needs to further account for the variety of experiences that exist between and among different denominations as well as within individual church congregations. Floyd-Thomas et al. (2007, p. 99) explain how “diverse forms of church organization, theologies, and worship experiences” reflect the different faith practices of each denomination, and they also point to other factors such as urban or rural location and social class, which add to their diversity. These too, as well as other intersecting factors, beyond race and faith, are what we will find among the congregations of the study, and rather than presenting them as a homogenous community, it will be important to identify the different ways in which a variety of interests and stories might be represented in the church gardens.

### ***2.4.3 What to do with community in the garden?***

Given the complexity that comes with community in the garden, Pudup (2008, p. 1231) moves to disassociate herself from the term by proposing an alternative expression—“organized garden project”. She emphasizes, “When all sorts of cultivated spaces are called ‘community gardens,’ it can be difficult to meaningfully assess their strategy or putative success—not to mention their

motivations—at producing communities, subjects or spaces” (Pudup, 2008, p. 1231). She argues that her expression would circumvent the associations that come with the word community, which would then give those involved the freedom to define their own meanings and understandings of their gardens without the burden of expectations that come along with it. However, despite her recommendations, she also concedes that “... ‘community garden’ remains the enduring phrase used in academic and non-academic literature” (Pudup, 2008, p. 1230). Due to its high level of recognition, the term continues despite its inconsistencies, but as has been shown, in physical reality, its use can make things challenging.

This section has discussed the first half of the compound phrase community garden and has shown a number of ways in which community is problematic when it is joined with garden because of the many interpretations and expectations that come with it.

#### **2.4.4 *What is a garden?***

A community garden endeavor often begins because of the pull-factor of the garden. This is the second half of the compound phrase, and its features will now be explored further in the section below.

#### **2.4.4.1      *Garden as private space***

If the material manifestation of community is complex, then surely the concept of garden is far more straightforward to describe and recognize. It is, after all, what Francis and Hester (1990, p. 5) call "... an everyday place, part of our common landscape". Because of this, many of us have personal memories and experiences of private gardens, maybe attached to homes, and these familiar encounters often form the basis of our physical expectations of them. Chevalier (1998, p. 50) explains that they might even be considered "... a spatial continuation of the house". And this brings for many a sense of familiarity with the practices of a garden. In this regard, then, gardens are outside spaces oftentimes close to a house where trees, shrubs, flowers, vegetables, and grass might grow (Wright and Wadsworth, 2014, p. 3), or are they? Westmacott (1993, p. 77) observes that "In the rural South [where this study is located] the term 'garden' is used for the place where vegetables are grown. Flowers are grown in the 'yard,' which is therefore often a place for leisure and entertainment". This may seem like a minor semantic distinction, but it is a reminder that we cannot take for granted that the same word automatically conjures up the same physical space. Bhatti (1999), Hitchings (2007), and Patman (2015) observe how magazines, garden shows on television and garden centers actually influence the look of many home gardens, frequently setting the trends in décor (such as pots, planters, and tools), and setting the tone for best practices within them (like whether they should be organic or use pesticides or herbicides); this, then, according to Bhatti (1999, p. 190) reinforces expectations of how a garden should look and

feel. So, even the seemingly personal choice and familiar appearance of a home garden is bound by culture, trends, socio-economic status, and context. Ross states that as a result, "... trying to pinpoint an exact definition of gardens is daunting given the kaleidoscopic variations of gardens across many cultures and geographies" (Ross, 1999, cited in Wright and Wadsworth, 2014, p. 3).

The above quote is perhaps a more helpful starting point in exploring gardens, for it acknowledges from the outset the sheer array that exists and makes clear that one description may not be sufficient to capture them all. If we now re-connect the two parts of the compound phrase, we can say that a community garden is one of a variety of gardens. Whilst there might be certain similarities between it and other types of gardens in terms of growing, planting and the activities that happen there, something distinctive happens when gardens are attached to community; they become publicly shared spaces with multiple facets that impact their appearance and therein lie possibilities for further variation. It is these, rather than the variations of gardens in general, that will now be examined.

#### ***2.4.5 The challenge of identifying gardens in community: less of the what and more of the where***

Lawson (2005, p. 238) points out that the expression, community garden, functions like an "umbrella" under which a number of gardens are incorporated. In order to learn more about them, the American Community Gardening Association (ACGA) periodically conducts community garden

surveys, the most recent of which was carried out in 2012 (see Lawson et al., 2013, Table 2.1 below). From its findings, the association identified two key factors that comprise these gardens—the type of location that the gardens are set in and the garden’s purpose.

**Table 2.1: ACGA Community Garden Survey 2012 from Lawson et al. (2013, p. 30)**

<b>Garden Type/Purpose</b>	<b>Percent of all Community Garden Types</b>
Neighborhood Gardens	43.76%
School Gardens	3.04%
Public Housing Gardens	9.65%
Church Gardens	20.32%
Gardens that equally address more than one	7.29%
Large “farm” sites with plots	2.30%
Senior Center / Senior Housing Gardens	3.36%
Job training/youth economic development	1.49%
Therapeutic/mental health gardens	5.96%
Other—	2.84%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.00%</b>

There are certain features worth noting within this table. First, all the gardens included in the above survey had to have ACGA membership in order to take part, which means that a number of non-member community gardens will have been left out, so there are limitations as to its representation. Second, it is likely that the numbers have changed substantially since 2012, especially in light of the increasing presence of school gardens in North America and the variety of research being conducted about them (Gaylie, 2009; Williams and Brown, 2012; Kincy et al., 2016; Loftus et al., 2017; Murakami et al., 2018). It is also interesting to note that despite the relatively high percentage of church gardens identified above, there is within the academic literature a comparatively smaller body of work to draw from. Whilst they are often listed

as sites for gardens (Cameron et al., 2010; Barnidge et al., 2013; Strunk and Richardson, 2017; McVey et al., 2018), fewer studies actually situate their research within their grounds (Warren-White et al., 2009; Smith, 2012; DeMarco et al., 2016; Hartwig and Mason, 2016).

#### ***2.4.5.1 The multiple physical settings of community gardens***

Despite these observations, the chart is still helpful, for it enables us now to envision the multiple physical settings of community gardens, and it also helps us to see how the neighborhood model, with its allotment-like plots, might dominate the literature and the accompanying expectations that come along with it in practice. Lawson (2005) also emphasizes another feature that is worth noting:

The programmatic nature of many of these efforts needs to be stressed. While the idea of allotting land for gardening may seem straightforward ... Most gardens rely on organizations and programs that coordinate gardeners, manage land and facilitate educational or social activities. (Lawson, 2005, p. 3).

In light of the amount of research carried out in community gardens by university teams (Turner, 2011; McIlvaine-Newsad and Porter, 2013; Porter and McIlvaine-Newsad, 2013; Barnidge, et al., 2013; McCreedy and Durden, 2016; Kraml and Holben, 2016; Jagger et al., 2016; DeMarco et al., 2016), universities can be regarded as one example of the kind of outside organization that Lawson (2005) refers to that establish garden programs with outreach partners. The table also helps us to understand that within such a context, the gardens may serve a purposeful role which will influence their

shape, form, and function. For example, in chapter one, it was explained how the gardens of this study passed through different stages of development. It is also described how at each stage they took on different levels of significance to the Youth4Health project and changed shape in the process.

Some scholars (Kurtz, 2001; Cameron et al., 2010; L'Annunziata, 2010; Pearson and Firth, 2012; McVey et al., 2018) observe that the distinguishing characteristics of a garden—how it looks and feels—often get lost in the literature because there is a tendency for researchers to focus on programmatic outcomes or community features that drive their research questions. This, then, makes the material elements of the garden, like the physical organization, its structures, and the use of space (Chitov, 2006, p. 438) seem insignificant or so similar that they are not worth mentioning. However, these researchers argue that gardens take on so many forms that dwelling on them can be a very revealing way to show a garden's diversity, and it often leads to a far more intimate understanding of such a space, which is what will be sought through this study. When this is attended to, the unique *terroir*, or character of the physical spaces, comes through and reveals the kinds of differences that are frequently present in community gardens but not always emphasized.

It will be important to attend to the ways in which the material elements are understood by the participants of this particular study. According to Lefebvre:

It is helpful to think of architectures as 'archi-textures', to treat each monument or building viewed in its surroundings and context, in the

populated area and associated networks in which it is set down, as part of a particular production of space". (Lefebvre, 1991, p.118).

In these words, we can appreciate the uniqueness that arises not just from a building but also from a garden's situation and circumstance and the many and varied ways in which it is produced.

#### **2.4.6 *Perceived section summary***

This section has shone the spotlight on Lefebvre's perceived realm to consider the spatial practices of community gardens in both their separate manifestations (as community and as garden) and in their combined tangible manifestations (as community gardens). In the discussion we have seen that they come pre-laden with meaning about the texture of them as physical constructs and that this creates expectations and tensions about their spatial practices; as such, they are often represented as neutral, or idealistic and uniform spaces, when in fact, they are far more complex and heterogeneous.

#### **2.5 The spotlight on the conceived realm (representations of space)**

This section will continue to illuminate another realm of Lefebvre's special triad, the conceived. A space is not only about the physical constructions that comprise it and the spatial practices that accompany it, but also about the ideas that encircle it. For Lefebvre (1991) these belong to the realm of the conceived:



[This is] ... the space of scientists, planners, urbanists, technocratic subdividers and social engineers, as of a certain type of artist with a scientific bent ... all of whom identify with what is lived and what is perceived with what is conceived. This is the dominant space in any society (or mode of production) ... Conceptions of space tend, with certain exceptions ... towards a system of verbal and therefore intellectually worked out signs". (Lefebvre, 1991, pp. 38–39).

It is, then, a site of logic and a site of discourse. In education, Middleton (2014, p. 144) describes it as the space of officialdom and policy. It is also the site of educational theories:

As mental spaces ... they 'exist' in the pages of academic works whose production and use is fragmented between disciplines and fields. What should be education's aims and objectives (philosophy)? How best do people learn (psychology or psychoanalysis)? What discourses inform (or have informed) education policies (history or policy studies)? How might particular systems, practices or values affect the 'achievement' of various social groups (sociology)? (Middleton, 2014, p. 57).

Thus, in this realm of the triad, questions about community gardens and their educational value are asked and answered (what might be the purpose of these gardens? How might they be learning spaces? What decisions inform their creation?) Herein the spotlight of the conceived shines its beam on the literature, statistics, signs, symbols, and imagery—the representations—where educators are likely to seek justification and inspiration for their garden outreach work and look for ideas in the discourses of others.

### **2.5.1 Seeking justification**

Pearson and Firth (2012, p. 147) point out that there are a number of ideas to draw upon, for community gardens have spilled out of their horticultural

container and are now being written about in many disciplines at the university level: “The literature dealing with community gardens is mainly located in the academic field of social science, with contributions from sociology, human geography, and anthropology”. They explain that the variety of research being conducted in and about these gardens (Kurtz, 2001; Carney et al., 2012; Delgado, 2013; Walter, 2013; Aptekar, 2015; Loftus et al., 2017) is reflective of the concerns around food, health, and community (Firth et al., 2011, p.555), and furthermore, due to their interdisciplinary nature, these gardens are now considered part of a wider trend by universities to address some of these issues. Many (Gaylie, 2009; Draper and Darcy Freedman, 2010; Rodriguez and Grahame, 2016; Gardner Burt, 2016; Reese, 2019) have also commented on how, during the Obama administration, these projects might also have been galvanized by the work of former First Lady, Michelle Obama, and her “Let’s Move” campaign, which carried a message of healthy eating and exercise and which also featured a vegetable garden being established at the White House. This took on a prominent role in the campaign. With seasonal photographic and video updates showing Mrs Obama and different groups of children planting and harvesting from the garden, and a book about the garden, *American grown: the story of the White House kitchen garden and gardens across America* (Obama, 2012), it was a constant presence in the news over eight years and might have contributed to the popularity of community gardens over this time. It also sent out a powerful message that centralized the importance of growing fruit and vegetables for health, and many projects, including our own, may well have been inspired by it.

As a result, (Firth et al., 2011, p.555) claim that "... community gardens have been appropriated by various statutory and voluntary agencies as an intervention to aid urban regeneration, social cohesion and related health problems". Thus, it would seem that the very inclusion of gardens in the Youth4Health project as a space in which to learn and teach has come about in part because this trend is occurring even at the university level. In the previous section on the realm of the perceived, the programmatic nature of some community gardens was already alluded to (see section 1.1). In this realm we are likely to hear the discourses behind their inception.

### ***2.5.2 The connections between community gardens and health—statistics***

As part of this wider trend around food issues, faculty outreach teams, like Youth4Health, justify the need for community gardens by drawing attention to the rising state of poor health of children and adults in the United States (Harmon, 2011; Delagado, 2013; Gardner Burt, 2016). According to a report by Hales et al. (2017) from The National Center for Health Statistics, between 1999 to 2017 obesity rates have been on the rise for both adults and youth. Loftus et al., (2017, p. 507) indicate that this has brought with it other health-related issues: "Health impacts associated with unhealthy weight include heart disease, diabetes, depression ...". In fact, in 2015 it was found that "... an estimated ... 7.2% of the U.S. population—had diagnosed diabetes" (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2017b, p. 3). This includes children where "The increasing frequency of both type 1 and type 2 diabetes in young people is a growing clinical and public health concern" (Centers for Disease Control

and Prevention, 2017a, p. 7). Increasingly, adults and children are falling sick and there is a rising cause for concern.

### **2.5.3 Food-related factors**

Factors that contribute to this problem are understood to come from unhealthy food choices and people not eating sufficient quantities of fruit and vegetables regularly to maintain a good level of health (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2018, p. 3). Lee-Kwan et al. (2017, p. 1241) state that in 2015, "... 12.2% [of adults] met fruit intake recommendations and 9.3% met vegetable intake recommendations". In their survey, Moore et al. (2013, p. 549) found that only "8.5% of high school students nationwide met fruit recommendations ... and 2.1% met vegetable recommendations". These figures highlight how a lack of fresh produce can lead to serious nutritional deficiencies.

Whilst a lack of healthy food consumption is a phenomenon that is occurring throughout the United States, it is more prominent in the South. According to Murimi (2011) and Lee-Kwan et al. (2017), Louisiana (where this study was conducted) is considered one of the unhealthiest states in the country, which ranks close to the top in regards to heart disease, strokes, and diabetes. It also has a high concentration of children who are obese or overweight. These statistics are also found to be higher in communities of color. For instance, in 2017 African American adolescents in Louisiana had a 17.7% prevalence of obesity compared to white adolescents at 15.8% (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2019).

#### **2.5.4 Food deserts—grocery gaps**

Contributing to this is the phenomenon of food deserts. This is when there are few options for people within a specific area to purchase their groceries. McEntee (2011) discusses that it is often presented as an urban issue, but it impacts rural areas too and affects low income and people of color the most. Gottlieb and Anaupama (2010, p. 245) point out that the idea of a food “desert” is actually something of a misnomer as it implies a “nothingness” (Reese, (2019, p. 45) within a neighborhood or area. They emphasize that the expression “grocery gap” (Gottlieb and Anaupama, 2010, p. 245) is perhaps a more accurate reflection of the fact that other kinds of stores or places to eat may be nearer to residents in a particular area than a supermarket. For example, there might be gas stations, liquor stores that sell a small amount of groceries, fast food restaurants, and, increasingly, dollar stores in the vicinity (Beaulac et al., 2009; Ferdman, 2018; Lloyd, 2019). In urban areas, these might be the only walkable food options. For rural residents, the distance will be much further as a supermarket can be anywhere from 10 to 20 miles away (United States Department of Agriculture, 2009, p. 35). Therefore, as these stores may well be within closer proximity than a supermarket, people may end up shopping there more out of necessity rather than choice. In either setting, though, such stores have fewer food selections and what they have is of lesser quality. They are more likely to sell non-perishable and processed goods like boxed and tinned items rather than healthier, fresher options like fruits or vegetables that would be available in a grocery store. Therefore,

McEntee (2011, p. 242) emphasizes that lack of access to healthy food contributes to food insecurity.

Much of the research around these grocery gaps also seeks to explore alternative food-related solutions, such as encouraging healthier eating choices (Meinen et al., 2012; Barnidge et al., 2013), improving food security by reducing local food supply chains (Seyfang, 2006), the provisioning of community food programs (Loopstra and Tarasuk, 2013; Whitley, 2013), and the building of community gardens (United States Department of Agriculture, 2009; Barnidge et al., 2013; Porter and McIlvaine-Newsad, 2013; Delgado, 2013; McCready and Durden, 2016).

Therefore, there is a point of convergence between growing fruit and vegetables and the wider discourses which express concerns around food and health.

During the Youth4Health project, we also presented the role of the community gardens to the church members as places where they might have better quality of food by growing their own. With the project's emphasis on health, the gardens were meant to help encourage children and adults from the two churches to experience growing and tasting different fruit and vegetable choices that had been grown at the sites.

### **2.5.5 *Privilege in the rhetoric***

However, tensions exist around using community gardens in this way. Firstly, Guthman (2008; 2011), raises awareness about the tone of the language that is sometimes employed during the inception of such projects. Drawing upon her experience as a specialist in community education at the University of California, Santa Cruz, Guthman (2008, p. 441; 2011, p. 156) observes that in their capacity to teach people about healthy food alternatives, educators and organizers of garden and food-related projects often employ a type of rhetoric that comes from a position of privilege. She argues:

Although there is enjoyment to be shared in home-grown tomatoes, pasture-raised eggs and food made from scratch, teaching people what and how to eat does appear to have many of the trappings of a civilizing mission, including the sense that the missionaries know what's right. (Guthman, 2011, p. 156).

By intentionally evoking the language of “missionary zeal” Guthman (2008, p. 436; 2011, p. 159), is identifying the white and middle-class privilege that is often contained within the messaging around healthy food issues and how it gets relayed to people of color and those from low-income backgrounds in a paternalistic manner (Guthman, 2008, p. 434). Her observations are so important because they turn the spotlight on the organizers, researchers, and educators (Guthman, 2008, p. 433), we who are involved in this work, and they challenge us to consider what values we espouse through our outreach.

### **2.5.6 *Planting whose power in the garden?***

Furthermore, Pudup (2008, p. 1230) questions the involvement of “non-state and quasi-state actors” in community garden projects and claims that their involvement has come about as a consequence of “neo-liberal governmentality” (Pudup, 2008, p. 1228). Therefore, she regards their creation as far less altruistic than it might originally seem. She emphasizes how community gardens are increasingly being used as “spaces in which gardening puts individuals in charge of their own adjustment(s) to economic restructuring and social dislocation through self-help technologies centered on personal contact with nature” (Pudup, 2008, p. 1228). There is, then, a way of using the community gardens to seemingly address a social problem that is much larger than the individual solution.

From this perspective, then, community gardens are being used as political spaces:

... by encouraging the development of “community” gardens on private land (such as churchyards or apartment building verges), individuals and communities could be inadvertently facilitating the withdrawal of the state from the provision of public amenities. (Jerme and Wakefield, 2013, p. 297-8).

They are regarded as filling a role that the state or local governments should be providing and by implication, those who are helping to implement these gardens might in some way be regarded as upholding this system. For this reason, Lawson (2005), Pudup (2008), and Guthman (2008; 2011), also highlight that these food and health issues are being presented primarily as



being about individual choice and lack of individual access, which gives the impression that the problem and the solution lie solely within the hands of individuals, meaning that "... the larger issues that prompted the gardens in the first place ... are more or less ignored" (Lawson, 2005, p. 293).

### **2.5.7 Structural issues**

For this reason, it is important to consider research that seeks to explore some of the structural causes that bring about conditions like grocery gaps. Eisenhauer (2001), Guthman (2008), McClintock (2011), and Morales (2011), point to factors such as supermarket redlining. According to Reese (2019, p. 6), this is the process of "... grocery stores consciously avoiding low income areas". The term harkens back to a period from the late 1930s to the late 1960s when the federal government, banks, and insurance companies in the United States would highlight on maps African American neighborhoods in red ink. These areas were then identified as investment risks and those people of color that were living there were prevented from receiving mortgages or loans. Eisenhauer (2001), Guthman (2008), and McClintock, (2011), liken the business decision of supermarkets not to invest in certain areas as having a similar impact as these banks historically withholding financial assistance. According to Eisenhauer (2001, p. 128), "As with the more familiar form of redlining, the driving force behind 'supermarket redlining' (and other corporate decisions about investing in particular neighborhoods) is abstraction based on stereotype". Not investing in a neighborhood, whether it be for housing or supermarkets, creates significant disparities because it has a degenerative

effect over the area. According to a number of authors (Eisenhauer, 2001; Guthman, 2008; Flachs, 2010; Reese, 2019), accompanying this is the phenomenon of “white flight” whereby white families and businesses move from the center of a city into the suburbs; the cumulative effect of this is the creation of racially and socially segregated neighborhoods which are reflective of many American cities and even small towns. They emphasize that the supermarkets have tended to follow this flight; Eisenhauer (2001, p. 127) even goes so far as to state that the impact of this move has been so extensive that it has contributed to a form of “placemaking behavior”. This is illustrated by Gottlieb and Anaupama (2010) who state:

By 2010 a food-related land use and built environment conundrum had emerged: dense urban areas, particularly in low-income inner-city neighborhoods, and also more sparsely populated rural areas suffer from various grocery gaps and an overabundance of fast food and unhealthy food options. At the same time ... a transportation gap has emerged ... As a result, this dual ... gap has become a core food justice and related transportation justice concern, affecting communities through land use factors that intensify those effects rather than reduce them. (Gottlieb and Anaupama, 2010, p. 48).

A number of studies (Eisenhauer, 2001; United States Department of Agriculture, 2009; McEntee, 2011; and Porter and McIlvaine-Newsad, 2013) point out that when people do not have easy access to public transportation (as is the case in many rural areas) or to their own transportation in order to get to a supermarket, they are caught in something of a double-bind situation—first, they must rely on other means of transport to go shopping and then the cost of gas and time adds to the expense of their shopping bill.

McEntee (2011, p. 242) emphasizes here again how the structural contributes to individuals' level of food insecurity.

### **2.5.8 A call for changes in policy**

Guthman (2008; 2011), Gottletib and Anampura (2010), and Winne (2017), call for a different or additional kind of action from the same groups, like university researchers and organizations, who concern themselves with food-related projects:

... the focus of activism should shift away from the particular qualities of food and towards the injustices that underlie disparities in food access. Activists might pay more attention to projects considered much more difficult in the current political climate: eliminating redlining, investing in urban renewal, expanding entitlement programs, obtaining living wages, along with eliminating toxins from and improving the quality of the mainstream food supply. (Guthman, 2008, p. 443).

They argue here that if real change in the food system is to come, then it cannot be only at the level of organizations and projects providing alternative forms of food in the shape of community gardens and food outreach, but that it must also at the wider level of policy which extends all the way along the food access and production chain. They maintain that this has been lacking up until now and that more attention needs to also been given to the latter by organizations and educators if they really want to make a lasting difference to the health of the people that they reach out to through their projects.

## **2.6 Conceived section summary**

This section has shone the spotlight on Lefebvre's conceived realm to consider the representations of community garden spaces when they are introduced as part of a university-related project. In the discussion, we have seen that they are often considered by organizations as places to take action around issues of food and health. It has also shown that, like the perceived, this is a realm of different opinions and meanings around the role of community gardens and the power structures that might be at play.

## **2.7 Spotlight on the lived realm (representational spaces)**

According to Lefebvre (1991, p. 230), "Knowledge falls into a trap when it makes representations of space the basis for the study of 'life', for in doing so it reduces lived experience". Lefebvre is arguing here that despite the power that lies within the ideas of the conceived, there are limitations to them. Considering a space only through this realm has what Fraser (2015, p. 48) refers to as a distancing effect from how it is actually lived in real life; it de-personalizes something that is also highly personal. For Lefebvre, there is a need to go closer to real life; a space cannot be complete without shining the spotlight on the realm of representational spaces; therefore, it is this, the lived, that now requires our attention.

### **2.7.1 Finding meaning in the lived**

Lefebvre explains that the way in which a physical space becomes lived is by taking on meaning from the needs, wants, and uses, of those who encounter it and have to maneuver their way regularly within it:

*Representational spaces: space as directly lived through its associated images and symbols, and hence the space of 'inhabitants' and 'users' ... This is the ... space which the imagination seeks to change and appropriate. It overlays physical space, making symbolic use of its objects. (Lefebvre, 1991, p. 39).*

Some of this may be visible through the actions of people within a particular space, but by stating that this meaning can be symbolic and that it draws on the imaginary, he indicates that from the outside it may not necessarily be obvious what those meanings are or where they might come from. What may seem mundane and ordinary could also be highly significant, for "... it is within the mundane and ordinary that our life takes place" (Fincham et al., 2010, p. 6).

In the above quote about representational spaces, Lefebvre also introduces the idea of appropriation as part of the lived experience. He explains this happens when, "groups take up residence in spaces whose pre-existing form, having been designed for some other purpose, is inappropriate to the needs of their would-be communal life" (Lefebvre, 1991, p.168). He indicates that this might be done covertly, as an act of dissent, or it can emanate from a need for greater social belonging and can reflect a way of putting a personal

mark on a space. As an illustration, in discussing some of her earlier work, Middleton (2012; 2014, pp. 83-110) explains how this appropriation might occur for children in a school setting when their classrooms become “... infused with their personal, cultural, spiritual and emotional meanings” (Middleton, 2017, p. 416). In this way, then, the lived is also very much also about feelings and sensations about a space and the need to make it significant. This is stressed by Lefebvre when he describes it in the following way:

Representational space is alive: it speaks. It has an affective kernel or centre: Ego, bed, bedroom, dwelling, house; or: square, church, graveyard [we might add garden here too]. It embraces the loci of passion, of action, and of lived situations, and thus immediately implies time. (Lefebvre, 1991, pp. 42).

As can be seen here, our everyday life is, in fact, conducted in multiple different spaces that we move in and out of regularly, both privately and publicly. They often evoke reactions about them and those that we might meet within them; hence meaning might come from how a space is shared with others. In referring to time, Lefebvre also offers us a further clue as to the characteristics of the lived and that is that the movement in and around particular spaces is usually accompanied by the movement of time. For instance, we go to certain places at certain times and find ourselves using or moving in a space for a specific length of time. Thus, the lived has a rhythm to it. In *The production of space*, Lefebvre (1991, pp. 205-207) puts forward a “rhythm analysis”—a way of considering the lived through its various rhythms—from the highly intimate of breathing and bodily functions, to the

shared rhythm of place and time, to the cyclical rhythms of nature. For him, all of these have the potential to provide a deeper understanding of the meanings of our everyday experiences.

Learning about the lived, therefore, is an opportunity to hear and bring to the fore the voices and actions of those who interact with a particular space on a regular basis and who might not always be heard against the more powerful voices of the conceived, or the taken-for-granted voices of the perceived.

### **2.7.2 *The lived in community gardens***

Within a community garden setting it is vital to learn about the lived because as many (L'Annunziata, 2010; Turner et al., 2011; Purcell and Tyman, 2015; Struck and Richardson, 2017) point out there often is a difference between the meanings that could come from official representations, like reports or organizers' research (most often from a conceived, project-related perspective) and the everyday (or lived) meanings that are given to the gardens by those who actually use them—the “inhabitants”.

There are a number of studies Glover (2003; 2004), L'Annunziata (2010), Aptekar (2015) that acknowledge the idea of community gardens as being lived spaces. Even though they are not referring to Lefebvre's work, through their research on the everyday nature of the lives of the gardeners, they shed some light as to how a garden might be lived. For instance, L'Annunziata (2010, p. 128) talks about her study as being from the level of people “on-the-

ground". She writes about Hmong women gardeners and unravels in their gardens their stories of immigration, English language use, and cultural growing methods. For L'Annunziata (2010, p. 128), the lived is "a means to see how the garden ecology is tied to identity, gender, knowledge production, community activism and power". It is only by going this close to the participants that it would possible for the researcher to glean this from the garden.

Using a Lefebvrian perspective, and drawing on the spatial triad, Eizenberg (2012) explores community gardens in New York. At the lived level he finds certain kinds of gardens reflecting the people from diverse cultures who comprise the city. The style of the garden and what is grown are redolent of the heritage of the gardeners, who in his study come from a Puerto Rican or African American background, and they all hold meanings to them that are reflective of their traditions; therefore, as lived spaces, he refers to these gardens as "carriers of culture" (Eizenberg, 2012, p. 770).

It was at the level of the lived that I entered the church gardens that were established at the end of the Youth4Health project. From this perspective, I attempted to identify who was using the gardens and how, and I asked about the purposes that this might serve, and the meanings that this might hold.

### ***2.7.3 Locating the study in the literature***

Prior to this discussion, though, it is worth considering how this study might fit within the existing literature around community gardens set in African



American church gardens. It has already been indicated in the introduction that African American churches are regarded as important sites of education; consequently, much of the research focuses on how the inside of these churches or their attached rooms or buildings are places for learning. For example, in one Californian Baptist church, Peele-Eady (2011) considered how the positive environment of the Sunday school aided children with their communication skills and discussed how her findings might transfer into a classroom setting. In another study, Kelly (2001) found that literacy programs for African American children set up in the multipurpose room of their church on Saturdays provided a supportive learning environment. Both studies emphasize how such culturally appropriate approaches are often in contrast to African American children's experiences within traditional school settings. From a health perspective, Epstein et al. (2007), introduced a drug awareness program in two African American Missouri churches, while Williamson and Kautz (2009) describe a program of heart health education at a church in North Carolina. Here too the emphasis is on partnership-building and faith-based approaches, and they describe how the activities of the studies such as creating a video, doing physical workouts and cooking take place inside of the church buildings. Torrence (2005, p. 162) even emphasizes the importance of the church buildings for those undertaking research at rural African American churches, "... the structural design of church facilities makes churches ideal for holding meetings, educational programs, and in some instances exercise sessions". There has clearly been a lot of focus on the inside of these sites.

In contrast, only a few studies (Barnidge et al., 2013; Struck and Richardson, 2017), make reference to the outside of African American church buildings and explain how church land is used to establish community gardens. Often, though, these gardens are not the focus of the research. One study (Warren-White et al., 2009) did provide more detail and considered the wider impact of their garden on church members' lives, but in keeping with the general trend of the literature discussed in the perceived section above, this was done within an urban setting. Of the literature surveyed, only De Marco et al. (2016), explored the gardens at their rural African American church. By focusing on two rurally situated churches, my study will add to their work.

#### ***2.7.4 Revisiting the questions of the study***

In this section, I will revisit some of the questions of this study and will refer to De Marco et al. (2016), and briefly to Warren-White et al. (2009) in order to anticipate how the lived might manifest itself within rural African American church gardens. These were not studies that were exploring the lived from a Lefebvrian perspective, but given the everyday nature of the lived and its emphasis on personal meanings, the studies might provide some initial clues about what to anticipate from the users of the gardens of this study.

##### ***2.7.4.1 The gardens as possible spaces of learning***

One of the questions this study is asking is what kind of learning is taking place around the gardens, and who are the teachers and who are the

learners? Much of the work referenced above, whether in rural or urban settings, has an explicit health education focus and discusses the ways in which the community gardens enabled church participants to eat the produce that they grew and how it impacted their health and eating habits. The Youth4Health project initially created the gardens as sites of demonstration and in later phases as places for the children and adults involved with the project to learn about the growing and tending of plants and vegetables as well as the nutritional benefits that come from this. Whilst my study is not driven by the same health-related goals of Youth4Health, I am interested to find out if the gardens at Hope and Grace Baptist Churches continue as places of learning, which might be health-related but could be more practical. For instance, De Marco et al. (2016, p. 323) comment on how the children of their study learned a number of garden skill-sets, like watering, movement, and pest control, through interacting in the gardens with the adults.

#### **2.7.4.2        *The gardens as possible spaces for faith in action through food justice***

In their urban setting, Warren-White et al. (2009) explain how one of their church sites donated surplus produce from their gardens to food banks. In many ways, such contributions can be regarded as examples of faith in action. It is possible, therefore, to ask if the presence of the gardens at Hope and Grace Baptist Churches have initiated any discussion or mobilization among church members around wider issues of food justice? Alternatively, faith might express itself in other ways that are significant to the participants.

#### **2.7.4.3      *The gardens as possible places for fellowship***

It is important to consider how the physical setting might assist in the connections that are made in these spaces. De Marco et al. (2016, p. 323) explain how many adults in their study shared “ ... their great enjoyment of the fellowship they experienced by being out in the field planting and harvesting together”. As I seek to find out more about the nature of Hope and Grace Baptist Church gardens, it will be interesting to see what the findings of my study teach about how and where people come into relationship with and find meanings within the physical space of the garden.

#### **2.7.4.4      *The impact of external factors on the gardens***

One of the questions of my study asks, what is drawing people out of the churches and into the gardens? De Marco et al. (2016) bring up an alternative perspective to this when they discuss some of the factors that prevented people of their church from being able to get out to the gardens:

... the pilot study was conducted in a rural community and although most participants attended the church, their residences were dispersed over a wide geographical area, making provision of transportation challenging and without more funds for gas we had to rely on participants to find their own transportation. De Marco et al. (2016, pp. 324-325).

This observation acts as a reminder that it cannot be taken for granted that access to the gardens will be easy or convenient and that everyday meanings of the lived experience of the gardens might be related to issues of feasibility.

### **2.7.5 *Lived section summary***

This section has illuminated certain aspects of Lefebvre's lived realm. It is these that will continue to be explored now as I enter into our examination of these two rural African American church gardens and ask the participants to cast light upon what the gardens have come to mean to them.

### **2.7.6 *Review of literature chapter summary***

Using Lefebvre's spatial triad of the perceived, the conceived, and the lived realms, this chapter has discussed the many and varied meanings that are attributed to community gardens and showed that they are frequently contested spaces. From the realm of the perceived, I explained how the physical attributes of community and garden are often confusing and hard to locate. In the conceived realm, I showed how ideas justifying the need for community gardens might arise and how power is held within this discourse. Within the realm of the lived, I explored how meanings are attributed to community gardens by those who use them, and that for Lefebvre, this understanding is key.

Within the discussion, certain gaps in the literature were also identified. Firstly, despite the high numbers of church gardens reflected on the American Community Gardening Association chart (see Table 2.1), only a few studies about church community gardens were found, and then the church setting tends to be mentioned only in passing. Next, there are very few studies of

community gardens in rural areas as they are presented as an urban phenomenon. Even fewer studies discuss rural African American church gardens in any detail or examine them in any depth. In asking about the meanings of the gardens at Hope and Grace Baptist churches, my study will make a contribution to some of these missing areas.

## **CHAPTER THREE—METHODOLOGY**

### **3.1 Introduction to research design**

Chapter three discusses the value of my research as a phenomenological study and makes connections between the lived of phenomenology and the lived of Lefebvre. Following this, I explain how I designed the research methods of adult walking interviews, children’s activity focus groups, photography-elicitation and garden notes to help me to collect data. The discussion will explain the different ways in which these methods enabled me to learn about the gardens at the churches, and it will address the ethical challenges that arose during the process.

#### ***3.1.1 Posing phenomenological questions***

The purpose of my qualitative study was to learn what the gardens established at the end of the Youth4Health project have come to mean to the members of the churches where they are set. How are the gardens being used, lived, and considered? According to van Manen (1997, p. 23), these are inherently “phenomenological questions”, for they seek to understand “... the meaning and significance of certain phenomena”.

#### ***3.1.2 What is phenomenology?***

Butler-Kisber (2010), Finlay (2011), and Vagle (2018) explain that as a philosophy, phenomenology can be traced to the Austrian-German

philosopher Husserl, who in the early part of the 1900s introduced his ideas about the need to consider more deeply the lived—the everyday experiences of people and how they respond to the phenomena that they encounter. A phenomenon can be “an event, object, situation, or process” (Finlay, 2011, p. 16). However, Vagle (2018, p. 10) is quick to emphasize that phenomenology ought not to be considered in the singular but rather in the plural. Thus, there are phenomenologies; for example, “Transcendental, Existential, and Hermeneutic offer different nuances of focus” (Quinn Patton, 2015, p. 117). This study utilized a hermeneutic, also known as an interpretive, approach.

### **3.1.3 Link to Lefebvre**

It is no small coincidence that there is some commonality between Lefebvre’s discussion of the lived in his spatial triad and the way in which the concept is described and explained in phenomenological thought, for according to Elden (2004a) and Schmid (2008), he was heavily influenced by this philosophy. Elden (2004a, p. 101) explains that Lefebvre drew upon the German philosopher Heidegger in many of his ideas and claims that “He can therefore profitably be read on a political and philosophical level as operating between Marx and Heidegger”. Schmid (2008, pp. 38-39), furthers this discussion by exploring other phenomenological background influences behind Lefebvre’s (1991) *The production of space* and explains that it is less well known that Lefebvre also turned to the work of his compatriots and peers Merleau-Ponty, Sartre, and Bachelard. However, according to Schmid (2008), Lefebvre departed from them in that, for him, the lived and the everyday were connected



to space not separate from it. Hence, “Lefebvre’s aim is, so to speak, a materialist version of phenomenology” (Schmid, 2008, p. 39). Thus, as phenomenology is the study of experiences of everyday life, then everyday life happens within a specific context or space, and for Lefebvre, this is significant to the meaning of how a phenomenon is encountered and experienced.

### ***3.1.4 Phenomenological research approaches***

According to Vagle (2018, p. 10), the phenomenological philosophies have also led to a number of phenomenological methodologies, but what brings them together is that they have certain elements that they share (Cresswell, 2007, p. 58; Butler-Kisber, 2010, p. 51). Finlay (2011, pp. 15–16), provides six facets that are present in the phenomenological project:

1. A focus on lived experience and meanings.
2. The use of rigorous, rich, resonant description.
3. A concern with existential issues.
4. The assumption that the body and world are intertwined.
5. The application of a phenomenological attitude.
6. A potentially transformative relational approach.

I draw upon these six facets and thread their elements through my discussion below to show how they informed the methodology for this study.

Quinn Patton (2015, p. 116) states, “The only way for us to really know what another person experiences is to experience the phenomenon as directly as possible for ourselves”. He emphasizes that this usually comes by encouraging participants to talk about the phenomenon and recommends conducting interviews or asking participants to write about their experiences in journals. However, throughout my time in the gardens during the Youth4Health project, I noticed that gardening with others seemed to naturally engender the sharing of stories and feelings, and so I felt that as I was exploring the gardens as a phenomena and the participants’ everyday experiences of them, it would be appropriate to physically go a step closer with his recommendation by actually conducting the interviews in the gardens themselves.

### ***3.1.5 Reconstituting the lived garden***

There is, however, something retrospective about the act of asking someone to talk about a phenomenon, and van Manen (1997) and Seidman (2013) point out that while we might experience something in the present, we usually re-live it through the lens of the past, “By concentrating on the details of participants’ experiences, interviewers strive as best as possible to guide their participants to reconstitute their lived experience. Interviewers using a phenomenological approach are always trying to make the ‘was’ come as close as possible to what was the ‘is’ ” (Seidman, 2013, p. 18). This, then, is one of the challenges for the researcher. One recommendation about how to

overcome such a challenge is from Vagle (2018, p. 17) when he suggests that “The phenomenon calls for how it should be studied”.

Therefore, I selected the methods below, in the hope that they would help emulate, to some degree, in an interview situation what participants might actually do in a garden (walk, talk, garden, take photos). Thus, data collection was conducted in the following ways:

1. Adults were invited to take part in a walking interview in the garden.
2. Children were invited to take part in a garden-based activity focus group interview.
3. During these interviews, photography-elicitation with both children and adults added another layer to support the data collection process.
4. I kept a garden notebook throughout the data collection process.

Through a mobile and embodied engagement in the garden and by talking to a number of people (25 adults and 16 children), I hoped to discover what their garden might mean to the participants “... how they perceive it, describe it, feel about it, judge it, remember it, make sense of it, and talk about it with others” (Quinn Paton, 2015, p. 115). I felt that this approach to the interviewing might help to capture elements of the “was” (the past stories and experiences of the garden), while perhaps even triggering moments of the “is” (observations about the garden in real-time). What follows now is a discussion of these data collection methods.

### 3.2 Renewing relationships

In their chapter about doing research in African American churches, Floyd-Thomas et al. (2007) ask:

How then do researchers who are members of the communities that they study negotiate their relationships with those religious communities? What are the roles, responsibilities, privileges and challenges faced by researchers who simultaneously occupy insider and outsider positions? (Floyd-Thomas et al., 2007, p. 103).

As a British researcher of Ghanaian-German heritage who is not a member of these churches, I also had to ask these questions of myself to address my responsibilities and privileges so that I was able to not just access these churches as research sites but to make a genuine contact with those that I was hoping to recruit to my research. I initially approached two insider contacts from the churches of the study. These were colleagues who had been church-university members of the Youth4Health team, and I spent a lot of time with them discussing the possibility of conducting my research. These colleagues acted as counsel and intermediaries at all levels of the planning stages and beyond. They were helpful in guiding my actions and were attentive to the practicalities of me developing relationships back at the churches in an appropriate way in these faith-based settings. I could not have done this study without their assistance.

Even though I was returning in 2017, two years after the end of Youth4Health, given the three-year presence of the project, from 2012–2015, some of the

members of the churches may have been wary of any further university intrusion. To mitigate this, I remained aware of how I conducted myself as I was re-introduced to the sites, and I made sure the participants did not feel pressured to take part in the study.

### **3.3 General ethical considerations**

I read the British Educational Research Association (BERA) ethical guidelines, and as this study was conducted in the USA, I also undertook online training at its American equivalent—the US Department of Health and Human Services Office for Human Research Protection (OHRP). Permission to conduct this study was granted through the London South Bank University Ethics Panel and the Institutional Review Board at Louisiana Tech University. Two sets of ethics applications had to be completed—one for each site and in accordance with each institution’s regulations and documentation format (see Appendices 4 and 5). I sought permission from the church gatekeepers—the pastors at both sites (see Appendix 6). Once this was granted, I conducted a number of visits to the churches on Wednesday evenings and Sundays in order to recruit church members to the study (see Appendices 7, 8, and 13), and this occurred on a rolling basis throughout the three phases of data collection. Further discussion about specific ethical considerations regarding walking interviews, focus groups with children, photography-elicitation, and the garden notes is given in the relevant sections that follow. The chart below shows a timeline of the research data collection phases and analysis process.

**Table 3.1: Timeline of Research Data Collection Phases and Analysis Process**

<b>Phase</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Data collection</b>	<b>Post data collection and analysis</b>
Phase I	June 2017	Adult interviews at Hope Baptist Church and Grace Baptist Church	July 2017–September 2017 Transcription/ Image compilation Provide participants copies of images and transcripts Analysis of data
Phase II	October 2017–November 2017	Adult interviews at Hope Baptist Church and Grace Baptist Church	December 2017–February 2018 Transcription/ Image compilation Provide participants copies of images and transcripts Analysis of data
Phase III	March 2018–June 2018	Adult interviews at Hope Baptist Church and Grace Baptist Church Children interviews at Hope Baptist Church and Grace Baptist Church	July 2018–December 2018 Transcription/ Image compilation Provide participants copies of images and transcripts Analysis of data

### **3.4 Walking Interviews**

There are many reasons why a walking interview is the preferred method for those wishing to learn more about a specific place. While traditional seated and face to face interviews may provide both researcher and participant with

an opportunity to concentrate on a specific question-and-answer format, a walking interview enables researchers to learn more about a particular setting from participants while they are moving in it together. This section will explore further benefits of walking interviews and how they were used in the study.

### ***3.4.1 Interviewing in context***

De Leon and Cohen (2005, pp. 202-203) argue that “Both built and natural environments can be imbued with as much meaning as any portable object ... the idea is simply to walk around and encourage the informant to talk about past and current associations with the physical surroundings”. In this way, both the interview questions and answers are potentially initiated and enhanced by the environment itself. This might generate memories and can encourage participants to recall events and stories more easily, which can add to deeper understandings of the space. Jones et al. (2008, p. 7) state, “These kinds of stories add a richness to spaces which, to the casual observer, have no meanings”. It is, therefore, a unique opportunity for the researcher to learn more about the location in a way that would not be available if they were situated elsewhere for the interview.

### ***3.4.2 How walking enhances the interview situation***

During a walking interview, participants often take the lead by deciding the course of the walk. As a result, Carpiano (2009, p. 267) points out that this “helps to reduce typical power dynamics that exist between the interviewer

and interviewee (as subject)". Participants are also able to reveal their local or expert knowledge about the area, which is initiated by the different things that the pair might encounter on their way. Additionally, Lee and Ingold (2006, pp. 68-69, pp. 80-82) and Pink (2007, p. 246) explain that the act of walking with another allows for a type of sociability that arises through the shared physical experience of the walk itself, but they highlight that this takes on an unusual form of togetherness as the pair are more likely to be walking in sync, but less likely to be actually looking at one another. Focusing on the terrain and items of interest actually makes for a friendlier and less stressful interviewing experience.

### **3.4.3 *The different types of walking interview***

In their paper, *The walking interview: methodology, mobility and place*, Evans and Jones (2011, p. 850) explain that there are, in fact, many different ways to conduct walking interviews and create a simple yet helpful typology that explains how these might vary from each other. On the lower end of a vertical axis, they plot examples of walking interviews (Reed, 2002; Paulos and Goodman, 2004) where the interviewer, who has knowledge of the area, exercises greater control about where and how the walk takes place.

To the middle of the axis, Evans and Jones (2011) describe a situation where the act of walking takes on greater significance than the route or destination. They cite Anderson (2004) who uses the term, "bimble", which is described as "aimlessly walking" (Anderson, 2004, p. 257). From his description, the lack



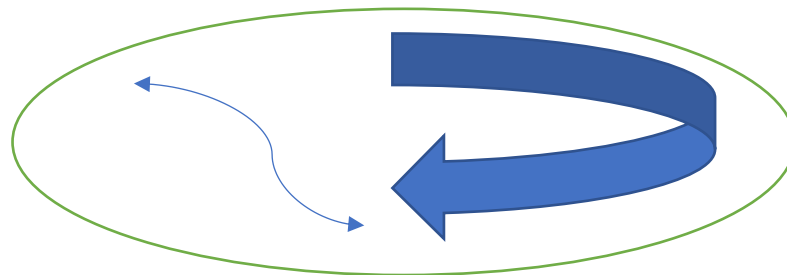
of objective regarding the destination allows participants to use the act of walking to ruminate, and by doing so, they generate more freely potential topics for discussion. Their typology has been recreated in Appendix 23.

On the upper end of the axis, they plot studies where the interviewee has more intimate knowledge of the area and chooses where the pair will walk. At the top of their axis, they highlight a particular style of walking interview called “the go-along” (Kusenbach, 2003)—here the interviewer is embedded in the interviewee’s regular walking routine and ‘goes along’ in order to experience this first-hand.

#### ***3.4.4 Plotting this study on the typology—the garden amble***

If my study were to be plotted onto Evans and Jones’ (2011) typology, it would fall mid-way between the “bimble” and the “go-along”. This study was meant to replicate the kind of walking that anyone might do in any kind of garden setting. In general, people tend to walk at a slower pace in a garden, and as they tend to be bounded or fixed areas, I felt that it was likely that we would adopt a circuitous (going around) or threading (going through) movement or a combination of the two (see Figure 3.1 below). In planning these interviews, the intent was for the adults from the church to decide where and how we would walk and what we would focus on during that walk, and I conceptualized this as an unhurried, leisurely amble around the garden.

Unlike the 'bimble' walk, these ambles had more of a sense of purpose, but unlike the 'go-along' walks they did not assume that where we walked was going to be part of the participants' regular garden routines. Our ambles were not planned out by the participants in advance. Rather, they were open to the possibility of interviewees discovering things as they walked or re-acquainting themselves with something familiar. I felt that this was a suitable way to experience the gardens with those being interviewed, and that this pace and method would allow us to physically and verbally happen upon whatever might arise during the amble process, and that we would be able to follow any direction or train of thought that arose as we walked.



**Figure 3.1: Going around or threading through a garden**

### **3.4.5 The preamble to the study**

Twenty-five adults were recruited to take part in the walking interviews (twelve at Hope Baptist and thirteen at Grace Baptist). These individuals ranged from long-term church members (one over 87 years) to more recent arrivals (about a year at the church); they represented an inter-generational cross-section (grand-parents, parents, and young adults) and also a variety of church interests, such as those in positions of responsibility (ministers and deacons, teachers of the Sunday school, choir members), as well as regular church

members. One site (Hope Baptist Church) has an attached day care, and some non-church members who worked there were also included as part of the broader church and were invited to join the study.

The interviews were held on Wednesday evenings, Saturday and Sunday mornings when participants were at the church for Bible study or church services, or other times during the week at their convenience.

According to the British Educational Research Association (BERA) Guidelines (2018):

Researchers should do everything they can to ensure that all potential participants understand, as well as they can, what is involved in a study. They should be told why their participation is necessary, what they will be asked to do, what will happen to the information they provide, how that information will be used and how and to whom it will be reported. (BERA Guidelines, 2018, p. 9).

For me to gain informed consent, where participants felt well-informed about the study and not coerced into having to participate, I provided all interested adults with a pack containing the Participant Information Sheet and Research Project Consent Forms for both Louisiana Tech University and London South Bank University (see Appendices 9, 10, 11, and 17). They were asked to take these documents away and to read and sign them prior to the interview.

On the day of the interview, I joined the adults in an assigned indoor meeting room. Once there, the interviewee and I reviewed the contents of the Research Project Consent Forms for the participants and made sure that they

were in full understanding of their meaning and intent. Two copies of consent forms for both institutions were provided; therefore, this was a good moment to check that all documents had been signed and dated, and I added my signature and highlighted my contact details. One signed set of consent forms was then returned to the participant, and the other signed set of copies were kept by me.

During this time, I also answered questions that participants might have had about the study and emphasized the statement from the consent forms that indicated that they did not have to take part in the research and that they had the right to freely withdraw from the study at any time. I also reminded participants that their identities and the identity of their church would be anonymized to ensure confidentiality (see Appendixes 9, 10, 14, 15, 17, 18, and 20). Once we had checked their comfort level with the camera and voice recorder, we were ready to move outside.

#### **3.4.6 Interview protocol**

In their “toolkit” for the Economic and Social Research Council, Clarke and Emmel (2010) describe a series of walking interviews that they conducted for a research project called, “Connected Lives” (Emmel and Clarke, 2009). These interviews consisted of researchers being shown around various neighborhoods by their participants. This study was also plotted on Evans and Jones’ (2011) typology (see Appendix 23) and placed near the top of the axis, as it was the participants who decided the course of the walk and guided the

interviewers through the different neighborhoods, pointing out items of interest and attachment to the places they encountered

Within the toolkit, Clarke and Emmel (2010) also provide their interview schedule, which outlines the various stages of their interview process. This was very insightful, for they provide a “rationale” (Clarke and Emmel, 2010, p. 3) for each stage. As both movement and photography was included as part of my interview process, there were a number of things that I had to consider before, during and after the walk, so as part of my interviewing toolkit I adapted the wording of Clarke and Emmel’s (2010) schedule into an interview protocol that fitted this study and used their square bracketing format [ ] to remind me of my rationale for each stage of the interviews, and their curved bracketing format ( ) to prompt me about the tasks that I would need to carry out during the experience. An example of this is found below:

[Greeting participant and gaining permission to take part in the study, conducted in the meeting room prior to the walking interview. Time: about 10-15 minutes].

(Participant Name), Thank you for coming today. I am looking forward to our walk. Before we go outside, I would like to go over some important issues around confidentiality and your consent. Let’s take a look at the Research Project Consent Form. *(Read over consent form with the participant and make sure that they are in full understanding of its contents. Emphasize the statement from the consent form about voluntary participation and freedom to withdraw at any time.)*

Do you have any questions about this for me? *(Check for understanding and have the participant sign the form. If the form is already signed, confirm signature and add my signature.)*

The full protocol is reproduced in Appendix 24. I printed out a copy of the interview protocol and placed it in a clear plastic folder that could easily be held in my hand and referred to as we moved.

The protocol also contained a list of semi-structured questions that I might ask while we walked. These questions were deliberately open-ended as I wanted the participants to be able to take their answers into any direction that was relevant to them. In addition, I anticipated that the gardens themselves would generate further topics for discussion, so I also prepared some follow up questions that I could use during these times (see Appendix 24).

### ***3.4.7 Transitioning and positioning***

As we moved from inside to outside, we would often need time to transition as our eyes adjusted to the bright sunlight that met us as we exited from the buildings. I would use these moments to set up the recorder and start the interview. This time would often be spent looking in the direction of the garden, but talking about it from a distance (see Appendix 2B, Hope Baptist Church after the move, and Appendix 3). At the right moment, I would then use a prompting suggestion or question such as:

- “We can walk towards the garden ... is there a particular spot you’d like to begin?”
- “Shall we go a bit closer? We’re standing a little far away”.
- “Is there any way you’d like to go?”

- “Do you have a preference about where you’d like to start?”

This enabled us to start walking and moved us closer and into the gardens. One of the sites, Hope Baptist Church, had undergone a number of changes since the project departed, and a few of the adults chose to walk me around the whole church campus to point out what was new. Others would walk us directly towards the gardens.

In their walking interviews, Carpiano (2009, p. 267) and Evans and Jones (2011, p. 851) observe that their participants often adopted the role of “tour guide” directing the interviewer around a location, like a street or specific neighborhood and making noteworthy observations about the buildings and places of importance. This is also a way of having the participants take control of the walking process and put the interviewers into a position of learning from them. Likewise, during these garden ambles, some interviewees gave me their version of a garden tour. However, my intent was not to presume that everyone had familiarity with the gardens, and where they did not, our walks took on an exploratory approach, where both of us learned more about the garden as we ambled through it together. Additionally, in the last stage of the data collection phase (spring-early summer 2018), I had been planting with the children as part of our focus group activities, so there were times when there was a brief role reversal during the interviews, and I found myself explaining to some of the adults what the children had been doing and what we still planned to do. At these times with those less familiar with the garden, the interview took on the tone of a guessing game. This reversal did not last

the whole interview, and there were still genuine moments of discovery in the garden because it changed from week to week as things grew and took on new characteristics with the seasons.

#### **3.4.8 *The punctuated garden amble***

Many who have researched the act of walking (Ingold and Vergunst, 2008; Vergunst, 2010; Edensor, 2010; Doughty, 2013), explain that it is rarely a simple two-footed affair, but rather one that involves the whole body. For example, walkers might switch pace en route, change course, or adapt their gait to navigate obstacles on the ground like stones, roots, or animal droppings. These are described as the kinds of movements that “punctuate” a walk (Hall et al., 2003, p. 3). Furthermore, in their descriptions of walking interviews in gardens Hitchings and Jones (2004, p. 9) explain how gardens are in fact prime settings not only for movement but for interactions with the environment to occur during an interview as well.

Similarly, once in the church gardens, it was actually quite difficult for some participants not to adjust their bodies in order to interact with the setting in some way, and our garden ambles became punctuated by a range of garden-related movements as participants engaged with a variety of material aspects of the garden, such as the plants and physical structures as we passed by. This is what Doughty (2013, p. 144) calls “embodied interaction” and it is a reminder of how the phenomenological project assumes that the body and the world are intertwined (Finlay, 2011, pp. 21-23). The movements included:



- Pausing or stopping as something was noted or to share an observation.
- Bending down or leaning in to inspect things growing in planters or raised beds.
- Absentmindedly pulling weeds or dead-heading flowers as we talked.
- Picking off dried leaves as the different plants were inspected.
- Reaching in to touch a few of the plants in order to identify them better.
- Squeezing or picking vegetables or fruit.
- Rubbing or tapping a structure prior to sitting on it.

#### **3.4.9 Sensory significance**

This level of embodied engagement often heightened and foregrounded the senses. According to Pink (2009):

... the multisensoriality of the research context is often something that emerges through one's encounter with both people and the physical environment in which one is participating. It often involves unanticipated smells, tastes, sounds and textures and unexpected ways of comprehending these. These lead to similarly unanticipated moments of realization. Pink (2009, p. 44).

She advises that even though researchers cannot plan for when they will happen, they can be prepared to be attentive to such moments, as they may lead to additional revelations about how people experience the environment. It may well be that Lefebvre (1991) provides us with a further clue about this, for he too talks about moments as an important aspect of the lived. According

to Harvey (1991), writing in the afterword of *The production of space*, Lefebvre explained that moments can be:

... interpreted as fleeting but decisive sensations (of delight, surrender, disgust, surprise, horror or outrage) which were somehow revelatory of the totality of possibilities contained in daily existence. Such movements were ephemeral and would soon pass instantaneously into oblivion, but during their passage all manner of possibilities—often decisive and sometimes revolutionary—stood to be uncovered and achieved. (Harvey, 1991, p. 429).

By acknowledging sensory experiences when they arose during our ambles, I found that I was actually witnessing the participants expressing various forms of these Lefebvrian moments further described by Harvey (1991, p. 429) “as points of rupture” within the mundane and that they too led to topics for discussion about the garden and participants’ relationship to it in both expected and unexpected ways, which will now be explored through the excerpts below.

#### **3.4.9.1      *Hands in***

First, instead of having to describe something, those with garden expertise were able to demonstrate it during the interview, and this provided additional ways for these participants to express themselves rather than just verbally. In this excerpt, Thelma and I have paused around a tomato grow-tub; she starts to explain how she planted the tomatoes but then chooses a more direct method:

**Isabel**—*Alright. Tell me about these tomatoes. What's special about them? What do you like about them?*

**Thelma**—*The fact that I bought the plant, and it's at home, but I broke some pieces off of it and set it out, and those are the results of it.*

**Isabel**—*Now, how did you do that? You just broke off a piece of the ...?*

**Thelma**—*C'mon. I'll do one (She begins the process of snapping off a piece of the tomato plant) I didn't want to put my finger in this dirt, but ...*

**Isabel**—*It's hard not to, isn't it? (Thelma makes a hole with her finger and pops the tomato cutting into the soil) And that's it?*

**Thelma**—*That's it. And keep it wet, and later this will be the result (pointing to a grown plant)*

Thelma's photo of this is shown in Figure 3.2 below. This hands-in method then led to a discussion about garden care and maintenance.



**Figure 3.2:** *Thelma's newly planted tomato plant cutting*

### 3.4.9.2 *A sense of wonder*

Next, the garden setting enabled participants to notice what and how things were growing. Clark and Emmel (2010, p. 2) explain, “Placing events, stories and experiences in their spatial context can help participants to articulate their thoughts”. In this excerpt Ameerah has been aware that the children have been planting in previous weeks and is now walking around the grow-tubs herself making observations:

**Ameerah**—*It’s kind of ironic to be amazed by this ‘cause this is natural, but because you don’t do anything like this in a garden, you’re like, ‘This thing grew!’ (Laughing) ... That they had an actual hand in making it come to fruition—no pun intended!*

**Isabel**—*Yeah, they’ve seen it ... they’ve literally seen it grow from when it was green, and it’s already taking on the coloring, isn’t it?*

**Ameerah**—*I bet it tastes better when you had a hand in it.*

This sense of wonder and the anticipation of taste enabled Anita to share her values and express her opinions about aspects of the garden.

### 3.4.9.3 *Tasting and talking*

Attending to the possibility of taste also made room for experimentation that was not part of the planned interview process. In this discussion, Michelle decides to try one of the cherry tomatoes that she has discovered growing in the tubs:

**Isabel**—*How does it taste?*

**Michelle**—*Oh it is good.*

**Isabel**—*It is...?*

**Michelle**— *... I like it. I don't think I ever ate out of the garden.*

This brought authenticity to the discussion about personal garden experiences and an exploration of why and how things had come to be this way.

#### **3.4.9.4        Sounds of the season**

At times, authentic sensory interactions also came about instinctively. Here, Oleta acknowledges something in the soundscape that for me registered simply as birdsong in the background, but for her was a familiar indicator of the season:

**Isabel**—*What do you think we need now? (Birdsong in the background) What's the ...?*

**Oleta**—*Well the same, the same... (she stops in recognition of the sound and looks around)—I haven't seen a mockingbird at my house this year! (Laughing and pointing) There's one. I've got a poem I've written. Well, I'm not gonna get into that ...*

**Isabel**—*For the mockingbird? Well. We see a mockingbird (I try to locate it).*

**Oleta**—*He just left right there (pointing), that's when I thought about it, (laughing) but I haven't seen one.*

This acted as a reminder that even though we might be exposed to the same stimuli, it might resonate with us in different ways.

### **3.4.9.5      *Looking and remembering***

In addition, after looking at some of the blueberry bushes, Trenton recalled times gone by and made childhood connections:

**Trenton**—*Blueberries. Now see, we didn't grow them on the farm.*

**Isabel**—*OK.*

**Trenton**—*They grew kinda wild in the woods. We called them huckleberries.*

**Isabel**—*OK. Ah, so you'd just go into the woods and pick them?*

**Trenton**—*Oh yeah, pick the wild berries, wild plums.*

**Isabel**—*Wild plums as well?*

**Trenton**—*Yeah, wild plums. And if it wasn't poison, we'd eat it (laughing).*

**Isabel**—*(Laughing) And you'd eat really from the land.*

Such interactions with the garden jogged memories and moments about past events or experiences, and participants would also reveal biographical elements about themselves.

### **3.4.9.6      *Feeling together***

Finally, it allowed me to actually experience some things in the garden in ways that were more personally relevant to certain participants. According to Clark and Emmel (2010, p. 2), "The participant's narratives told in their lived environment can add detail to the researcher's understanding and insight". In

this excerpt, Jennifer is not encouraging me to see the bench through her eyes, but to feel it through her sense of touch:

**Jennifer**—*When it was built, it was made to rest your back, so it is so comfortable. (Sound of both of us sitting)*

**Isabel**—*Oh yes.*

**Jennifer**—*Take a look at how it's made (sound of camera clicking). Can you feel it?*

**Isabel**—*I can!*

**Jennifer**—*You just, yes, it's not straight up. I mean this is why when you sit, you don't wanna move.*

**Isabel**—*(Laughing)*

**Jennifer**—*I mean, it's good in every way, even health-wise; you don't have to sit with your back slouched, you sit straight, your feet are swinging.*

**Isabel**—*Yes, they are! (Laughing and swinging legs)*

**Jennifer**—*I told you! (Laughing)—You're discovering this yourself! You're feeling it! (Laughing and swinging legs)*

**Isabel**—*(Laughing)*

At that moment Jennifer was revealing to me a form of “emplaced knowledge” (Anderson and Moles, p. 5), which is a familiarity with a place that only someone who has had regular interactions in the setting will know. It was an opportunity for me to empathetically feel how she felt (Pink, 2009, p. 110).

### **3.4.10 Sharing with others**

Lee and Ingold (2006) caution that researchers:

... cannot simply walk into other people's worlds and expect thereby to participate with them. To participate is not to walk *into* but to walk *with*—where 'with' implies not a face to face confrontation but heading the same way, sharing the same vistas. (Lee and Ingold, 2006, p. 67).

It was this opportunity for sharing with some participants in their embodied and sensory ways of knowing that characterized the adult interviews. In the following section, I explain how photography also contributed to this, and when combined, all of these elements punctuated the ambles and made for a more relaxed interviewing experience. In fact, Adey (2017, p. 207) explains that our emotions are often connected to our movements, "Being mobile with, seems to unlock barriers between bodies, enabling the passing on of ideas, emotions, and fellow sentiments so that a feeling can itself become mobile". As can be seen from the excerpts above, our interactions often evoked laughter and banter. Both the adults and I seemed to become less conscious of the microphone between us as we focused our attention on other things, and this sometimes added a lightness to the interviewing process.

#### ***3.4.11 Details of ethical considerations and risks***

Despite the many benefits that can come from walking interviews, they also bring with them a number of ethical considerations and certain risks that researchers must be aware of, for it is vital that the wellbeing, safety, and protection of all participants are of paramount importance during this kind of experience. This section will discuss various areas of special consideration that arose during the garden ambles:



### **3.4.11.1      *Issues of Mobility***

In planning research like this that included movement, it was important not to take for granted that all participants would have the same degree of mobility or would be comfortable walking. Indeed, “When working with people with disabilities and impairments walking may not be an appropriate form of mobility to share” (Pink, 2009, p. 76). But the discussion goes deeper than Pink’s observation about appropriacy. Researchers in critical disability studies (Castrodale, 2018; Parent, 2016) remind researchers who use mobile methods, like walking interviews, that they are in danger of normalizing ableism if they do not seek to work more closely with participants to find out how they might prefer to traverse a specific place and why this might be the case. Castrode (2018, p. 45) suggests, “Offering a variety of interview formats where people can act, move, and express themselves in diverse modalities may address issues of accessibility”. While no-one stated a preference about not ambling in the garden, I had planned to be flexible about how, and indeed if, we would be mobile, and participants were offered the opportunity to show me their garden in whatever way that was authentic for them (see Appendix 9). This too would have been an important aspect of learning about people’s relationships with these gardens and it acknowledged that we move through them in very different ways.

### **3.4.11.2      *Interviewing in public***

Conducting mobile interviews in a garden meant that the participants’ presence and identities were public and that their comments were potentially

within the earshot of others. Clark and Emmel (2010, p. 5) state that this may compromise any issues of confidentiality as it may cause participants to hesitate about sharing an element of their story, or they might become uncomfortable about speaking on a sensitive issue in public. To mitigate this, our interviews in the garden were usually conducted at times when others would be inside and my interviewing schedule was usually made known to those inside the church. I also made participants aware prior to the interviews that they were not obliged to stay in a situation that made them feel uneasy. Nevertheless, there were times when an interview might overlap with the arrival or departure times of others, and occasionally the end of the interviews was interrupted by children or adults coming into the gardens to greet us. This sometimes meant an abrupt ending and that I was unable to properly debrief and gain feedback from the participants.

Regardless of the type of ending, once interviews had been concluded they were transcribed, and all adults were emailed copies of the interviews to read. As part of their ongoing consent, they were invited to check their information and were able to add or delete from it and were reminded of the option of even withdrawing from the study. However, I was mindful that a lengthy transcript might be perceived as overwhelming and intrusive. According to Ritchie et al. (2014, p. 87), intrusion occurs when a study uses approaches “that place an undue burden on participants”. Therefore, in the email accompanying the transcripts, I emphasized that looking through them was optional and required no further response (see Appendix 12).

### **3.4.11.3      *The elements***

Being outside for interviews meant that the weather, climate, time of day, season, and temperature played a part in the personality and rhythm of the gardens and also helped contribute to the sensory data. However, as Evans and Jones, (2011, p. 853) warn, they can also impact not only how we walk but whether we should walk at all. These are unpredictable factors that researchers have no control over, but they often have to make decisions about them. This was seasonal research and I chose the most clement times of the year for Louisiana (spring and late autumn) in which to conduct my study. Prior to the interviews, I would check the weather conditions and the temperatures, and I would always prepare for possible fluctuations that might impact the walk. The coldest day was at the end of October when we had temperatures of 1° Celsius, so I brought hand-warmers and spare gloves, and the warmest day was 32° Celsius in late spring, and I tried to point out shady spots when it was appropriate. I always checked on participants' comfort levels during the interviews and provided refreshments at the end to ensure that they stayed hydrated. On two occasions (once at each site), rain meant that the adult interviews had to be conducted indoors instead. The one thing that I had not accounted for prior to the interviews was daylight saving time. In Louisiana, the early winters are usually quite mild, and I began phase two of data collection in mid-October thinking that I could go through until mid-November. I usually interviewed at one site in the evenings at around 6 pm; however, once the clocks went back at the end of summertime, it was not the weather that thwarted the interviewing but the impending darkness.

#### **3.4.11.4      *The terrain***

Ingold and Vergunst (2008, p. 7) point out that “The surfaces on which inhabitants walk, however, are neither flat nor homogenous ... they are *textured*”. Thus, care had to be taken to identify possible variations or in the lay of the land along the way that might have caused potential walking hazards, like weed blocking fabric poking out on a mulch pathway and uneven areas in the grass that might have tripped us up as the interview was in progress.

#### **3.4.11.5      *Mobile others***

We were not the only beings mobile in the gardens, and the sound of bird song was a regular reminder of this and an accompaniment to many of the garden interviews, but there was a sense of surprise when mobile animals and insects made their presence felt in more tangible ways. Cresswell, (2015, p. 20) reminds us that “Places are not just about people. Other living things form part of place and these too can be experienced as transgressive”. No one was endangered, but during some of the interviews, wasps, fire ants, lizards, lovebugs, and the possibility of snakes moving around us were regarded as sources of irritation or potential or even imaginary threats. Whereas sightings of turkey buzzards and deer coming out of the nearby woodland triggered discussions about foxes and wolves passing by the area and made clear to me that as shared spaces, we might be the ones regarded as the transgressors.

Despite the risks, these walking interviews provided a number of valuable insights and allowed me to understand the gardens from a number of perspectives.

### **3.5 Children's garden-activity focus group interviews**

From the outset of the Youth4Health project, the gardens in their various forms had been created to support the children's learning activities. I considered it essential that the children of the churches were involved in the interview process. However, while walking around the gardens was a suitable method for the adults, I felt that it would be more appealing to the children if we actually undertook some gardening activities in the form of small focus groups. This section will describe this experience further.

#### ***3.5.1 The suitability of activity-based focus groups***

According to Cresswell (2007) and Lichtman (2013), this activity-based focus group interview creates more discussion among the participants; instead of talking solely to the interviewer, members of the focus group talk to each other. As they share their thoughts, this may trigger new ideas and allow participants to add to or think of something that they might not have initially included in their original answers. It allows them to develop their ideas in a collaborative way. When I worked with the children in the gardens during the Youth4Health project, I often noticed that this kind of sharing happened quite spontaneously as we gardened together. At times, the children almost seemed to forget that

I was present, and they would chat back and forth around a garden task that they were doing. It was this kind of experience that I was hoping to evoke once more. Freeman and Mathison (2009, p. 104) state that talking in a group like this has the potential to reduce both individual pressures and, in the case of children's focus groups, adult pressure or dominance, which allows for the experience to feel more natural than typical a question and answer interview. Gibson (2012) and Freeman and Mathison (2009) explain that providing creative hands-on activities can also be important assets to an interview process with children, for it brings in a sense of engagement to the proceedings, which then adds to the children's level of comfort. Tammivaara and Enright (1986, p. 232) argue that "Young children generally find *doing* something *with* something and talking *about* that something to be easier, more comfortable, and more interesting than only talking about something that isn't physically present (i.e. an event, a routine, an idea)". Hence, interviewing the children whilst doing gardening activities seemed to offer the children and the process a lot of flexibility.

It has been mentioned above that phenomenological interviews try to evoke the lived experience (Seidman, 2013, p. 18). However, it is important to emphasize that by doing garden-based activities during the focus groups, I chose not to take for granted that this was the norm for the children. Rather, the purpose was to give them time to be active together in the gardens as a way to help them generate and share their perspectives about the gardens.

### **3.5.2 *Considering the numbers for the group***

From April 2018 to June 2018, during the third phase of data collection, 16 children in the age range of 9 to 17 were interviewed in this way. Lichtman (2013, p. 208) points out that the usual size of a focus group is between 6 to 12 people. However, I had practical concerns that this size of grouping would be too large to fit around the circular grow-tubs together and that there might be recording difficulties in picking up so many different children's voices in an outdoor setting. Therefore, I followed the recommendation of Guest et al. (2013, p. 177) who highlight that in certain circumstances "mini focus groups" may be preferable than the larger groupings and that "Even smaller groups—dyads and triads—also sometimes make specific use of group dynamics". Therefore, my smallest focus group was a dyad and my largest was a quartet, but I felt that a triad was the optimum size as we could all fit comfortably around the raised beds and grow-tubs and the children could still build upon each other's comments.

### **3.5.3 *Issues of safeguarding***

Given our need to be both active and mobile during the interviews, concern for the children's well-being was paramount, and it was vital to give issues of safeguarding careful consideration. According to Wallbank and Wonnacott (2015, p. 41), "Safeguarding is a term used to describe a wide variety of activities related to protecting children from maltreatment, preventing impairment of health and development and promoting welfare". In fact, a

number of researchers (Hill, 2006; Kellett, 2010; Graham et al., 2013) stress the importance of building such measures into the whole research project if it is to include children. Consequently, the following child safeguarding strategies were included in this study:

- **Understanding of the task**—It was important to give the children a clear understanding of what they were being asked to do. I initially went up to the churches a number of times in order to recruit all participants. During this time, I had meetings with the children in the presence of parents and other adult church members during which I explained the purpose of the research and encouraged them to ask as many questions about the research (see Appendix 13).
- **Relationship building**—Even though some of the children remembered me from the Youth4Health project, time was needed to rebuild this relationship and to connect with the new children who had arrived at the sites. Gibson (2012, p.153) recommends that prior to interviewing, the researcher should take part in “pre-meetings” with the children in the presence of trusted adults; these are opportunities for the children to get to know the interviewer prior to being interviewed. In agreement with my contacts at the sites, I intentionally left the children’s interviews to the last phase of data collection (March 2018–June 2018). By then, the children were accustomed to seeing me regularly at the churches and in the gardens with the adults (during phase one, in June 2017, and phase two, from October 2017), and they would often come



out and join us, so we were able to acquaint ourselves in a more relaxed way over a longer period of time before interviewing happened with them.

- **Informed and ongoing consent and the right to dissent**—The children’s parents or guardians were informed about the study both verbally and in writing and were asked to give their written consent along with their child (see Appendices 15 and 21). Additionally, the language used with the children in their recruiting documents was child-friendly and jargon-free so that they could understand what it might entail (see Appendix 14). However, the US Department of Health and Human Services Office for Human Research Protection (OHRP) website emphasizes that “informed consent is a process and not a form”. It was important to seek on-going consent throughout the study. Kellett (2010, p. 25) explains that this is the principle of consent being sought from the child participants verbally throughout each stage of the research rather than just once. This happened in the following ways:
  - Prior to the focus group interviews, parents or guardians were asked to read over the consent documents with their child before signing the forms. Here it was stated that they could withdraw from the study at any time. Both parents and children were asked to sign the Children’s Consent Forms (see Appendices 17 and 20). Graham et al. (2013, p. 56) stress that in addition to seeking informed consent from parents or guardians for their children,

researchers must “uphold children’s right to dissent”. In these circumstances, a child is free to leave a study even if the parents or guardians have given their consent. This was made clear to the children as well.

- Shortly before starting the focus group interviews, the children’s written consent was confirmed, and they were reminded that they were not bound to take part in the study and could leave at any time.
- During the interviews, the children’s comfort level was checked, and they were free to move away from the group or leave or if they felt tired or overwhelmed or needed a comfort break.
- After the interviews had been transcribed and the photos were put into a slideshow, I offered the children the opportunity to see their transcripts and pictures. They were invited to check their information and were able to add or delete from it. At this time, I also asked for their consent to use this information and informed them that their details would be kept confidential, and their names would be assigned a pseudonym in order to protect their identity.
- As with the adult interviews, the children and their parents and guardians were informed that all electronic copies of the transcripts and photographs were stored on password-protected file on a safe server at Louisiana Tech University, and in accordance with

LSBU'S Code of Practice, all data generated in the course of the research will be kept securely in electronic form on an external hard-drive for a period of 10 years after the completion of the research project.

- **Avoid harm.** Within the boundaries of being in an outdoor garden setting, I tried to mitigate any form of harm. This is described by Kellett (2010, p. 30) as occurring in three possible ways: physically, mentally, or emotionally.
  - To avoid physical harm during the research, the children and I discussed the garden terrain and weather conditions and how it might impact our movements. And we created simple guidelines together on how to use garden tools, such as trowels and forks, in a safe way. I paid attention to the heat of the day and to possible signs of fatigue that might be caused by being outside. Water and snacks were provided for every child.
  - Next, in order to avoid mental harm, I looked at the children's body language for signs of boredom, anxiousness or confusion. I also attempted to reduce this by introducing new activities or providing clarification if a question or comment made caused confusion or anxiety.

- Finally, in order to avoid emotional harm, I was thoughtful about my own line of questioning, creating open-ended questions that the children could answer in a variety of ways or not at all. I also requested that a trusted adult from the church, either a parent, guardian or the youth minister, was present in the background during the focus group interviews.

#### **3.5.4 Focus group protocol**

In her article on focus groups with children, Gibson (2012, p. 148) explains that “novice researchers need guidance regarding how to engage children in developmentally appropriate interviews and focus groups”. I adapted her ideas into a child-centered interview protocol that would keep me on track and focused on the various stages of the interview (see Appendix 25). It included the following sections:

- Ice breaker activity to start the interview.
- Explanation of task.
- Explanation of role.
- Confirming consent/ Right to dissent.
- Technical and safety discussion.
- Example questions and possible follow up questions to prompt discussion in the garden.
- Questions regarding photography.
- Feedback and debriefing to end the activity.

### **3.5.5 Learning while doing**

My first focus group was a dyad of older children (14 and 16 years), but I found that despite my planning the interview felt quite stilted. Gallagher (2008) explains that in participatory focus group situations with children, issues of power and assertion of authority between the adult and the children are sometimes present and that children might resist adult authority by not participating fully in the group. During the interviews, I reflected upon this but felt that it was not the cause of the issue. The children were receptive, jovial, and taking part in the task; it was just that their responses were at times monosyllabic and were frequently followed by requests for more thinking time. We had discussed this as a response strategy if they needed it, but I had not expected it to be used quite so often. For example, in the excerpt below, Simeon (age 16) has made a comment about the trees:

**Isabel**—*You like the trees?*

**Simeon**—*Umm.*

**Isabel**—*What is it that you like about the trees?*

**Simeon**—*(Chuckling) I'll have to answer that later.*

**Isabel**—*OK.*

**Simeon**—*I can't explain it.*

**Isabel**—*OK. You can try afterwards.*

Upon reflection, I realized that I had been treating their interview like the adult interviews, walking them out of the church building and into the garden and

then starting almost straight away with a question. I think this made them feel rather nervous as it was too direct and too fast, even for older teenagers, when they actually needed far more time than the adults to think about their answers. It also brought a formality to the experience and made it feel rather lesson-like. However, as we progressed, I noticed that the teens seemed to share more when we were transitioning from one task to another and that incidental observations were made when we repositioning ourselves.

Gallagher and Gallagher (2008, p. 513) remind us that “Research is inherently unpredictable: the best laid plans are liable to go awry”. They recommend that researchers adopt an experimental mindset to their work, which they refer to as “methodological immaturity”—this helps researchers “to think of research as experimentation” (Gallagher and Gallagher, 2008, p. 512). They recommend that researchers open themselves to learning from the process.

### **3.5.6 Making changes**

After this experience, I decided to adjust my original plan to better suit the needs of the children in subsequent focus groups. This is explained in more detail below.

#### **3.5.6.1 Location**

First of all, I decided that meeting inside the church and moving outside together into the garden was too formal. Instead, I met the children outside at

the picnic table where we went over all of the paperwork. Being outside already had the children excited, and they were immediately more engaged than if they had to be walked out of the building.

### **3.5.6.2      *Child involvement***

Hill (2006, p. 67) emphasizes the value of seeking some kind of input from the children taking part in a study. This enables them to contribute to the research agenda, thereby making it more of a participatory experience. Thus, the children were encouraged to walk around and to see what jobs needed doing. We used their findings as some of the activities to be carried out during each focus group interview.

From the experience of that first dyad, I decided to build in more deliberate transitions between and during the tasks. To start with, we walked around and looked at what other children had planted in previous weeks, then we tidied up the garden beds, and often went to get seedlings from one side of the garden and carried them to another place to be planted. Afterwards, we made small name tags for the plants at the picnic benches and walked these back to the raised beds. We also discussed plant aftercare and sometimes watered, depending on the dryness of the soil. By creating such movement around the garden, there seemed to be more opportunities for conversation to flow. It was often during this time that spontaneous comments happened, or children observed something, or a memory was jogged as their attention shifted to different parts of the garden.

### **3.5.6.3      *Building in more talking time***

In the adult interview section, it was explained how walking allows people to move in sync, which often leads to a more convivial atmosphere between walkers. In many ways, weeding had a similar effect. It was a good activity to get the children focused as it too had a certain rhythm to it, and as the children worked collectively together to clear a raised bed or a tub prior to planting, it also functioned as an ice-breaker, so we often started with this before I asked any interview-based questions. During this time, we chatted about a variety of topics—the plants, the activity, their day at school, but I would not ask my first actual question until about the 15<sup>th</sup> minute of an interview that usually lasted about an hour. I think this not only put the children at ease, but it also helped to settle me into the task as well. We had time to warm into the activity and into one another. I also learned that sometimes I did not always need to pose an explicit question, as the children’s chatter might also contain an answer to something that I was hoping to learn about. Ironically, by being less goal-oriented in my questioning and having more of an experimental approach towards the focus groups, room was made for the conversation to flow.

### **3.5.7      *Questioning techniques***

The focus groups with children explored the same purpose, themes and questions as the adult walking interviews discussed previously. However, in order to achieve this, the questions took a more child-specific approach. I drew on the work of Gibson (2012, pp. 156-157) who suggests providing more



direction in the overall questions by ranging them from easy to more difficult. She also recommends using the following questioning techniques in a way that encourages the children to expand on their answers:

- **Follow up questions** that encourage children to develop what they have said.
- **Echo statements** that reflect back something that the children have said.
- **Summarizing statements** that acknowledge how a child might feel.

Gibson (2012) also emphasizes two important aspects about the way in which children communicate:

- **They may need encouragement to explain something properly (Gibson, 2012, p. 157)**

She cautions against researchers leading children into an answer and suggests that they use a statement like, “Try to find other words to tell me” to encourage children when they are stuck.

- **They tend to be tangential (Gibson, 2012, p. 156)**

As this reflects the way in which children communicate, she warns researchers about getting the children back on track too soon. Often the tangent allows for a story to be revealed and gives room for others to fill in some of the gaps collectively.

Some of the above strategies are used in the excerpt below, where the children at one of the sites (Daniel, Amber, and BJ) work together to tell me the story of how their swing chair came to be broken (see Figure 3.3 below):

**Isabel**—*What happened?*

**Daniel**—*My sister and other kids.*

**Amber**—*No. Her and [name] broke it.*

**Daniel**—*Uh-huh, and other kids sat on it, and you, you sat down with them, and it broke. Ya'll were screaming. Aaarh (laughter).*

**Isabel**—*So what, you were on the swing, and it broke like that?*

**Amber, Daniel, and BJ**—*Yeah.*

**Isabel** (to Amber)—*And, were you screaming? (To BJ and Daniel) Did you laugh? What did you? Did you feel sorry for her?*

**BJ**—*If it was me, I would ...*

**Amber**—*You wasn't here!*

**Isabel**—*So what was it like when you were swinging? So, the swing was good, but then ...*

**Amber**—*So, we were swinging, and then we swung, and then we went ba-boom.*

**Isabel**—*It went ba-boom? (laughing)*

**Daniel**—*And all the wood was down there.*

**Isabel**—*Oh.*

**Daniel**—*Down on the floor (sharp intake of breath).*

**Isabel**—*So what happened?*

**Amber**—*We was looking like (makes face) ... and we all got up and ran.*

**Isabel**—*You just ran?*

**Amber**—*Yeah.*

*Isabel—And so did anyone see it happen?*

*Amber and Daniel—No.*

*BJ—I did.*

*Isabel—Were you here?*

*Daniel—I think I remember you being here.*

*Isabel—You were what?*

*Daniel—I think I remember you being here.*

*Isabel—You were here when it happened?*

*BJ—Yes.*

*Amber—No you was not!*



**Figure 3.3: Amber's broken swing chair:**  
*Amber—We used to sit out here a lot until the swing broke ...  
It looks empty now.*

Given the tangential nature of the conversations, there were plenty of moments when I wondered how we had arrived at a particular topic. On other occasions, it felt as if something important was just about to be expressed when the moment would be lost because of an interruption—another child would interject with a different topic for discussion, an insect would come

crawling into the garden beds, or something new would draw our attention away.

### **3.5.8 Discovery through movement and the senses**

Whilst some of the adults took the opportunity to be more hands-on during their walking interviews, the children's focus groups were designed to be hands in and from the outset evoked many of the senses through the activities that the children took part in. To start with, we would walk around and look, touch, taste, and smell in order to learn about the plants. For example, in this excerpt, the children (Kayla, Lucas, and Aaliyah) have guessed about a plant from sight and now are confirming this in other ways:

**Kayla**—*It looks like a bunch of mint leaves.*

**Isabel**—*It looks like a bunch of mint leaves? How can we tell if it's mint?*

**Kayla**—*It tastes like mint.*

**Isabel**—*So, shall we try it? Let's see. (We all tear off a mint leaf). You may want to rub it.*

**Lucas**—*(Rubbing the leaf) It smells good.*

**Isabel**—*It smells good. What does it taste like?*

**Lucas and Aaliyah**—*Minty.*

**Kayla**—*It smells like gum.*

**Isabel**—*Is it chewing gummy? Can we taste it? Umm. Is it minty?*

**Aaliyah**—*A little.*

Next, during the garden activities, discussions were initiated by the children

(Daniel and Tianna) as they deliberated the many things that they were pulling out and finding in the tubs. They came across insects, and they also found dried plants. As can be seen from the excerpt below, each discovery set off a train of discussion:

**Daniel**—*I see something.*

**Isabel**—*What do you see?*

**Daniel**—*I just saw a centipede.*

**Isabel**—*Another centipede?*

**Tianna**—*I had one of them, but I gently let him out.*

**Isabel**—*You did that by yourself?*

**Tianna**—*Uh-huh.*

**Isabel**—*Good for you. You're not scared of insects or worms?*

**Tianna**—*No, I love worms.*

**Isabel**—*Why do you like worms?*

**Daniel**—*Because they're so slimy and they are squishy.*

**Tianna**—*Yeah, I like to wiggle them around ... One time I actually tried to sneak it in the house as a pet.*

**Isabel**—*(laughing) Oh dear.*

**Tianna**—*Oh, I found a ...*

**Isabel**—*Erm, that's a root.*

**Daniel**—*It feels weird when you hold it.*

**Tianna**—*Yes, it feels so squiggly and slimy.*

**Daniel**—*When you hold it, it feels like it's breathing or something.*

These kinds of discussions were significant, as they enabled the children to share their curiosity about what they had discovered, and make connections to the garden and their lives. In these ways too, Lefebvrian moments were also experienced and expressed. Also, the process of deciding who and what should be permitted to stay in the tubs (like worms or seeds from flowers the previous year) and who and what needed to be pulled or rehoused (lizards, centipedes, spiders, and weeds), contained moments of recognition of personal power as the fate of an insect's life literally lay in their hands.

### **3.5.9 Gardener as researcher**

In her study on children's play and digital media, Eckhoff (2017) explains how she adopted what she refers to as the "least-adult-role" in order to complete her own research; she states, "In this role, the adult researcher is responsive, interactive, and fully involved in the children's activities" (Eckhoff, 2017, p. 119). While it was easy to become part of the children's activities, it was not my intention to blend in to this extent, neither was it feasible. However, I had noticed that during the summer camps with the Youth4Health project that the children from the churches who attended the camps were often surprised to find out that I was actually an instructor at Louisiana Tech University as well as a gardener. From this, I learned that my role throughout that project as the garden teacher had already positioned me in a particular place in the minds of the children—in the garden. Similarly, during this study, the children came to associate me with the outdoors. As I became more of a familiar presence up at the sites, they would come to look for me in the garden during their

breaks and might comment if they had not seen me there for a while, or that I was not there when they arrived. In the end, as the weather became more clement, I would simply set up outside and only entered the church buildings to check-in.

During the garden activities, other roles came into play too. As in traditional focus groups, it was still necessary for me to act as the moderator at times. Indeed, Kellett, (2010), Graham et al. (2013), and Ey (2016) all emphasize that in focus group interviews, researchers need to be mindful of dynamics amongst the children themselves as there is a possibility of tensions arising within the group, which may cause some children to dominate or to withdraw from the process. Consequently, when possible, I tried to group children according to age and used inclusive questioning techniques that gave every child the opportunity to speak if she or he so wished. I also had to remind some children about using their equipment safely around the garden beds. Additionally, when a learning opportunity arose, then I would use the moment to instruct the children about a certain aspect of gardening, or I would encourage them to share what they knew. For instance, in this excerpt, we are figuring out which way an onion bulb should be planted and Daniel is connecting the familiar shape to something tastier, a Hershey's Chocolate Kiss candy:

***Isabel***—*So which is the bottom and which is the top?*

***Tianna***—*This is the bottom and this is the top.*

***Isabel***—*How do you know?*

**Tianna**—*I know this because this has a baby root sticking out.*

**Isabel**—*There you go.*

**Daniel**—*This looks like a baby... like a Kiss.*

**Isabel**—*It does look like a Hershey's. Put one in ...*

**Tianna**—*Kisses!*

**Isabel**—*Do you think it's gonna taste like a Hershey's?*

**Daniel and Tianna**—*No!*

**Daniel**—*When I eat one it ...*

**Tianna**—*It tastes sour ...*

**Daniel**—*Do you know what they taste like? Like they burn your mouth or something.*

**Isabel**—*Do they? The onions. Oh...*

### **3.5.10 Researcher as multi-tasker**

The mobile nature of interviewing in this way demanded the ability to multi-task. I was often interviewing while doing something else such as walking, carrying plants, and actually gardening along with the children during the focus group interviews. Holding the tape recorder with one hand and helping the children with the other was a little difficult because at times I forgot that I was recording. Sometimes, I went to do a task, and I had to remember that I was holding the recorder. I also had to learn to trust the microphone. I had been concerned that the small handheld digital voice recorder that I used throughout the interviews would not be able to pick up everyone's voices; however, we usually moved around from raised bed to raised bed together, so it was always within everyone's range. Even when children moved away,



we were about to stay in the same vicinity, and it worked out very well for the microphone to pick up the children's comments.

### ***3.5.11 Further ethical issues and practical concerns***

It is not always possible to pre-empt everything that might happen while doing activity-based research with children (Gallagher and Gallagher, 2008; Kullman, 2012), especially when we are outside. Therefore, it was necessary to make on the spot decisions about concerns that arose. For instance, on one occasion, there were wasps and bees flying around close by, so I decided to talk to the group of children about how to react if any of these landed on them. We did this as a role-playing activity prior to gardening, and they were able to apply it in the garden setting. At another time, the wind changed and there was suddenly debris flying all around us including into our eyes, and one child commented that goggles would have been useful at that moment. Similarly, when our interviews coincided with the presence of two big sit-down lawnmowers being used to cut the grass around one of the churches, rather than competing with the drone of them the background and the dust that they were churning up, I temporarily suspended interviewing and moved us to a different spot until things settled. No-one was hurt during these times, but it was important to be constantly alert.

### **3.5.12 Documentation**

The organizational considerations in getting the children's consent forms back proved to be one of the more challenging aspects of the study. Having two sets of documents (one for London South Bank University and one for Louisiana Tech University) was a bit problematic as I had to ensure that both sets came back to me and that both had been properly filled out by the children and their parents or guardians before they could be admitted to the study.

I decided to color-code the paperwork and then put them into colored folders so that they could be easily identified, but even then, getting the folders from the children was not always straightforward. Sometimes children who had already received folders lost them or forgot to bring them back. In one instance, a child gave his paperwork to an adult at the church but then forgot who that adult was. As a result, I did not always know exactly who I would be interviewing until I (and they and their folders) showed up. As already indicated, most were age-related focus groups, but sometimes this was not possible. Once I had to combine a child who had her folder with two children who had already completed an interview, another time a 13-year-old had to join a group of 9 year-olds, and on a different occasion, the supervising adult informed me that the children all had their folders, but they had not brought them outside with them, so we were unable to begin until all the documents were with us. Despite this, on the whole, we were able to have groups that were fairly closely related in age.

### **3.6 From photo-elicitation to photography-elicitation**

In discussing phenomenological research, Seidman (2013) observes:

Another complexity inherent in seeking the essence of the lived experience of participants is that our access to lived experience is primarily through language: the words we use to guide the participant and the words they use to respond. Seidman (2013 p. 18).

One way to help our participants express themselves further comes from “arts-based methodological tools, like photo-elicitation” (Vagle, 2018, p. 102). Both he and van Manen (1997) recommend these because such tools enable participants to express themselves about an aspect of their lived experience in a slightly different way than if they were relying only on the spoken word. In this section, the use of photography is discussed in more detail, followed by an explanation of how it was applied in this study.

#### ***3.6.1 Introduction: using photographs in research***

As a research technique, there are many ways in which photography can be utilized by the researcher or the participant; consequently, it comprises a number of photographic possibilities, which Harper (2002, p.14) places on a continuum, explaining that the images used can range from the scientific to the collective and into the realms of the personal.

In *Using photographs in social and historical research*, Penny Tinkler (2013) explains that these photographs often fall under two types—generated photos

and found photos. She clarifies, "... generated photos are those made for the researcher or research participant; found photos are pre-existing photos, including personal and non-personal pictures such as documentary, survey and commercial images" (Tinkler, 2013, p. xiv). Found photographs are often, but not always, historical in content, and enable the researcher to capture glimpses of times gone by or to consider elements of modern culture or personal interest. In looking at the photographs, the researcher is able to explore aspects of life represented by the images in the picture and can draw certain conclusions about how life was lived or expressed during the times shown in the image. In contrast, generated photographs, are either produced or taken by the researcher or participant.

### ***3.6.2 Photo-elicitation interviews***

Photo-elicitation interviewing usually occurs in two stages. In the first stage, the participant is requested by the researcher to produce generated photographs and is encouraged to later share the relevance of the images and explain their importance to the researcher during the second stage in what is usually a semi-structured interview. Douglas (1998, p. 9) emphasizes that what is important in this process is that the participants "... are the primary interpreters of their photographs". Therefore, it is not the researcher assigning meaning to the images, but the interviewee. Other variations for this type of interview process are "the reflexive photographic method" (Harper, 2002), "auto-driven photographic elicitation" (Clark-Ibáñez, 2004; Miller, 2016), "photo-interviews" (Capello, 2005; Tinkler, 2013; Zartler and Richter, 2014),

and “participant employed photography” (Castleden et al., 2008; Winton, 2016).

### ***3.6.3 A different take on the face-to-face interview experience***

There has been much emphasis on the ways in which the use of photo-elicitation interviews can add a number of new dimensions to the traditional interviewing experience (Harper, 2002; Clark-Ibáñez, 2004; Butler-Kisber, 2010), this is now examined in the section below.

### ***3.6.4 It often changes the traditional dynamics between the interviewer and the interviewee***

In the first stage of photo-elicitation interviews, participants are given a camera and are invited by the researcher to take a series of photographs on a particular topic. At some point later, during the interview or second stage, there is a viewing of the photographs and these images are perused by both parties together. It is often the interviewees, though, who decide their progress through the images (Meo, 2010; Barker and Smith, 2012). Consequently, this “... can also enable participants to introduce their priorities and perspectives into interviews” (Tinkler, 2013, p.179). This is in contrast to traditional interviews that tend to move at the pace set by the interviewer. The discussion that ensues, triggered by the photographs, has the potential to go in a number of directions, which makes the process and the outcome less clear cut. It also adds a more conversational and authentic dynamic to the interview experience. In this way, Clark-Ibáñez (2004, p.1512) considers the

photograph as a “tool” that assists both interviewee and interviewer in their respective roles.

### ***3.6.5 It makes for a more relaxing environment***

This interviewing technique also deflects attention from the interviewee to the photographs; in so doing, it manages to “... decentre the interviewee in terms of the interaction ...” (Tinkler, 2013, p.174). Much of the focus is on the image being discussed and its content and meaning; therefore, “... direct eye contact need not be maintained, but instead, the interviewee and interviewer can both turn to the photos as a kind of neutral third party” (Banks and Zeitlyn, 2015, p. 86). This results in creating a more relaxed interviewing environment. Epstein et al. (2006, p. 2) refer to this as having an “icebreaker” effect in that by putting less pressure and stress on the interviewee, it creates a more enjoyable interview experience that allows for a more natural flow of conversation.

### ***3.6.6 It is a more empowering experience for children***

The shift in interviewer-interviewee relations often makes this interviewing technique appealing to those who are conducting research on children. For example, Barker and Smith (2012, p. 92) point out, “Photography is engaging and interesting to children as it is task centred rather than talk centred”. This element of the process can, therefore, be enjoyable for youngsters, and Meo (2010) emphasizes that this allows them to be more involved. One way in which this might happen is that “The images ... can produce story-telling

responses rather than potentially intimidating ‘question-and-answer’ approach” (Clark-Ibáñez, 2008, p. 103). Thus, there is the likelihood that the children will expand their responses to include details that are of relevance to them and in ways that are more at their level of description.

Most importantly, through engagement and activity, it creates a more empowering environment (Tinkler, 2010, p. 174), as it is able to, “... enhance students’ voices and participation in research about themselves and their views and images of their social worlds” (Meo, 2010, p.164). All too often these are voices that go unheard. This happens in the following ways:

### ***3.6.7 It promotes talk***

The added element of the photographs in the interview situation means that potentially there is simply more to talk about. Harper (2002, p.13) claims that the brain actually responds more effectively to this visual-aural response than to one which relies solely on discussion, and, Meo (2010, p.153) points out that many of these responses might have “remained dormant in a face to face interview”. By looking at the photographs, participants might be more inclined not only to explain how the picture resonates with them but also to explore some of the less obvious meanings that lie hidden when they look at the image. According to Tinkler (2013, p. 178), “... photos stimulate people to talk about their thoughts, feelings, memories and experiences, to work things out and, sometimes, to discuss subjects that are difficult to broach in talk-alone interviews”. Thus, using photos functions as a way to help to promote talk.

### ***3.6.8 It helps create the conditions for a deeper type of interview***

Consequently, in this relaxed state, the participant is more likely to explore in greater depth their opinions and feelings about a topic reflected in the photo. Clark-Ibáñez (2004) and Butler-Kisber (2010) highlight that the image does not have to be anything out of the ordinary, but it is in the discussion that ensues about the image that the participant might be prompted to point out or share something of significance. Butler-Kisber (2010, p.125) emphasizes how useful this can be: “This process gives rise to the stories and further dialogue that deepens the understanding of insider or emic perspectives”. The meaning is not always visible in the actual photograph but lies rather in the participant’s connection to the image and the feelings and memories that are evoked by it. This often results in a far more thoughtful response.

### ***3.6.9 It contains a trigger moment***

It is important to explain how this deeper response is actually thought to happen. In the second stage of the process, the actual interview, participants are usually invited to view their photographs, oftentimes choosing the ones that they want to talk about with the interviewer. Banks (1998, p. 18) states, “A photograph ... is a material object with form as well as content”. Therefore, during this viewing experience, the physical photographs are touched and looked at more intently. This, then, becomes for the interviewee something of a show-and-tell experience (Winton, 2016, p. 432), for it is during the handling of the photos that leads to a closer inspection of them, which allows for a more



detailed looking to occur. This then acts as “a memory trigger” (Westerberg, 2014, p. 31), as participants often start to share their thoughts and feelings about the meaning of the photograph.

The concept of a trigger moment seems to have its roots in Barthes’s (1981, p. 40) work on photography where he introduces the term, “*punctum*” as a detail that attracts his attention while he is examining a photograph. Cronin (1998, p. 71) develops this explanation stating that this *punctum* moment often “... stimulate[s] the release of strong emotions” where participants see something in their pictures: “... a small detail in a photograph which triggers a succession of personal memories and unconscious associations”. Rose (2007) argues that this leads to a more intentional viewing of the photographs. Consequently, it is this moment of combined tactility and closer looking that perhaps slows down the gaze, jolts a memory or releases a thought, and encourages talk; this is the point at which the elicitation part of the interview occurs.

### ***3.6.10 Gathering ideas for my own study***

Epstein et al. (2006, p. 2) provide a comprehensive overview of a variety of studies that use photo-elicitation interviewing. It is regarded as a flexible approach that has much to offer researchers working with both children and adults in a number of different environments.

In her work on sensory ethnography Pink (2007, 2009) explains how she uses a video camera to conduct video tours. One series of tours takes her through a community garden at different stages of its development (Pink, 2009). She is behind the camera filming, and her participant walks her around the garden explaining the most recent changes. During this experience, she attends to how the participant moves and examines various things that are growing. She states:

Being there, in the garden, with the video camera, offers a way of accessing these sensorial aspects of the process of the development and experiences of it as well as some understanding of the memories and imaginaries associated with it ... It allows research participants to use their whole bodies and senses to touch, show, smell and verbalize what is important to them about the environments they make and inhabit. (Pink, 2009, p.110).

Pink's work is very evocative and acts as a reminder that people often attribute meanings to gardens through the senses, which might potentially be lost or overlooked during a face to face interview. It was not my intention to use a video camera for my study as I felt that it would not be in the interest of the study, but I wondered, given that the interviews were being conducted while on the move, if I offered my participants a still camera might it allow for a similar effect to the one that Pink (2009) describes? I felt that with the participants behind the camera emulating the type of photo-elicitation experiences described above, it might still be possible to capture something of their sensory engagement with the garden, while at the same time it would provide opportunities for the participants to capture items of interest that held significance to them.

For the photo-elicitation interviews, I drew on the two-stage format described by Clark-Ibáñez (2004) and Meo (2010). The first stage is the act of photography. Here the participants are given the camera by the researcher and asked to take photographs on the given topic. The second stage occurs when the interviewee and the interviewer sit and look at the images together and the interviewee discusses their relevance. This is the elicitation aspect of the process.

In this study, it was envisaged that during the interviews, participants would walk at an unhurried ambling pace around the garden, during which they would be encouraged to stop and talk about items of interest along the way. On some of these stops, they would be invited to photograph various artifacts or items in the garden held some relevance to them. Due to the convenience of downloading the images, the adults would be given a digital camera; whereas the children would be given a disposable one. As we would be gardening during the children's interviews, there was the possibility of the digital camera being accidentally dropped on the floor or grit getting into it, so I felt that this would be a more practical option. Once the photos were developed, participants would be invited to view their images (adults individually and children in their groups) and to comment upon them. This photo viewing would also be recorded.

### **3.7 Ethical considerations using photography**

There are potentially many ethical issues that can arise from the use of photography in research, so Mitchell (2011, p. 15) states, "... the area of Visual Ethics can actually be regarded as a specialist area within Visual Methodologies". Therefore, in addition to reading the ethical guidelines of the British Educational Research Association (BERA) (2018), and guidance from its American equivalent—the Office for Human Research Protection (OHRP), I sought out ethical codes from the International Visual Sociology Association (2009) and the Economic and Social Research Council's (ESRC) National Centre for Research Methods Review Paper *Visual Ethics: Ethical Issues in Visual Research* (Wiles et al., 2008) in order to better understand and anticipate possible concerns that might arise specifically from the use of photography in this study. This section explains the considerations that were taken into account.

#### **3.7.1 Protecting the privacy of participants**

One of the main concerns when using photography is the need to protect the privacy of the participants, especially if there are children involved (Wiles et al., 2008; Wiles et al., 2011; Tinkler, 2013). Therefore, in order to avoid children or adults in the pictures, participants were asked to photograph an item or artifact of interest in the gardens, rather than people. While it is not always practical, feasible, or necessary to avoid having people in photographic research (Clark, 2012), I felt that it was reasonable to request it

in this study as it was about the garden and participants' relationship to the garden.

### ***3.7.2 Protecting the privacy of places***

In a similar vein, Mitchell (2011, p. 22) reminds us that places and faces can be easily identified and that the researcher needs to be mindful of this. Wiles et al., (2008, section 4.5) expand on this discussion and highlight that this is also connected to issues of how researchers visually represent the sites of their study, which is no less of an important consideration. Consequently, I decided to have participants also avoid images with highly identifiable markers such as place names, and if these were captured in the photographs, then they were not used for the photographic representation of the study.

### ***3.7.3 Reducing the threat for participants unwilling or unable to use the camera***

Next, to make participants familiar with the camera, they were given an opportunity to practice using it prior to the interview. No-one was coerced into having to take photographs. If they lacked confidence with the camera, or if they were reluctant to use it, then they could direct me to take a picture of the garden artifact on their behalf. Alternatively, the interview could have proceeded without the picture(s).

It also needs to be stressed that the inclusion of photography in the study, was not to privilege sight over and above the other senses or ways of knowing the

space (Banks and Zeitlyn, 2015, p. 8). In his paper, Hall (2015) refers to the use of photography with two of his students who are visually impaired and describes their experiences. Even though I had accounted for issues of mobility in my ethics planning (see discussion on walking interviews), I did not consider what I might have done had I encountered participants with visual impairment. This was an oversight on my part, and I am now aware that had this situation arisen, I would have worked with the individual to find out his or her preferred way of approaching the task, just like I had been prepared to do if an issue of mobility had occurred.

#### ***3.7.4 Gaining consent—clarifying long term use***

To take part in the study, participants were asked to provide consent for their photograph(s) to be used, referred to and represented in the research and other research outputs (see Appendices 10, 19, and 22). The need for this consent was explained to them verbally during recruitment and in writing in the information sheets (see Appendices 9, 14, 15, 18, and 21). By signing the consent forms, they confirmed their understanding of their consent, and this was verified shortly before the interviews. Later, once they had seen their pictures, they still had the opportunity to decline the use of their photographs for the study. One participant did, in fact, request that a photo be deleted.

As regards gaining consent from children, Wiles et al. (2008, section 2.5) caution the researcher, “In the current climate of concern about photographs of children, it is advisable that visual researchers seek consent from children,

parents and any other gatekeepers who provide access to the children". Even though none of the photographs were of children themselves, only objects, I still chose to follow this advice, and children, along with and their parents or guardians, were asked to sign consent forms and were accorded the same verbal opportunities as the adults, but I also made extra time to explain things in ways that were child appropriate before, during and after photography.

Much of the discussion thus far has emphasized gaining consent for participants to take photographs and the act of photography during the interviews, but many (Wiles et al., 2011; Clark, 2012; Clark, 2013; Tinkler, 2013) warn that the use of the photographs, more often than not, goes beyond this because researchers will most likely publish their work in various media. As a result, the use of participants' photographs does not necessarily end at the point of data collection, and researchers are charged with the duty of making this known to the participants so that they can give informed consent about this too. Clark (2013) highlights a further concern that requires consideration when he raises the following question:

...gaining informed consent at the beginning of an interaction with a respondent erroneously implies that as researchers we know to what purpose data will be put. Yet is it possible to inform respondents, beyond reference to somewhat abstract ideas about analysis, storage and display, what will happen to the data we gather? (Clark, 2013, p. 71).

Thus, given that the use of the photographs has certain unknown elements for the researcher, I tried, to the best of my ability, to describe the types of research outputs that I anticipated and listed them on the consent forms as

“publications, reports, posters, and web pages” (see Appendices 10 and 17). In this way, I hoped that participants could be made aware of the potential breadth of places where their photos might be shown.

This use of photography in research outputs brings with it further ethical concerns for researchers, as Clark (2013, p. 74) asserts, “... it is important to consider the *affect* of the image and the way it can move an audience or viewer or evoke certain reactions and that in turn prompt further response and actions”. With this, he is highlighting the fact that photos are open to interpretation by those looking at them, and that this should also be something that researchers take into account when choosing to show them. Whilst it is not always possible to know the impact that a photo might have on a prospective audience, some visual researchers (Rose, 2007; Mitchell, 2011; Tinkler, 2013; Miller, 2016) strongly recommend that no photo be presented on its own merit and suggest that one way researchers might mitigate against a potential misinterpretation is to always provide some form of “... basic interpretive framework to ensure that their photos are not misconstrued in ways that might degrade or disadvantage the people depicted” (Tinkler, 2013, p. 205). Therefore, throughout this study, I have presented the contextual background to the images as well as the conversation or commentary that accompanied the photography. I have also included in the discussion my own observations regarding the importance of the image and dialog.

This section has explained many of the ethical issues that I anticipated concerning the use of photography, but Wiles et al. (2008, section 6.0)



emphasize, “We recognize that the ethical issues that visual researchers encounter in their research are situated and emerge in relation to the specific contexts of individual research projects”. This highlights that researchers need to be aware that they may face ethical challenges in the process of conducting visual research and that solutions may not be as clear cut as they might seem in their planning or on a consent form. Consequently, throughout the rest of this chapter, I continue to reference ethical issues as they arose and discuss them once more in the section on researcher positionality.

### ***3.7.5 Making changes to the original plan***

Shortly after beginning the first data collection phase with adults, I realized that there were a few subtle differences between my study and the studies that I originally drew upon (Clark-Ibáñez, 2004; Meo, 2010; Thupayagale-Tshweneagae and Mokomane, 2012; Barker and Smith, 2012; Miller, 2016; Bourke, 2017), which caused me to make some adaptations. I discuss these now below.

#### ***3.7.5.1 Being present at point of photography***

First of all, I was present at the point of photography. In the studies mentioned, the interviewer usually gives the interviewees a camera and leaves it with them for a period of time. For instance, Clark-Ibáñez (2004) gave her participants a week to take their photographs. Most of the studies utilize a disposable camera; therefore, the interviewer has to collect these and then

have them developed. This too adds time between the taking of the photographs and their eventual viewing. This is standard with such interviews, but it creates a retrospective element to the interview that follows. Being present during the photography meant that I could pose my questions to the interviewee about their choice of image in real-time and *in situ*. This discussion was always recorded on the voice recorder, which often led to very rich data being generated.

### **3.7.5.2      *Elicitation in real-time***

Tinkler, (2013, p.190) emphasizes that it is important to explore “... meanings made both at the point of production and in the context of the photo interview”. From the outset, though, I noticed that the context actually became intertwined with the point of production. As we were using a digital camera, adult interviewees had the chance to immediately set up, see and, if necessary, edit the images that they produced. Also, perhaps because we were already in the setting, talking about the setting, combined with fact that we were on garden-time—moving at a slower, stop-start pace—that when the time came to consider an artifact for a photograph, it resulted in triggering the adults to share stories, reflect on memories and talk about the gardens in a very similar way as if we had been doing the second stage show-and-tell photo-viewing interviews.

It struck me, then, that this was more of a look-and-tell experience, occurring in real-time, shortly before, during, or after the moment of photography. In his

study on tourist digital photography, Larsen (2008, p. 143) refers to the decisions that go into the taking of a photograph as "... practices of photography. These include: looking for, framing and taking photographs, posing for cameras and choreographing posing bodies". He stresses that researchers should pay attention to these practices, for they can be very significant. Thus, the practice of choosing an item in the garden, the setting up of the shot, the taking of the picture, and the discussion about the significance of the item in the picture (not necessarily in this order) were contributing factors to the elicitation experience. As a result, I came to think of this experience as photography-elicitation: somewhat distinct from, but related to, photo-elicitation, which happens in later-time with physical photographs. Due to this observation, I decided that it would probably be repetitive for the participants to conduct the two-part stages of the traditional photo interview because my questions were already being answered in the moment.

### **3.7.5.3      *Keeping to the digital option***

When the time came to conduct the children's focus group interviews, I decided that we would continue to use the digital camera for them as well because I realized that it had practical advantages. To begin with, the groups were small enough that the camera could be passed around from child to child with each having sufficient time to take their photos. I also noticed that most of the children were mindful of their own technology—their cell phones—and they handled the camera in the same way. Additionally, they all wore gloves during the gardening activity and took them off to take their pictures, so their

hands were relatively soil-free and could easily be rinsed off at the hose if necessary. Most importantly, I felt that a cumbersome disposable camera might have been more of a hindrance for the children, and with its lack of immediate viewing, it is unlikely that it would have produced an in-place response in the way that I had experienced with the digital camera.

### **3.7.6 *The impact of photography on the study***

The use of photography was helpful to the study in a number of ways which are examined in the discussion below.

#### **3.7.6.1 *It maintained authenticity***

As I was present during the taking of the photographs, we were able to avoid any inauthentic or “staged” photos (Miller, 2016, p. 265), which are mentioned as possible drawbacks to the traditional type of photo-elicitation interview where the participant is given the camera over a week or so prior to collection and takes photographs independent of the researcher. Some researchers (Alm and Olsen, 2016; Miller, 2016) share that during this time, parents in their studies were known to take or edit the photos on behalf of their children. In my case, all participants were still free to choose what images they wanted to capture, but authenticity was maintained as I was with them at the moment of photography, and they were able to talk to me about their images at that time.

### **3.7.6.2      *It injected a new dynamic***

It enabled us to move physically closer to the garden and within the garden space. All the adult interviews began inside the church, and we then walked towards the garden and began talking during this time. Occasionally, I noticed that as we approached the garden we would begin to slow down, and the participants would stop at the garden's edge and talk about it from this distance. While this positioning enabled us to get something of a wide-angled view of the garden, we often remained outside of its actual space looking out at it but not in it, so it had a distancing effect, rather like looking outside through a window. However, the invitation to take a photo forced us to move into the garden itself and caused us to walk through it as the participants then set about selecting their items to capture on camera.

Photography played a distinctive role in the pacing of the interview as well. Only two of the twenty-five adults interviewed integrated their photography and comments seamlessly throughout the interview. For the rest, it came during the middle or the end of the interview, usually at a point when a conversational thread had reached its natural conclusion. This sometimes led to a lull in the rhythm of the interview. Tinkler (2013, p.176) advises, "Silence can be a productive part of an interview (though sometimes disconcerting for the interviewer)". I became more acquainted with these moments of silence that arose often as the conversation ended, and I had to be mindful not to fill them too quickly. However, when we had reached a natural ending in the

discussion, the option for photography often injected a new dynamic into the proceedings and allowed for a fresh topic to be discussed.

#### **3.7.6.3      *It gave individual children their own moment to stand out from the group***

The children each had their own time with the camera. Sometimes they would be in the presence of other focus group members, and sometimes they would be at a distance from them. Regardless, in that moment, they were speaking for themselves about something that was of relevance to them. Even though I would ask them to discuss their reasons for their choice of image, they did not have to negotiate or justify these reasons with other group members, although sometimes they did.

#### **3.7.6.4      *It had a focusing effect on seen and unseen elements***

The process of choosing an item in the garden to photograph seemed to encourage participants to look more intentionally at the space, and as they prepared to take their shot, or shortly after, it would conjure up deeper moments of reflection and discussion. Zartler and Richter (2014, p. 42) observe that in their study, the photographs produced by their child participants often initiated elicitation about seen and unseen elements in the pictures, what they refer to as “aspects of visibility and invisibility”. I too found that the more focused looking by the interviewees around the time of photography had a similar effect but went a little beyond this. It functioned in three particular ways:

- Photography helped to capture the seen
- Photography exposed that which was hidden
- Photography operated as a portal to the unseen

The section below will now provide illustrations of these three focusing functions.

### **3.7.6.5      *Photography captured the seen—the visible***

These were tangible artifacts and items that we were both looking at but which had a specific resonance for the participants. For example, one participant, Xavier, is talking about his routine at the church and how his movement to and from the car park has enabled him to observe various things in the garden as he passes by. He comments on the simple joy of noticing the growing sunflowers as he walks by them and then chooses to photograph them. As he prepares to take the picture, there is a hint of sadness in his tone at the fact that the flowers are now fading (see Figure 3.4):

***Xavier**—I'm always parked on the side where the garden is, so it's easy for me to just step out of here, so basically, I'm out here every Monday and every Wednesday, and I sometimes come on a Friday, so I'm able to see ... for instance, the sunflower. I noticed the sunflower every day. It got taller and taller, and now it's taller than me, so it's been a blessing to see that. So, I'm out here two or three times a week to see the progress of the garden ...*

***Isabel**—OK. Great. Is there anything else that you'd like to take a picture of?*

***Xavier**—The sunflower. Of course, it looked way better than that, but of course, you know that the heat has gotten to it.*

**Isabel**—Of course, it has had its time. I think you've got one growing here, though, can you see that one? So that was how tall it was?

**Xavier**—Yeah, yeah, yeah, they were big. Very big!

**Isabel**—That's lovely. There's something about a sunflower isn't there?



**Figure 3.4: The visible—the fading sunflowers**

### **3.7.6.6 Photography exposed the hidden**

It encouraged participants to walk around and go closer to the artifacts that they wanted to photograph, but this sometimes led them to be surprised by what they found. In Figure 3.5, Denise is finishing a thought, and the conversational thread turns to the camera. She is explaining how she recently walked the children in her charge around the garden and is discussing the things that they had seen and the questions that they had asked on this recent walk. She then moves to the next plant of interest, the tomato plant. It is here that she is taken by surprise by something hiding within its stems. This causes



her to be both repelled and fascinated at the same time by the intruder, which she then, after some inspection, chooses to photograph:



**Figure 3.5: Exposing the hidden hornworm**

**Isabel**—*Uh-huh. OK. That sounds really good. Well, you've got the camera and I'm just gonna follow you, and you can take pictures and you can tell me what it is that you're taking pictures of and why you're taking a picture of what you're taking a picture of.*

**Denise**—*Erm ... The children wanted to know what this was. I said it was a tomato plant, but ... Oh my goodness! Did you see that?*

**Isabel**—*What?*

**Denise**—*It's a big caterpillar.*

**Isabel**—*Ah.*

**Denise**—*Look how big he is. He is full! And he was blending in. I couldn't see him at first.*

**Isabel**—*What shall we do?*

**Denise**—*I dunno. I'm not gonna touch him ... I'm gonna get a ... I'll take a picture of him. Now insects, I'm scared of ... Look how big he is!*

**Isabel**—*He's huge, isn't he? (Isabel pulls him off the tomato plant)*

**Denise**—*Uh-huh (she moves closer to inspect him) He's not happy.*

**Isabel**—*No. He's not.*

**Denise**—*He's such a pretty color.*

**Isabel**—*He is. I'll throw him into the field, but he is pretty isn't he?*

**Denise**—*Oh my god.*

**Isabel**—*And he becomes ...*

**Denise**—*Oh my ... look how he feels (she begins to stroke him).*

**Isabel**—*He's quite big, isn't he?*

**Denise**—*He is.*

**Isabel**—*And becomes some kind of, not a butterfly, but a moth, I think. I suppose he's already got his markings.*

**Denise**—*Uh-huh. He's gonna be big.*

**Isabel**—*I'll throw him into the woods.*

**Denise**—*Probably outside of the sun, 'cause this sun will kill him.*

In many ways, this is a prime example of another Lefebvrian moment (see section 3.4.9) captured in the garden and on camera. Denise passes through a series of emotions ranging from surprise and disgust, and it is interesting how she surrenders to the caterpillar experience by stroking it and by the end expressing concern about its wellbeing.

### **3.7.6.7      *Photography operated as a portal to the unseen***

The process of moving towards and focusing on an artifact to photograph often conjured up deeper moments of reflection and discussion; therefore, by evoking associations, stories, memories, emotions, and imagination, it had a portal-like effect that would take the discussion beyond what was actually visible. In Figure 3.6, George has been taking photographs all around the

garden and the wider site where growing is going on. We now approach the bell that has just been installed at the church. Prior to photographing the bell, he demonstrates how it sounds. This focused interaction, shortly before photography, takes us back a little to the story of the bell's dedication ceremony, and then it transports us back even further to the historical significance of the bell.



**Figure 3.6: The bell—portal to the past**

**Isabel**—Now this is new.

**George**—Yeah. So, we did this church bell area, and we created a little pot on either side of it. That's another way of being involved in planting, and they put the proper plants in there, 'cause those plants haven't done nothing but grow since they've been there. They've gotten bigger and bigger!

**Isabel**—Well, they're beautiful.

**George**—Yeah. It was really exciting to put the bell there so that it'd ring. And you know, we had a ceremony of some people that had passed on, and we put their names on the plant, and it brought some of the old tradition and history back to the church.

**Isabel**—So this is a working bell?

**George**—*Uh-huh. Yes, it is. (Sound of moving around) What you do, you take a ... We came out as a group. The day we had our program we came out, and it was raining; so we were gonna come out to do the bell ringing ceremony out here, but since it was raining, everybody stayed in the church, and I came out, and the guy stood at the door, and he told me when it was time in the program to ring the bell, and he told me, “Eh, boom time!” So, I came out and they sat in there, and I rung it three times. And it hit three times just like this here—(Sound of bell ringing once, bell ringing twice, bell ringing third time).*

**Isabel**—*That’s amazing!*

**George**—*And the history opened back up.*

**Isabel**—*Tell me about the history, what do you mean?*

**George**—*Well the history. When they first built this church, the bell was over there.*

**Isabel**—*Oh that’s the original ...*

**George**—*That’s the original bell ...*

**Isabel**—*This is really special.*

**George**—*This church has been through a lot. It was burned down once and then they re-built it ... Where’s your camera?*

**Isabel**—*Oh here.*

**George**—*Let’s take a picture of that bell from the front side.*

**Isabel**—*It’s beautiful.*

**George**—*How’s that? (showing Isabel the image)*

**Isabel**—*Perfect.*

Clark-Ibáñez (2004) observes:

... there is nothing inherently interesting about photographs; instead, photographs act as a medium of communication between researcher and participant. The photographs do not necessarily represent empirical truths or “reality”. [But they] ... have a dual purpose. Researchers can use photographs as a tool to expand on questions and simultaneously, participants can use photographs to provide a unique way to communicate dimensions of their lives. (Clark- Ibáñez, 2004, p.1512).

While we were not looking at a printed photograph, the seeking out of the artifact and the act of photography, had a similar impact on participants in the garden. There were times when images were out of focus or dimly lit due to the dusk setting in, but their quality was less important than the meanings attributed to them and the deeper meanings behind that attribution. I doubt that these dimensions would have been discernible had I been in the garden by myself or even if I had just been walking through with the garden with each participant. This combination of movement, looking and photography complemented each other and together made for an interesting interviewing experience.

### ***3.7.7 My role behind the camera—positionality***

Murray (2009, p. 472) citing the work of Pink (2006) and Rose (2007) emphasizes that it is vital that researchers adopt a reflexive approach when working with visual methods. She stresses, “Reflexivity is thus about more than where the researcher came from, but about the processes of co-production of knowledge given the positionality of researcher and participant” (Murray, 2009, p. 473). In this spirit, I feel that it is important to examine and explain my own various positions in relation to photography and the participants during the study because it was not always as clear cut as handing them the camera and standing back.

### **3.7.7.1 Prompter**

I have already discussed how photography provided something of a change of pace to the interviewing process when it began to slow down. At this point, when there was a lull in the conversation, I would often use a prompting statement to gently remind the participant about the presence of the camera and the possibility for photography. This often introduced a shift in movement for the interview. If we had stopped, then we would start to walk around, or we would move ourselves to the area where the artifact was. In so doing, it also seemed to prepare participants to focus on an artifact of interest.

Sometimes, some of the younger children needed more time to think about what they wanted to take a picture of. At these times, I tried to remind them of their options for photography, and sometimes I restated a comment that they might have made about an object. Gibson (2012, p. 156) shares that “Children are much more likely than adults to need help telling their story”. Therefore, I felt that it was an appropriate way of encouraging them to return to a train of thought or an observation that they might have made earlier to help them decide on something of interest to photograph.

One further aspect of the prompting role was to gently remind participants about avoiding photographs of people or identifiers. Every now and again someone would wander into the shot or participants might want to take a picture of something distinctive, like the name of the garden. On these occasions, we would wait until the person had passed by, or I would suggest

maybe taking the shot from a different angle so that the identifier would be less visible.

### **3.7.7.2      *Technical assistant***

I also found myself in the role of technical assistant. We used a digital camera with standard point-and-shoot capabilities. The adults carried it throughout the interview; whereas, for practical purposes, the children were given it at the end of their focus group garden activities. Packard (2008, pp. 63-64) cautions that researchers must be careful about balancing out power relationships when using cameras in research, for "... an unequal power dynamic is immediately and irrevocably established the moment the researcher must instruct a participant on how to operate a piece of equipment" (Packard, 2008, pp. 64-65). Even though participants had the opportunity to practice with the camera prior to the interview, instruction was at times unavoidable when they wanted to do more with it than just point and shoot, such as disabling an auto-setting or flash or going closer to capture an item of interest. In those moments, I stayed at hand to help. At these times, I was also mindful not to step in too quickly. It was also interesting to note that the power imbalance around technology could potentially go the other way. Whilst using a digital camera was something of a novelty factor for the younger interviewees, the following comment from a 12-year-old highlighted that it also showed its age:

*Daniel (to Isabel)—Didn't they ... I think they used to have these (pointing to the camera) in the old days.*

While this made me smile at the time, it also made me realize that even a digital camera might have seemed a little outdated for some participants compared to other more current possibilities of photography such as their mobile phone.

### **3.7.7.3 Collaborator**

As we were all in the garden together, there were opportunities, both between myself and the participants and between the children themselves, to collaborate on their photographic efforts. Harper (2002, p. 23) states, "When two or more people discuss the meaning of photographs they try to figure out something together". Even though this collaboration occurred during the process of photography within the actual setting, I think it had a similar impact of allowing a sharing of meanings to arise and brought about a clearer understanding of the meaning. Kullman (2012, p. 3) states, "... it is advisable that researchers pay heed to their influence on children's interpretation of images", so it was always important for me to check with the children about what it was that was meaningful to them about the pictures they had taken rather than assuming my own interpretations.

### **3.7.7.4 Directed photographer**

The photography was not intended to challenge the participants in any way, and they were given the option to direct me to take a picture on their behalf if they felt uncomfortable using the camera. Five out of the twenty-five adults



chose this, but in these cases, I encouraged the participants to tell me about how to take the shot, and this led them to adopting a directing role. This is reflected in the excerpt below, where Joyce has already decided that she does not want to take the photos. As we prepare to take pictures, I confirm her choice. As she steps back from taking the picture, she steps forward into a directorial role and guides me (see Figure 3.7 below):

*Isabel—Yeah, we can go over to the peach tree. If you want me to do it for you, then you just...*

*Joyce—You can do it.*

*Isabel—OK.*

*Joyce—Do you want me to stand next to it?*

*Isabel—No, I can't have people in the picture, so it's always...*

*Joyce—Oh, I'll let you do it.*

*Isabel—So, is there an angle or a particular peach?*

*Joyce—Step back a little bit so that we can get this view of it.*

*Isabel—Alright, so if I give you the mic again.*

*Joyce—Yeah.*

*Isabel—So you probably want to see from this end.*

*Joyce—Yes. Try to get that good one. Yeah, try to get that one, 'cause that one is almost ready.*

*Isabel—It's looking sweet isn't it?*

*Joyce—Yes.*

*Isabel—(Sound of camera clicking) OK.*



**Figure 3.7: Joyce's peach photo**

### **3.7.7.5      *Adult researcher***

In her book, Mitchell (2011, p 52) explains, “Not all visual work necessarily alters the unequal relationship bet researcher and researched”. One specific exchange reminded me that, for one child at least, I was still an adult whose request might be read in different ways:

***Isabel*** (to *BJ*)—*Hang on, what would you like to take a picture of?*

***BJ***—*Just what I like?*

The tone of this short exchange, made me think that my request might be regarded by *BJ* as a type of loaded adult-child interaction that came with

limitations attached. His question made me think that he might be checking how far “What would you like?” could go and that he perhaps anticipated that there might be boundaries contained within this question and answer to do with what the adult wanted to hear.

#### **3.7.7.6      *Concerned researcher***

Many of these incidents had already been anticipated through the ethical planning, and so I already had some sense of how I might respond to a number of situations that arose. However, Clark (2013, p. 69) reminds us that researchers need to be aware of what he calls, “ethical moments” that are often unplanned. He explains:

Ethical moments emerge at the interplay of relationships (including power inequalities) within research, when ethical quandaries cannot be resolved by resorting to pre-determined universalistic principles. Rather, their resolution emerges from the situated and contextualised practices within which research happens. (Clark, 2013, p. 69).

Thus, not everything during visual research can be anticipated; some situations might take the researcher by surprise and can be quite challenging for those involved.

An ethical moment that I encountered was at one of the sites and happened during the children’s focus group interviews when I realized that mine was not the only camera taking pictures in the garden. The supervising adult, who was also a parent, had decided to use an iPad to photograph the children taking

part in the garden activities with me. By the time that we had finished, the parent had taken the iPad inside and had connected it to a television, where other children and adults were watching what we had accomplished that morning. Not only this, but later these images were put on to the church's social media site.

The impact of the visual times in which we now live is stressed by Eckhoff (2017, p. 115) who states, "Through the omnipresence of tablets and smartphones equipped with cameras ... digital media is now a recognizable and consistent part of the everyday lives of many young children". This includes their parents as well who often record their children's endeavors. I realized that the photography of the parent was done with the intent of recording an enjoyable activity at the church in the garden and that for the parent this was simply a norm—capturing and sharing the children's highlights that day on camera. Yet for me, as it occurred during the data collection, it was a cause of some consternation—it all happened so quickly, and was uncertain if this was somehow an ethical breach. This was my fourth focus group, and I thought that I had explained about the task of supervision to the supervising adult. As it was the first time that anything like this had arisen, I was unsure how to resolve the issue. I did not feel confident about asking the parent to stop recording; neither did I feel that this was appropriate as it was beyond my ethical aegis. In the end, I felt it prudent to separate the two types of photography. I had to accept that the parent's photography was different from my study's use of it, and in this case, the cameras were being used for two different purposes. In addition, I would not be using any of this extra

material in my research.

Ironically, the parent's photography had a further effect in that many of the non-participant children looking at the pictures on TV suddenly became interested in the study and requested that they be allowed to take part.

### **3.7.8 Drawbacks and challenges**

This section will discuss some of the drawbacks and challenges that this method brought with it.

#### **3.7.8.1 Challenges posed by light or weather**

Sometimes it was not always possible to take a photo. If the interviews were in the late afternoon, then the changing light of dusk made it a little difficult to take a clear picture. Bad weather occasionally hampered the taking of photographs too. A few times, rain started to fall and we had to cut short the interview in order to seek shelter. In these cases, if the participants were available, I would ask them to use the camera the following week. However, a few interviews did not have a photography component.

#### **3.7.8.2 An imbalanced focus on telling rather than showing lead to a disjointed ending**

Next, the real-time photographic experience with the digital camera generated a different material outcome: "While digital camera screens have a material

tactility, the photographs they display ... are images, not physical objects” (Larsen, 2008, p. 149). At the time, I did not really dwell upon this distinction because the use of photography in the garden setting was allowing for real-time elicitation to occur, and that seemed to me to be the main priority. Therefore, as I have explained, I felt that it was unnecessary to pursue the second stage interview with its show-and-tell component. However, with hindsight, I realize that my attention was really only on the telling and not the showing element of the photo-elicitation experience. In the literature (Clark-Ibáñez, 2004; Meo, 2010; and Bourke, 2017), the showing part that occurs in the second interview allows for participants to see their photographs as objects—to touch them, to pick and choose favorites, decide which should and should not belong to the study, and, of course, to talk about them; not only this but the showing experience is also about the participant taking ownership of the photographs, through their meanings but also tangibly. Oftentimes, interviewers present participants with copies of the photos taken. They may make an album for their participants, give them a favorite picture, or simply hand them their full set of images. By presenting them with something physical like this, it is not only a very thoughtful way of bringing the interview to a close, but it is a way of acknowledging that the photos also belong to the participants. Mitchell (2011, p. 25) emphasizes that ownership is an ethical issue and advises, “A rule of thumb, then, is to make sure that the interviewees have copies of their own photographs”.

This time of showing is also an important opportunity to gain ongoing consent for the use of the images as participants can be reminded at this time about

the purposes for which the images will be used and if they are still in agreement with this. Despite having gained consent to use the photographs in the consent forms and verbally prior to the interviews, I felt that I had not carried out this part of the experience quite as meaningfully as had hoped and that my change of plan not to have the second interview meant that I had not given participants the opportunity to properly see their finished set of images and take stock of them. Consequently, I decided to make a slide show for each participant. Adults received emailed copies of these with their transcripts as a record of their participation and a memory of the experience. They were given the option to delete any image that they did not like or want in the study. I took the children's slideshows up to the churches and had them view them together on my laptop computer; they too had the same choice as the adults to delete an image if they wanted to, and they were given the option of keeping their images too. However, due to the timing of sorting the images and getting the transcriptions completed, this came about much later than the interview experience. Therefore, doing it in this way, felt somewhat disjointed and disembodied, compared to the flowing and embodied way in which we had incorporated the photography during the actual interviews.

### **3.7.8.3      *Paying attention to the difference digital makes***

From the discussion above, it is clear that prior to data collection, beyond the convenience of immediately having the images caught on camera, I was not fully aware of the difference that using a digital camera would make. As I have explained, in some ways my intent was very similar to those studies that used

a disposable camera, but then the digital option enabled me to make adjustments to my original plan in real-time. Both Kullman (2012) and Larsen (2008) caution against researchers being too quick to focus only on the photographic outcome. Larsen (2008) states:

... photographing is absent from most theory and research that jumps straight from photography to photographs. They go directly to the representational worlds of photographs and skip over their production, movement and circulation. ... Such representational accounts have been successful in analyzing photography as texts and scripts, but they have been blind to issues of technology and hybridized performances, which also means that they have neglected much of the significance of *digital* photography. (Larsen, 2008, p. 143).

He highlights here that digital photography is different from analog photography, and that digital has the potential to be used in many creative ways, and that researchers should remain open to this, rather than trying to fit their projects into an analog format.

This section has considered the multifaceted role that photography played in the study. The discussion has shown how it soon took on an identity of its own during the interview process.

### **3.8 Garden notes**

Finlay (2011, pp. 17) discusses how a phenomenological project seeks to draw on "... rigorous, rich and resonant description". These are key elements in trying to capture the lived experience of a phenomenon. I have already discussed how the walking interviews with adults and the garden activity-



based focus groups with children helped to trigger impressions about the gardens and how the voice recorder and photography helped to capture this. In this section, I explain how the garden notes added one more important layer of data collection.

### **3.8.1 A variation to field notes**

As a variation to field notes, the garden notes included garden specific information, such as weather conditions, animal sightings, and sensory elements, which all contributed to the experience of the garden for us on a specific day. Pink (2009) emphasizes that gardens frequently provide gardeners with a number of sensory experiences, for example, touching or smelling a plant, that are often taken for granted or can be easily overlooked. This is information that might be forgotten as it may not be noted verbally or visually, yet it is another way for people to express their impressions about the gardens. When and where possible, I added these sensory descriptions from my notes to the interview transcripts, which gave them more depth and provided better context. In addition, physical perceptions, such as identifying how we walked through the gardens, were also be noted as this too was a relevant way of capturing how participants experienced their garden. After a few interviews, I added to my notes how we began and ended the interviews to remind me of interruptions or other factors that might have impacted the pacing of the interview. Finally, once the focus group interviews began, I made note of the planting activities that we carried out so that I would be able to have some idea of how we progressed from week to week.

Similar to traditional field notes I also used the garden notes to record my impressions, insights, and descriptions after the interviews. However, there were some differences. One of the key components of phenomenological methodology is what Finlay (2011, p. 183) refers to as a “phenomenological attitude”. This is where the researchers open themselves to all possibilities with regards to the phenomenon so that they may experience it during data collection and data analysis from a place of discovery. To do this, they attempt to bracket off any prior thoughts or preconceptions that they may have about the phenomenon. “Here, taken for granted assumptions, judgments, and theories are temporarily suspended or reigned in, in order to see the world anew” Finlay (2011, p. 23).

This is clearly not an easy or even realistic thing to do—as Finlay goes on to explain “Researchers are an inevitable part of what is being researched” (2011, pp. 23-24). Therefore, she recommends a reflexive approach to the idea of bracketing and suggests that researchers actually examine, and explain that which they have bracketed in order to be more aware of what they themselves bring to the research process and the phenomenon. Thus, the garden notes were also a place where I was able to begin this reflexive process and explored some of my preconceived ideas about the gardens. This also has an ethical impact that is discussed below.

### **3.8.2 Ethical considerations**

Emerson et al. (1995, p. 5) point out that "... writing descriptive accounts of experiences and observations is not as straightforward and transparent a process as it might initially appear". They provide us with some ethical scenarios that might arise when using notes in the field:

Prejudging incidents in outsiders' terms makes it difficult to cultivate empathetic understanding and to discover what import local people give to them. (Emerson et al., 1995, p. 27).

This statement is also reinforced in the BERA Guidelines (2018, p. 13), which reminds us that "An important consideration is the extent to which a researcher's reflective research into their own practice impinges upon others". The garden-field notes were meant to provide me with a means to reflect on the interview experience and any incidents that arose from it. I used them to gain greater reflexivity about the process and to help me question my own perceptions, values, and expectations. To do this, I drew on Sunstein and Chiseri-Strater's (2012, p. 87) tracking questions: "What surprised me? (tracking assumptions), What intrigued me? (tracking positions), What disturbed me? (tracking tensions)"; these and other questions and thoughts enabled me to be open about what I discovered but also to hold myself to account for any observations that arose from the interview process (see Appendix 26).

Emerson et al. (1995, p. 111) explain:

... field note descriptions and memos may be framed in terms of what is a standard of 'what is supposed to be' that derives from official rules or understandings that are held to govern action in some specific setting. (Emerson et al., 1995, p. 111).

This is quite pertinent when thinking about a garden. As a garden educator, it would be easy to have projected expectations about how the gardens should look and what activities should be conducted there. However, it was not my intention to judge their condition but to be open to what people had to say about them and to attend to what they meant to those taking part in the study. It was my hope that I would learn about what it was like to live with the gardens through the eyes of the participants, and the garden notes were a helpful way for me to reflect on my own position in the gardens with the participants and provided a means for me to record observations (both theirs and mine) that could easily have been overlooked or forgotten. For example, I also reflected in my notes how my relationship with the sites changed. Finlay (2011, pp. 24-25) points out that phenomenology has "a potentially transformative relational approach", and I feel that I got to know the participants and the gardens far more deeply over the one year of data collection than I had over the three years of the Youth4Health project.

### **3.9 Transcription**

As a way of immersing myself once again within the experience, I transcribed all the interviews. Smith et al. (2012, p. 74) point out that this is a valuable way to approach the start of the interview interpretation process. It also allowed me to attend to sensory observations, like sounds and touch, which may have

arisen during the interview and been written about in the garden notes but not necessarily captured on tape. I was able to layer these observations onto the transcripts, which then helped evoke certain movements, the feeling of being outside and the conditions of the setting itself.

In addition, the 187 photographs that were taken were sorted for all participants and merged with their interview transcripts so that the pictures and the words would always remain contextualized for a fuller picture of each interview. This immersive experience was a way “... to dwell with the raw data” (Finlay, 2011, p. 229). In so doing, new ideas and understandings were able to arise about the lived nature of Hope and Grace Baptist church gardens.

### ***3.9.1 Protecting the data***

I have kept a record of all hard copy transcripts in a locked filing cabinet in my university office, and all electronic copies were stored on password-protected files on a safe server at Louisiana Tech University. Furthermore, in accordance with LSBU’s Code of Practice, all data generated in the course of the research will be kept securely in electronic form on an external hard-drive for 10 years after the completion of the research project.

### ***3.9.2 Interpreting the data***

The guiding question from this study’s title—How do your gardens grow?—was originally posed to discover the different ways in which the gardens are

regarded by the participants of the churches where they are set. Using Vagle's (2018, p. 108) whole-parts-whole analysis method, I was able to draw out themes about the ways in which the gardens were being used and thought about from the data both within each site and then between the sites to see if there was any correlation. Following this, I sought to find further relationships within the themes (Braun and Clark, 2013, p. 231) to explore the possible lived meanings that these might represent. A reflection of this process can be found in Appendix 27. What follows now is a discussion of my findings.

## CHAPTER 4—FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

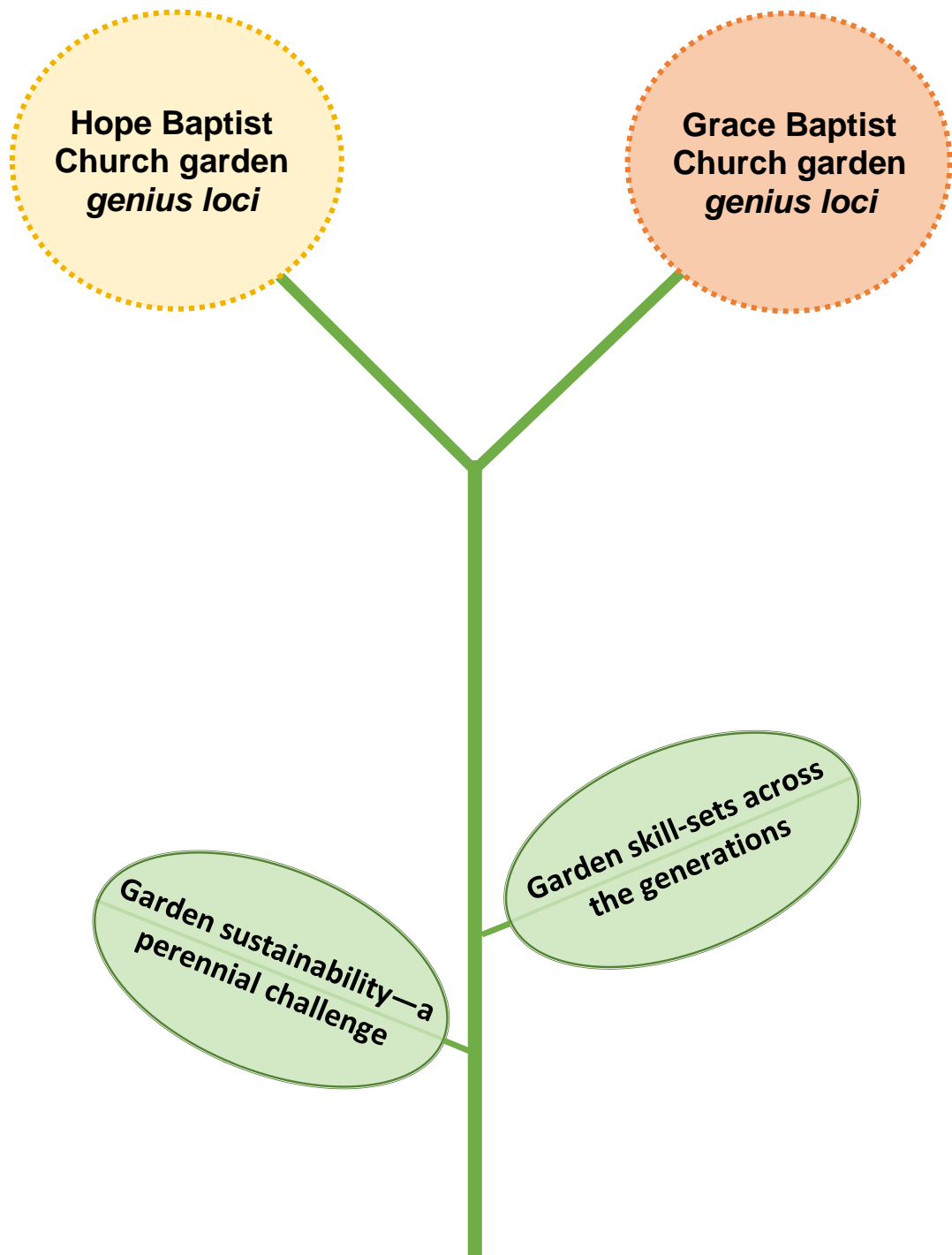
### 4.1 The *genius loci* at Hope and Grace Baptist Churches

In the literature review, the word *terroir* was used as a way to show the idea of a garden having its own special feel (see section 2.4.5.1). Cresswell (2015, p. 129) explains that architectural phenomenologists actually have a specific term for this—*genius loci*—to capture what they call “the spirit of place”. This “includes both ‘natural’ aspects of a place ... and the human landscape” (Cresswell, 2015, p. 130). For a garden, then, this is its unique personality or character, that comes from an intertwining of the natural setting with physical structures and the needs of the people who are involved with it. An exploration of the *genius loci* of both church gardens provides the first set of themes about their lived experience and the meanings behind this. Looking at them in this way also helps to create a picture of what it is like to live with the gardens at the individual sites (See Figure 4.1 below).

- Hope Baptist—a garden on the move rooted in history
- Grace Baptist—a garden that grows people through relationship

Following this, two common themes shared by both church gardens will be explored:

- Garden skill-sets across the generations
- Garden sustainability—a perennial challenge



**Figure 4.1: Findings chart—How do your gardens grow?**

#### **4.2 Hope Baptist Church garden—a garden on the move rooted in history**

This section will discuss the *genius loci* of Hope Baptist Church gardens.



#### **4.2.1 Introduction—garden spatial flow**

Gardens are often connected with what we do in them, the kinds of things that we plant, and the successes and failures of those attempts. These can be regarded as the practices of the garden, but gardeners often discuss the atmosphere and practicality of the setting too. Regardless of how it might look, a garden does not always tell us how it might feel to move through it, that is something that comes with regular garden routines—this is what I call a garden's spatial flow. By attending to this, I discuss how Hope Baptist Church garden's *genius loci* was that of a garden on the move rooted in history.

#### **4.2.2 Rootbound: living with a garden that doesn't feel right**

Over the two years since the Youth4Health project departed, it was this sense of their garden's spatial flow, or rather a lack of it that became most apparent to the deacons, George and Trenton, at Hope Baptist Church:

**George**—*Well, we were looking at where we had it at, and there wasn't room to grow ... I think they [the architectural students from Louisiana Tech University] had a great design, but it was congested in here, so we didn't have enough room to really work, so we felt like we needed to move it over.*

Here we see how a garden's spatial flow is not always known in advance, for it is determined by its functionality, which comes from the users needing to move back, forth, and within it on a regular basis; those in the garden become conscious of its spatial flow because they may have to make decisions about how to move within the garden space, and if their movements feel easy, or

are somehow hampered. Whilst the initial garden design at Hope Baptist had been attractive, for the deacons, the flow of the church's garden site was too tight to maneuver around, in person or by lawnmower. The feeling of being constrained by this setting was very clear:

**George**—*I want to expand it because where we're going, we want a little bit more room.*

Positioned between a storage building and the main church (see Appendix 2A, Hope Baptist Church garden: original design), there was a sense of being hemmed in or stuck in the middle, which also made it harder to maintain. A garden's spatial flow might change over time as the needs of those who use it change. At Hope Baptist Church, the garden started to evoke a sense of being root bound:

**Trenton**—*we just needed space ... we needed the space for, erm, (laughing) other things.*

This left a feeling that in their original position there was nowhere else for them to grow, less in the planting sense but more in terms of any ideas regarding the expansion of the garden and that this was the most limiting aspect of all. When a plant is root bound, the gardener must decide whether to maintain the status quo or to uproot the plant. The deacons at Hope Baptist faced a similar choice about their garden and decided that theirs would be a garden that moved:

**Trenton**—because we had a play-ground set out here, and it outlived its usefulness ... It was getting to be kinda rickety, and we didn't want the kids playing out there anymore, so we took that down ... And then it was just a matter of a couple of men grabbing the grow-tubs and dragging them over there.

**George**—Now we decided we'd mount our garden up on a platform of soft rubber ... I think it's a good set up. It's out of the way and not in a congested area. It's easy to keep up and slows the grass down with the rubber in there, and I put the boards around it ...

By dismantling all the original structures and relocating most of them to where the playground used to be, a new garden spatial flow, and a new garden, were created at Hope Baptist (See Appendix 2B, Hope Baptist Church garden after the move).

#### **4.2.3 Regeneration: increased movement in the garden**

This was, then, a very practical decision and with the addition of more grow-tubs, the new setting had a regenerative effect in that it was accompanied by an increase in movement at the grow-tubs. First, it was drawing in the seniors:

**George**—There's a couple of older members, I would say elder members that likes planting and gardening, and they come out on their time and they check the soil, they stick some things in the ground.

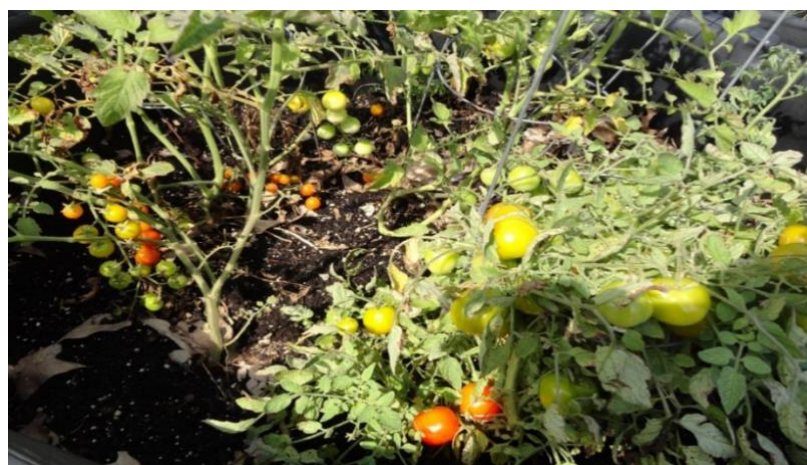
**Trenton**—There's another couple of ladies in the church who really like the garden and stuff and they come out here a couple of times a week to make sure it's being watered and stuff like that ...

**Xavier**—Sister Thelma, and Brother George and Sister Tamar have come together and seem to be a great working group of people who not only are dedicated but also committed, wanting to see the church do more and the garden go further, so that's been a blessing all by itself.

For this core group, the garden was allowing them more room to expand themselves into the garden compared to the original garden space. One of the seniors, Thelma, described the new location as, *“It’s larger and we can plant more things”*. This helped them then to plan for different kinds of growing options in ways that they had not been able to before.

It was also drawing those inside the day care, located in the Family Life Center on the church campus, outside. One of the teachers, Taneka, commented, *“Well, I definitely love the move because we had a smaller space at the beginning, now it’s a larger space, and it’s more available now”*. For her, this new setting meant easier physical contact with the space for the toddlers in her charge. She explained, *“Oh, we try to bring them out at least two or three times a week”*. She described how these regular visits were becoming learning experiences for the children:

**Taneka**—*I remember a child grabbing the tomato ... they thought it was a ball (laughing), they said, ‘ball’, but I told them that it was a tomato, but it ... was still green. So, they all said, ‘green’ ... so it was very interesting to see the progress—as the garden grew, the progress of the children’s knowledge grew (see Figure 4.2 below).*



**Figure 4.2:** *Taneka—the tomatoes are growing pretty good*

For this teacher, the easy access to the newly positioned garden was providing her and her young class with an experiential element—the opportunity to actually see and touch different plants and to and learn about them in a developmentally appropriate way.

The outside was also being drawn inside. From her day care window, the director, Cynthia, was finding it much easier to notice the space:

**Cynthia**—*They had moved the garden to a bigger space ... and you're able to see it when looking outside. They have plants and flowers ... and it lets us know that it's spring and things are blooming ... It lets you know that life's still going on (laughing).*

She explains how the flowers catch her eye:

**Cynthia**—*I always look out every day. Just look around my area, and I look out here and see how stuff has grown. I mostly notice like this pink flower (see Figure 4.3 below). You know, I like colors like flowers.*



**Figure 4.3:** *Cynthia's photo of pink zinnias*

The movement of the garden as it grew and came into bloom was indicative of the rhythm of the seasons. It is easy to sometimes lose touch with these when one spends long stretches of time inside. In some way, simply noticing these intimate aspects of growth at moments through the day was a reminder of such cycles. The view from Cynthia's window thus became almost like a living and changing picture throughout the year.

The newly positioned garden, which was set towards the back of the church grounds, started to have a pull effect on others as well:

***Xavier**—Now that they've seen the plants grow and are starting to see the area cleaned up, I've seen people who've never been to the back of the church at the back of the church, so that's a plus here ... trying to get our members involved and trying to get them activated and moving forward.*

There was a feeling of curiosity about the new space, which was bringing other church members to visit the garden as a result. Rather like our root-bound plant, once it is transplanted it goes through a period of adjustment and then regeneration. Similarly, the garden at Hope was passing through a similar phase:

***Xavier**—What I've noticed is that each one of our tubs has more flowers and soil; more potting soil has been added, and as a consequence when they were in the replenishing process, I thought everything had just died, not knowing that it would just take a little work for everything to come back to life, and that's been a tremendous blessing—to see things that were once dead come back to life.*

With its Biblical inference, this comment not only reflects the state of plant development inside the grow-tubs but is actually alluding to a number of challenges that had befallen the church and its garden and a sense of resurgence that was present throughout the campus.

#### ***4.2.4 Resurgence: the winds of change blowing through the garden space***

The re-positioning of the garden was, in fact, indicative of a much wider sense of change that was occurring inside and outside the spaces that comprise Hope Baptist Church. With the unfortunate passing away of the previous pastor, the church had moved through a three-year period of loss and uncertainty; some spoke of it as “*a critical set back*” a sense of being “*derailed*” and a need to get “*back on track*”—all of this impacted the garden:

**George**—*When we was part of the organization, Youth4Health, we started this garden drive. But out here at Hope we’ve had changes in pastor and youth director. We had a young lady that was really excited about our garden and our youth and giving them things to help them advance in life; her husband got a job in another city ... but our heart is still in the garden.*

The church had passed through a period of upheaval and this statement shows a sense of needing to rebuild what had been started and a commitment to placing the garden within the center of this process, especially for the youth, many of whom were new. However, unlike the day care toddlers who had had easy access to the new site, the church children explained that they had yet to be introduced to the garden:

**Kayla** (age 10)—*Kids don't really do anything in this space because we've never really had a chance or an experience to come out here to do something.*

**Aaliyah** (age 12)—*No one ever gave us an opportunity to come out here.*

From their perspective, this was an adult space that had yet to become a place for them. Hence there was a feeling that they were being left out of the bigger picture and had not been invited to explore this new garden setting. In contrast, for the adults, the garden was a place-in-waiting for these church children:

**George**—*We want to be able to have the youth to come and be a part of planting in it.*

**Xavier**—*Oh, I would like to see it get bigger. I would like to see our youth being more involved and learning how to nurture plants and learn the importance of plants, so I would like to see that.*

Even though it had yet to be communicated to the children, these observations indicate that the future presence of the children in the garden represented a sign of the church's own resurgence. They were considered an essential part of the future of the church; therefore, many of the preparations were being made with them in mind.

With the arrival of a new pastor, Hope Baptist Church was transitioning to a period of stability and renewed optimism under new leadership. This was now symbolized by a series of beautification projects to the church and on the church grounds. Along with this, the concept of what comprised the garden space was expanded beyond the boundaries of the newly moved garden, and



other areas were identified as important sites. Trenton explains the two main additions and the inspiration for these:

**Trenton**— ... And actually, the bell project was one of them because the bell was [originally] on the other side of the church.

Also:

**Trenton**—We had been to a lot of different churches, looking at what they were doing ... and there was a church that had a prayer fountain. we thought, why don't we have a prayer garden? (Laughing) ... And the centerpiece for the prayer garden would be the fountain ... Then, we went back and did a little bit more of a campaign for the bricks ... and lo and behold, (sound of wind blowing) we got enough support that we could finish up the fountain here.

Both of these came to be regarded as garden areas as well. The bell structure was designed with planters within it to hold flowering plants, and the fountain area, when finished, was envisaged as having memorial benches and plants around it, which, when accompanied by the sound of gently running water, would then become something of a contemplative space. Therefore, different kinds of garden spaces were being established on the site.

#### **4.2.5 Renewal: change rooted in history**

This expansion brought with it a fresh start and a looking forward to the future, which seemed to be accompanied by the need to acknowledge the church's past:

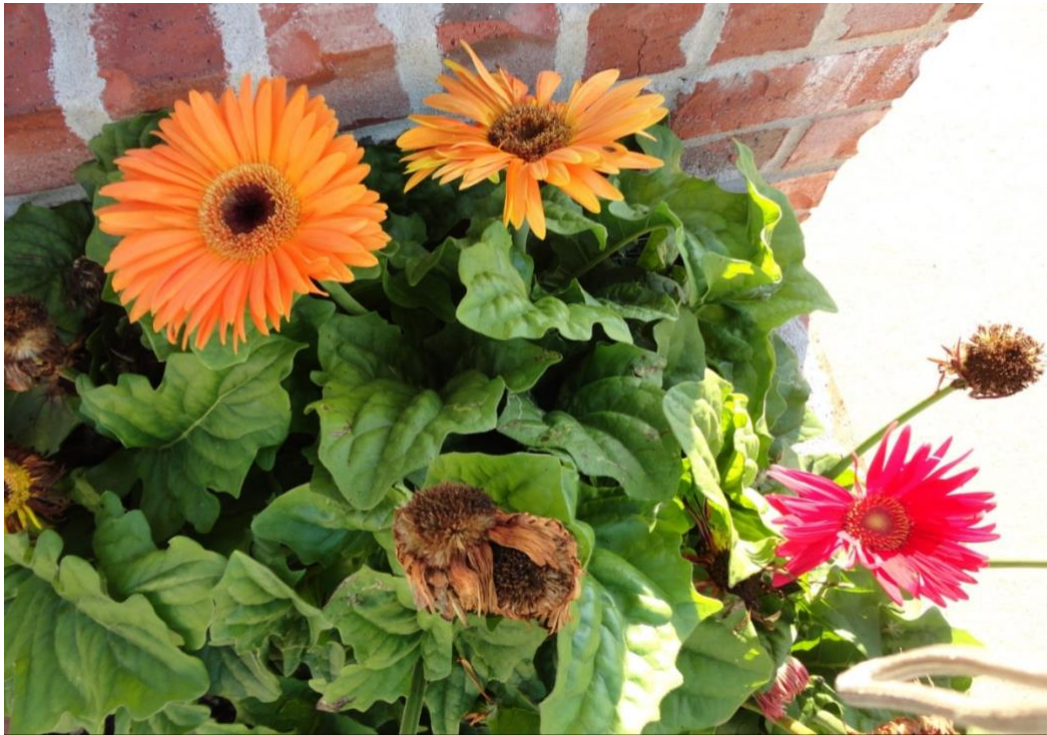
**George**—This is one of the oldest churches in this area. Yeah, so they took the bell [from its original position] and for the longest time they just

*had it sitting over in one church member's house, so we decided that we were gonna bring back history and build this church up, and we were gonna bring the bell back!*

As a result, both the bell structure and the fountain garden were created to be symbolic sites of memory. Founded in 1864, this African American church has a history that goes back to the period of time around the Emancipation Proclamation, which officially ended slavery in the United States. By emphasizing these historical roots, it seems as if this was the moment for the deacons and other church members to reclaim in the bell an important symbol from the past and to return it from its temporary shelter to its rightful place by giving it public expression in the garden. There was a lot of pride in this action and its dedication ceremony was a form of homecoming celebration. The determination of church members to bring the bell back seemed to set them in motion. Its return now marked their ability to move forward with the changes that they had planned. Once in place, not only did the bell resonate its one hundred and more-year history into the soundscape every time it was rung, but participants explained that during its dedication ceremony, the flowering plants at the base of the structure held the names of church members who had passed away and thereby became living memorials to them. Months later, the flowers were still thriving and bringing joy to church members as they entered the building. In her photo commentary Tamar explains their significance:

***Tamar***—*I just like how these daisies are around the bell (see Figure 4.4 below). You can see how pretty strong they're coming along ... Mr. [name] was one of the members that had the bell, and when we had our church anniversary, we had it dedicated and put back up, and he*

*planted these. I just think it's a great asset to our church. It's not anything to eat, but it sure makes the church look better.*



**Figure 4.4: Tamar's photo of Gerber daisies**

The commemorative bricks had initially been used to line the path when the student architects designed the original garden. They, along with more bricks from the recent brick campaign, were now rehoused within the fountain's façade:

**Trenton**—*So there's probably about 400 bricks in there ... and you see there are people who bought multiple bricks ... Some of it looks like families that were put together, and that's the way it is. Because starting from right here, back to over here, as a matter of fact, all the way over here ... This is all my family (laughing). And look, we go back. We got the 1800s ... (inspecting the bricks) that was my erm ... that was my grandfather and my grandmother—1887, ... and this was my grandmother on my other side of the family. My brothers and sisters, aunts, uncles, you know, that type of thing.*

These bricks also reflected the way in which the lived garden space was being inscribed with the past. They were engraved with the names of loved ones,

short scripture passages, and messages of hope, and together formed a legacy, marking the contribution of those who had gone before at the church.

An arc of church history running from the past to the present whilst looking to the future was key to the garden space expansion at Hope Baptist Church. Freed from the tightness of its initial location and at a time of optimism, the *genius loci* of this space was that of a garden on the move. The newly defined garden areas heralded that they were part of something much bigger—a renewal that was taking place on the church campus. The gardens were beginning to grow in a number of new directions, but the vision for the future was firmly rooted in an appreciation of the past.

### **4.3 Grace Baptist Church garden—a garden that grows people through relationship**

This section now turns to the *genius loci* of the garden at Grace Baptist Church.

#### ***4.3.1 Introduction—a new relationship with the outside***

Our life-stories are frequently woven into significant places that we share with others and this makes them take on an importance to our lives. Nearly all of the adults interviewed at Grace Baptist had been long-standing members there, some going back a decade, and others almost a lifetime. The oldest participant, Oleta, who was aged 94 at the time of the interview, even traced

a positional lineage through the generations of her family at the church. She explained:

*Ever since I've been in this church, the [position of] clerk—the secretary has been in my family. I've been in this church all my life.*

Another adult participant, Lynelle, who had been there for 55 years, shared what the relationship to the building meant to her and her ties to those inside it:

***Lynelle**—My momma bought me here when I was a baby, so ... this is home. Just home. Everybody in there I grew up with except for a few members ... All that time, there hasn't really been a connection to the outside ... not until now (laughing).*

Through these stories of growing up at the church, Oleta and Lynelle are emphasizing the significance of this building. For many African American Christians in the South this description of a church as “home” is a common phrase. For some of these adults at Grace Baptist, this term speaks to the way in which prayer bonds, worship bonds and personal bonds established within the four walls of their church building, provided for them a sense of belonging, comfort, spiritual sustenance and continuity over the years. In contrast to this high level of familiarity with the interior of the building, Lynelle's closing comment highlights how the garden now brought with it an unexpectedly new dimension to the exterior of this well-known place. This was confirmed by others:

***Jennifer**—It's been a dramatical change because right here there was nothing here at all, nothing. Empty.*

**Sherri**—*I think that it has changed as far as giving a place for people to come out and enjoy the outdoors.*

Having a defined garden space helped foster a new relationship to the area outside the church. It took on a different level of significance in that when the members came to church, they also had the opportunity to go into the garden. This section will examine how, through a new relationship with the outside, other relationships were forged. Therefore, the *genius loci* of Grace Baptist Church garden is that of a garden that grows people through relationship.

#### **4.3.2 A relationship with self: just sitting; a lost art**

Many of the participants at Grace Baptist Church commented on not going outside regularly to physically work in the garden:

**Sherri**—*Things were a little lax with the garden.*

**Simeon (age 16)**—*Maybe because it's time-consuming work and people just don't have the time to take out of the day to upkeep the garden.*

**Angela**—*When you have children, especially young children, this doesn't become your priority ... I guess I am out here on more of an, erm, ... 'as needed' basis. We came, Glynis and I, and planted the tomatoes and the peppers.*

Instead, a number of them observed that the space had provided multiple opportunities for them to take the time to slow down. Many acknowledged how much there was to actually do on a daily basis. One participant explained, “*People are busy with their lives*”. Even when at church, a minister spoke

about the pressure of her duties, *“I stay so busy inside ... I’m just running in the church”*. This sense of always doing something meant that there was little time to sit down; a couple of them even described the act of sitting still as *“a lost art”*. This is explained further:

**Ashley**—*Like nobody does this anymore. You don’t think about it ... Just sitting, I think is something our kids don’t do. We don’t do it as adults. I think it’s healthy; it would de-stress you!*

This comment acknowledges how a being constantly on the move comes with the need to counter all of this activity. There is also, likely, a gendered aspect to some of this movement. All of the adult participants at Grace Baptist were women of different ages and different positions within the church (ministers, choir members, committee members). Many had responsibilities when they came up to the site and sometimes disclosed prior to interviews that they were often arriving from responsibilities, such as work and/or family commitments, before they got to the site. Thus, they were caught up in the multiple and frequently overlapping demands that came with the business of daily life. This sense of multi-tasking may well have been carried into their time at the church.

Therefore, central to them being outside was less the need for their bodies to be active and more the need for them to be still. Sitting in the garden and making the time for a brief repose may well have been for some of these women a way to practice a form of self-care. Once in the garden at Grace Baptist the planter benches, the swing chair, and the shaded arbor bench were all referenced as favorite sites where they were able to decompress with

their bodies and minds at rest and be still for a while. Some of the participants described how the physical structures were conducive to creating a more relaxing environment that allowed them to just sit:

**BJ** (age 12)—*It's chill time ... Like when we tired, we go over there (pointing to the shaded arbor benches) and sit down.*

**Haven** (age 9)—*Sometimes I sit right here (tapping the planter bench).*

**Patrice**—*They mainly, you know, sit here and enjoy the outside—enjoy the breeze if it's cool.*

**Angela**—*What I have seen is the children and the adults come and have a seat, right here, under the shade. And just really seem to enjoy being outside ... enjoying the bench, and enjoy sitting (see Figure 4.5 below).*



**Figure 4.5: Angela's shaded bench photo**

In its own way, by providing a space for the church members to be quiet and to have time to think, the seating seemed to foster a relationship to the self:



**Jennifer**—*I come out to the church quite often, so when I do, sometimes I just take a seat right there, and I just sit and have a really good peace of mind.*

**Tre (age 13)**—*It gives you time to think about something ... life. Like what I'm gonna do in my future life ... If I should do cross country or not?*

These observations show that the garden provided a feeling of calmness, and was accompanied by greater clarity, which provided the space for participants to make key decisions. For another adult, the calmness had an added purpose:

**Nadine**—*People don't understand how important it is to have places you can go to and you know, just get away from everything ... I'm not thinking about my issues with where my children are in life right now. I'm just getting that renewal ... and this is that place for me. When I come, I'm able to release everything.*

Thus, it was a place to leave some of the emotions of life behind. This ability to let go of a burden in the garden would have had a cathartic effect. By providing time away from daily concerns, the garden brought with it restorative qualities; therefore, what seemed like the act of simply just sitting actually worked on a far deeper level for many of these individuals.

#### **4.3.3 A relationship with nature: a garden with a view**

The seating cannot take all the credit for this sense of calm. Many stressed how the natural environment, both within the garden's parameters and beyond it, contributed to how they felt within the space:

**Tianna** (age 9)—*I like to go near the plants and look at them and feel how soft the soil is.*

**Simeon** (age 16)—*It's a nice and open spot ... (sound of crows cawing in the background) ... with beautiful landscape around nature.*

**Sherri**—*Being outside and being a part of nature and seeing the plants growing, the sunflowers, the different flowers and things that were planted, the vegetables there in the garden, and being able to hear the birds and the breeze that blew by, it was just serene, a peaceful setting.*

**Patrice**—*It's just I kinda like the background of the trees behind it. It gives a little more involvement (sound of camera clicking) of the atmosphere of the environment of the trees (see Figure 4.6 below).*



**Figure 4.6: Patrice's photo of the woods**

In most situations, we anticipate that a garden in itself will provide flora, fauna, and something to look at, but Grace Baptist Church garden faces out onto five acres of open field and is surrounded by woodland on one side, so this was a garden with a view. It meant that it was not uncommon for participants to notice that while they were being still, different forms of wildlife were actually quite active, passing by from the woodland or walking through the open expanse of the field during different times of the day:

**BJ** (age 12)—*I see birds ... hawks and red birds and blue birds.*

**Jennifer**—*I have seen deer ... they like the two persimmon trees at the edge of the road. They have a tendency to go there and eat those persimmons. We have ... foxes over there eating persimmons also, but I don't think they bother when they see you ... they go back across the road over this way ... it's something to see. It really is, it's amazing.*

**Nadine**—*Brother James was saying, how wolves are so vulnerable now ... He said, 'Well, I used to see one every once in a while, ... but when I'm mowing now in the daytime, they come right out there ... then they sit, one or two' ... So this is a learning process, everything goes on!*

It is as if the boundaries between the garden and the field were far from distinct, making it sometimes difficult to tell where one ended and the other began. As participants sat on the edge of that in-between space, they were privy to the movement of wildlife that had an agenda and rhythm of its own. We see how there is an awareness of the garden area as a shared space between humans and larger forms of wildlife that brings with it issues of habitat loss and territory encroachment. This provided countless topics for conversations to arise. For example, the children talked about how to approach different animals and the best way to react to insects if they were scared. In these ways, the areas both within and beyond the physical structures of the garden represented spaces of surprise, continuous discovery and incidental learning.

#### **4.3.4 A relationship with each other: a gathering place**

Church members also explained how the garden was a space for them to share encounters with each other in both organized and more spontaneous ways. For instance, it was the setting for the annual Good Friday celebrations:

**Patrice**—*So everybody would be out here during that fish fry time, so that's when we'd all be around the garden at that particular time having fun and games.*

A few people described the children at the Easter egg hunt, looking for eggs inside the grow-tubs and raised beds. Simeon, one of the older children explained, *“It's a good place to hide all the eggs; people always think to come out here and look first”*.

Others pointed out the way art had been incorporated into the garden and how the children, under the supervision of the adults, had painted the grow-tubs. Angela explained her affection for a particular piece:

**Angela**—*And some of the tubs still have the artwork, but the kids were really excited to get that done. My grandchildren were actually here when we first had the tubs, so they were very creative with some of them.*

The water tower at the center of the garden also generated a lot of comments because of its unique look and the memories that it produced. One of the mothers explains:

**Jacinta**—*We tried to splash paint the little thing (gesturing to the water tower) ... One Wednesday night, I went to Lowes [a DIY store] and got some paint. I said, ‘Maybe if we splash it?’ ... They had fun doing it!*

The children corroborated:

**Amber** (age 12)—*We all did this together. We got a bunch of different paints!*

**Kimya** (age 19)—*It was fun ... It was like slinging paint ... Something that you don't get to typically do.*

**Daniel** (age 12)—*We slapped that with colors, right there (pointing to the water tower).*

**Simeon** (age 16)—*We were all throwing paint (Laughing) Everybody had their clothes dirty!*



**Figure 4.7: Simeon's splash-paint photo**

**Simeon**—*You can see the pattern. I like art ... pieces like that ... adds to the visual appeal of the whole entire garden and the church grounds.*

This shows the way in which doing activities in the garden together created a site of collective joint memory for the children and the adults. With the splash painting, the physical joy accompanied by the creative joy of the experience got re-lived in its re-telling and almost brought the experience back to life. There was, however, just like much abstract art, a mixed reaction to the final effect of the splash paint on the water tower:

**Jennifer**—*I would love to know why the kids just splattered that on the tank—Just do a whole ‘nother, really good paint job on that.*

**Kimya** (age 19)—*It was fun while we did it, but now I don’t really like it ... I think now we should just paint it one color ... it doesn’t look very serene. It just looks, you know ... It’s just splash paint, so I feel it should be just one nice clean color.*

For these two and some other church members, the peace of the garden and the boldness of the colors splashed abstractly on a central feature of the garden seemed to act in juxtaposition. Despite this contrast of opinions, the adults were encouraging the children, through their art, to take part in placemaking activities, leaving their personal mark on the structures and the garden environment, and making intergenerational memories together in the process.

The children also sought time in the garden by themselves. They made it clear that they rarely came into the garden to actually do gardening (see section 4.5.2 for further discussion), but they did comment that on church days they frequently made the time to wander out alone or together into the garden:

**Kimya** (age 19)—*It’s a place for us to gather and like talk and stuff after church. We’d sit under here after church and talk about whatever happened in there (pointing to the church building), like to get away from everybody. It was kind of quiet out here.*

In this way, the garden is being described almost as a place of escape. At these times, it became somewhere to be independent of the adults, not with them. One favorite place to do this was the swing chair, which had broken (see section 3.5.7 for the retelling of this story). It may well have been one of

the main reasons for some of the children to go outside. However, during their breaks and before or after service, the children revealed that they continued to gather in the garden for times of enjoyment with each other in ways that they would organize for themselves:

**Tianna** (age 9)—*I come out here and look at all the pretty things ... sometimes I'm with older people than me, like Daniel.*

Here Tianna comments on her photograph of the flowers (see Figure 4.8 below).



**Figure 4.8: Tianna's vibrant rose photo**

**Tianna**—*Oh that's pretty (looking at her picture). I like how the roses can ... I like how they can have very vibrant and pretty colors.*

**Jacob** (age 10)—*We just play tag around the tubs- sometimes the littler kids come and join us.*

**Yasmin** (age 16)—*Sometimes they'll play basketball.*

**Haven** (age 9)—*I like to run around. I don't go far out there (pointing to the field; see figure 4.9 below).*





***Figure 4 9: Haven captures the field where she likes to run and play***

We can see how by creating play spaces around and on the garden's structures the children started to appropriate the garden under their own terms and also pushed their own personal boundaries by claiming their independence and running out into the open field. The oldest teen, Kimya, explained why the garden managed to capture and hold the attention of the children:

***Kimya*** (age 19)—*Because this was interactive, and they could actually do something outside.*

Given the different forms of stimulation that exist in their garden, the children seemed able to always find things to share between themselves that kept



them entertained. This way of gathering together also served another more serious purpose:

**Tianna** (age 9)—*This is actually where I met all these new people at ... If I was inside the church, it would be like me going up to them and saying, "Hey" and then just walking away. But at the garden, it's like, "HEY", and then a whole new conversation starts. Because in the garden, there's all these things you can talk about, and in the church it's just, 'Hey' and 'Bye' and 'How ya doin?'* But in the garden, you can talk about, 'I like the pretty flowers; I wonder what they're gonna plant next?' And all these other exciting things!

In the excerpt above we are reminded that even in a church setting, being a child newcomer brings with it certain concerns about friendship and belonging.

The garden was a place to be brave, to take a risk in making a social move, and in doing so, it provided the means for friendships to flourish in ways that were different from how they might have evolved inside the building. Interestingly, a similar observation was made by one of the ministers who described an incident with another church member, "*She just opened up to me about a lot because the atmosphere makes you want to just talk*". A sense of ease, then, between people seemed to arise in this outdoor space that made the garden an appealing place to engage with others. Whether as a site for new friendships or for counsel, it was as if being out in the open, had a loosening effect on the children and the adults and provided a way for them to be more open amongst themselves.

#### **4.3.5 A relationship with God: a sense of wonder**

Finally, the sense of communing within this natural environment stimulated a heightened sense of awe, praise, and wonder, which some of the adults spoke of as a way of helping them to feel closer in their relationship to God:

**Patrice**—*I can enjoy the creation that God made. I just thank Him and praise Him just for ... how things are so beautiful and pretty.*

**Sherri**—*... outside, it's just in the open and you can see God's beauty.*

**Nadine**—*If you're out here by yourself, it's one on one. Just you and God. The atmosphere out here is just good, especially being at church where this is about spirit also, and it is a pleasant spirit because we talk about how we grow in spirituality in God's word, and you come out and you see the plants growing ... like the peppers you can see now are growing, (sound of camera clicking; see Figure 4.10 below) and it's just erm ... it just collectively comes together, you know, and it really is ... it's a beautiful place, so I like to just come and sit and talk with someone.*



**Figure 4.10: Nadine's peppers photo**

These comments show how the setting seemed to evoke a spiritual connection in the participants. In these times, through a greater awareness of nature, it was almost as if a greater awareness of the sacred was being felt in nature. At other times, the garden was regarded as an extension of their faith development:

**Sherrri**—*Talking with someone about the sermon that had just been preached, and then you feel ... you see the view of the garden and the plants growing and the flowers, and even the tubs that they had decorated, and it is just a beautiful place.*

**Nadine**—*Pastor did a sermon one time about "There"—you know, and it really stuck with me 'Where are you? Are you there—at that particular place and time in your life?' So, a lot of times when I come here, I'm 'there'—this is where I wanna be, you know, so it's really a beautiful thing, and it's all in how you perceive it.*

The garden provided a place of reflection and connection with some of the teachings from inside the church. In contrast to the ways in which participants indicated they were oftentimes pulled in different directions through the hectic of their day, the garden was a place that brought some of them to a place of an inner quietude. It had a centering effect enabling them to become aware of themselves in present time, to literally just be there, rather than being at all the other 'there's' (the other demands) that they might feel drawn to think about through the day. This sense of stillness and beauty may well have made them more receptive to moments of reverence. At these times, the garden provided a presence where participants could take the time to pray or to explore deeper faith-based meanings in their lives and contemplate the world and their place in it.

There is a lot growing in this garden at Grace Baptist Church that is simply not visible to the human eye. This is a place of deep-rooted relationships, a site of play, discovery of self and other, and a place of quiet prayer and reflection. Through all these different relationships, this is a garden that grows people.

#### **4.4 Hope and Grace Churches: garden skill-sets across the generations**

In the gardens of both churches, one joint feature that the participants shared was the way in which varying levels of knowledge concerning the skill and the value of gardening and growing was expressed across different generations. In this section I will explore these cross-generational sets of garden knowledge and will consider the differences for the following three groups:

- The seniors
- The children
- The millennial adults

##### ***4.4.1 The seniors—the skill keepers (ages 65–94)***

The first group that will be discussed are the seniors.

###### ***4.4.1.1 Expressing expertise***

One form of discovery that took place during the interview process at Hope and Grace Baptist churches was the unearthing of some of the participants'

stories about gardens from the past. Somehow, being in the church gardens triggered memories of childhood growing and planting, most especially for the senior citizens of the churches. Oftentimes, when they looked into the grow-tubs and spotted something familiar, they would be prompted to make an observation about them. Below are some of these comments with their accompanying photos:

**Tamar**—*The peach tree! (Laughing). You see the roots? You can see the roots, so it needs to get out of the tub and go into the ground. The taproot is done spreading out and it needs to be in the ground and covered. It probably will help this tree to get a little stouter. (See Figure 4.11 below.)*



**Figure 4.11: Tamar's peach tree roots photo**

**Trenton**—*Well, ... every bloom is not going to bear a squash [courgette] that makes it ... Believe it or not, some plants have a way of policing themselves ... And if it ain't right, or if it's too early, you know, it'll die. It'll just drop off. (See Figure 4.12 below.)*





**Figure 4.12: Trenton's squash photo**

In the above examples, participants shared an awareness about a particular plant or aspect of gardening which reflected a level of expertise for different growing and harvesting methods and an appreciation for the natural cycles of plants that could benefit the garden.

#### **4.4.1.2 Claiming of rural roots**

This sharing of knowledge was often followed by a discussion about its source and how they had come to be so familiar with the various growing methods that they discussed. Most prefaced their answer with what sounded like a placing statement:

**Glynis**—*I've had gardens. I'm a country girl; I live out here, and I've picked peaches and chopped cotton and did all of that.*

**Trenton**—*(Laughing) And see. I'm a farm boy myself. I grew up on a farm about 3 miles back that way.*

**George**—*I love the sanctuary 'cause that's where I praise God at, but I love the garden because it reminds me of the way I was raised.*

These statements functioned as a locating of self with the land, and in so doing, the participants claimed their rural heritage and grounded themselves back firmly into the local soil of their childhoods.

#### **4.4.1.3      *Being raised in a garden***

Often their claim would be followed with a story about a garden where they explored an aspect of the idea of what it meant for them to ‘be raised’ in a garden. It is interesting to note how the use of the word ‘gardens’ held different meanings (see section 2.4.4.1) and indicated a range of sizes from small house-hold plots to very large acreages and tracts of farmland. The following themes evolved from their storytelling:

- Being raised knowing the importance of staples.
- Being raised acknowledging skill and its influence on taste preference.
- Being raised in a different era.

Extracts of these stories are now discussed in further detail below.

##### **4.4.1.3.1 *Being raised knowing the importance of staples***

In this first excerpt, Oleta lists the produce from the garden and explains their importance:

**Oleta**—*My daddy was one of the best farmers you ever met! He knew how to grow everything ... He could raise cotton, had corn, peas, and then he had a garden at home. We had the garden at our house, and had beets, carrots, collard greens, turnip greens, tomatoes, beans, some called Kentucky Wonder! (Laughter) ... I've never been hungry a day in my life. We've always had plenty of food. I knew about a garden. That's why I was so interested in this [the church garden], to see if it looked like what my dad had.*

Here Oleta, aged 94, shares this two-fold experience of her father gardening—first growing cash crops on the farm to sell and then growing vegetables in the family garden to eat. Her list of abundant garden staples reflects the different harvests that formed the foundation for various meals when Oleta was growing up. These would be eaten seasonally or perhaps would be preserved by being canned or dried in some way. In recalling the variety of bean, we see how familiar the vegetables that were grown in the garden would have been to her as a child, the gardener would know her food by name, and we can almost imagine her learning to pronounce the unusual varieties. In seeking to find a connection between her church garden and the one from her childhood, she may well have been looking for these old ‘friends’. Her comments also reflect a time when the ability to grow food staved off potential hunger for many rural African American families in the South and represented an important lifeline to them.

#### ***4.4.1.3.2 Being raised acknowledging the source of expertise and its influence on taste preference***

Next, Laverne makes a link to her father’s farming expertise and explains how this has impacted her taste preference:



**Laverne**—*My father was a student at Tuskegee, under George Washington Carver, and his influence. He was a farmer ... a farmer who had big acreage, and that was his passion until he couldn't actually do anything anymore. He gardened until he became ill and couldn't do it anymore, so that's all we are used to - fresh vegetables. Certain things I don't even like to buy out of the store because I'm so ... I love fresh tomatoes; I don't care for hot-house tomatoes. So, you can get spoiled to the idea of eating fresh vegetables.*

Laverne's excerpt acknowledges the difference of flavor that comes when something is home-grown. It also indicates that there is a skill to the growing of flavorful produce. A number of southern farmers, like her father, received these skills, their farming education, through Tuskegee, a historically black university in the state of Alabama. Her mention of George Washington Carver speaks to one of the most significant African American agricultural educators who was also a plant scientist. He proposed ideas, like using certain plants to preserve or improve the quality of the soil. White (2018, p. 39) emphasizes that in his teaching Carver had a liberational focus in that he sought, "... the economic self-sufficiency of African American farmers". Many, like Laverne's father, would return back to their rural homes after spending time at this university and were able to implement Carver's practices within their own farming context and provide for their families in this way.

#### **4.4.1.3.3 Being raised in a different era**

In the unearthing of these stories, some participants also shared that being raised in a garden came with a lack of options:

**Priscilla**—*I never enjoyed picking or shelling peas, but you just had to do that, that was a part of it.*

**Trenton**—*Early mornings, after school, you know (laughing) Saturdays, whatever. You had to do it!*

It meant that as children they had to work there more out of necessity rather than choice. For Trenton, aged 73, it was important to emphasize that having to work in his childhood garden, albeit one which comprised one hundred and five acres of farm and timberland, also meant reminding me, the interviewer, that his experiences belonged to a different period of time:

**Trenton**—*Now understand, when I grew up, it was a different era. And my daddy was what you call a sharecropper—where we grew the crops, and we shared it ... with the owners of the property as payment, you know, for living on that particular land, so we grew everything. Everything—we grew cotton, we grew peas, we grew corn, we grew watermelons, we grew all sorts of vegetables, and a lot of that we would ... do what you called then, peddling, ... when you would go around to different neighborhoods and stuff selling your goods, you know.*

There is perhaps a tendency to romanticize the idea of a childhood spent gardening or farming. Trenton's reflection cautions us that these were not halcyon times and that the work brought with it a complex relationship of expertise but also oppression. Here, being raised in a garden also meant for many rural southern African Americans being raised in a racially inequitable and unjust system around living and working on the land and that these times are within living memory for some of these seniors, and therefore still in the relatively recent past.

When I questioned Trenton about the impact of growing up this way he responded:

**Trenton**—*It never did turn me off. Matter of fact, it enhanced me, if anything because I spent my working adult years in California, ... and in all of the 30 years I lived out there, I always had a garden in the back yard. Yeah, growing the same type of vegetables that you see growing here.*

For Trenton, then, his early life instilled in him an understanding of the soil from which he was able to raise himself out, but which he carried with him even when he was pulled up from his rural north Louisiana roots.

#### **4.4.1.4      *Appreciation for the seniors***

A reference to the expertise of the seniors was not only found in their first-hand accounts of growing up on the land but was also expressed in discussions about the seniors by those who came from generations after them. When exploring the value of a garden at the churches many of these spoke of its importance to the seniors and how they felt it benefitted them:

**Sherri**—*I think it's something that they're familiar with at home when they were younger, so it may bring back memories to them. Also, when they haven't got their own garden at home it's just a beautiful place to sit, have a conversation and reminisce.*

**George**—*The elderly can come out and sit and be able to put their hand in a tub and just feel the ... have the feeling of touching soil.*

These comments show an appreciation for the times that the seniors grew up in and indicate an understanding that there was still a need for them to have contact with the soil in some way; this does not simply disappear with age because it is, for many, a vital form of expression and a link to their past. They also show that the gardens at the churches have the potential to fulfill this role as well as provide the seniors with a social outlet. The seniors brought with them a number of skills about gardening which revealed themselves almost as soon as they stepped into their church gardens.

#### **4.4.2 The children—the schooled skill-set (ages 9–18)**

The next group that will be discussed are the children. For some of the children, the gardens also prompted them to reflect on their memories with other garden experiences that they had, and they revealed that their skills, or the lack of them, came from these sources:

***Tianna** (age 9)—Plants need a lot of good soil, and when you take that good soil away, they won't grow right, and then they'll die ... I learned that in school while we were talking about plants today.*

***Simeon** (age 16)—I remember that we [during the Youth4Health project] were out here planting strawberries like this one time ... and we planted them in those tubs over there.*

***LaChanti** (age 12)—We did gardening last year at school. It was for fourth grade last year, and now we have one for fifth grade.*

***Kimya** (age 19)—These are okra ... we had them at the [Youth4Health] camp. In the little Styrofoam cup. I remember.*

***Lucas** (age 10)—No one ever gave us an opportunity to come out here ... Like we never really had a garden lesson.*

For the children, then, their skills of gardening were connected to more structured learning experiences such as being part of a project like Youth4Health or part of a school project. It is no surprise that Lucas feels that a lesson in gardening is required to help him as gardens are now found at many of the local schools in and around the parish, so a number of the children would have had early experiences of gardening in these kinds of settings and may well associate gardens with this type of school or project format.

There was also much discussion from the seniors and the adults about the youth and what other skills the gardens would develop in them. They commented on what can be regarded as three main life lessons from a garden—*Learning about the process of growing, learning about real food and learning to nurture.*

#### **4.4.2.1      *Learning about the process of growing***

Many adults expressed the need for the children to understand possible lessons that this growing process would hold. Some observed that this might come from knowing about the different stages of growth from seed to plant and the importance of the seasons. Others focused on environment:

***Nadine***—*It's just that there are so many things that are around planting that's exciting than just seeing a plant sit there ... We can eat from the plants; we can enjoy seeing butterflies and things dwelling among the plants.*

The children would be able to find out about insects and other soil inhabitants

that help make a plant grow. One of the mothers, Jacinta, emphasized, *“They can see how long it takes something to mature enough for them to be able to eat or use it to cook and for them to see the process”*. In so doing, the children would develop a greater appreciation for the things that they ate. Glynis indicated how it would provide necessary *“hands-on experience”* that might stand them in good stead later in life if ever they needed or wanted a garden of their own. One of the day care teachers, Taneka, spoke about this process as a *“foundation to learning”* because it was teaching the children about basic needs coming from the ground rather than a supermarket.

#### **4.4.2.2      *Learning about real food***

A number of the adults drew comparisons between purchasing vegetables at a supermarket rather than pulling them from the ground. Nadine commented, *“The culture of planting is not as important to our younger generation”*. With this came the worry that for the children, food and where it came from was often associated with shopping rather than growing. The Sunday school director, Priscilla, observed, *“I think that with modern-day kids ... vegetables came out of a pack in the frozen section aisle”*. Many children did not seem to understand the journey of food before it got to the store. This seemed to indicate a concern about the children lacking a true connection to their food. One of the ministers, Sherri, added:

***Sherri***—*Everything now I think is a more modern, advanced, technological, fast-paced, microwaved world! ... When they eat vegetables or things that are already prepared, they actually don’t see where they are grown. All they know is that it’s on the plate.*

This implies that for the children the skill of growing in a garden and the slower process would make them more appreciative of and more connected to the kinds of things that they ate.

#### **4.4.2.3      *Learning about the importance of nurture***

Finally, many of the adults felt that learning how to grow would teach the children an ethic of responsibility. Kimya, now 19 years old, but one of the original children from the Youth4Health project, described her experience:

***Kimya** (age 19)—You have to, you know, come water it. And again, you watch something literally grow and I guess seeing it is kind of amazing and interesting. I don't think I would have ever, like, grown anything if it hadn't had been for the [Youth4Health] program, so it gave me a new perspective.*

This indicates the joy that can be gained from this kind of duty. Lynelle, a mother, spoke of it as nurturing and suggested that tending to plants would help develop the children's caretaking skills and explained that these might also transmit to other life forms and relationships that needed to be nurtured.

Xavier also emphasized:

***Xavier**—If there's a garden on-site, we're able to teach our kids what our ancestors were taught as it relates to planting and working hard for what you want.*

Here we see how nurture can take a lot of effort, but they would be drawing on strength from the past. One of the ministers described this as a “root

*experience*” and felt that if children learned this early, then it could impact the areas in their lives that might also require care, attention, and hard work and that would stand them in good stead in their future. So, there were many potential life-skills for the children in the garden to go along with the learning that they were already experiencing at school.

#### **4.4.3 The millennial adults—a missing skill-set (ages 25–45)**

Whilst the children and the seniors were able to discuss aspects of their garden skills or have their value discussed by others, there was another demographic between the former and the latter, very broadly, and not exclusively, the millennial adults, who pointed out that many of their generation had not grown up having any kind of foundational experiences in childhood gardens, and thus, as regards gardening, they lacked the skills.

One of them, Tarsha, admitted, *“I’m not familiar with any plants, and I need to learn that ... I’m still in the learning process as well”*. Another participant, Michelle, who helped with the Sunday school remarked, *“When I was younger, we lived next to an older family and they had a garden, so I was able to see that, but ... I never helped or anything”*. Here gardening was something to observe others doing. The result of this was identified by some adults as a knowledge gap.



#### 4.4.3.1 *Moving away from the skills*

Lynelle, one of the parents, felt that it was a two-fold issue—the seniors as parents did not pass on their knowledge, and their children, now adults, most likely did not have that much time to spend in gardens. One of the seniors, Tamar, explained that as a parent, “*we got away from it*”, indicating that there was maybe a distancing of her rural family from the land as times changed and other priorities took over. Ameerah, a daughter of one of the seniors and a mother to one of the children, tried to explain the generational shift even further:

***Ameerah**—We kind of veered away from those domestic skills ... one of them being the ability to produce food on our own, and it just got lost in translation. I don't know if it was seen upon as a lesser skill, that's possible ... That we were pushed, then, towards the books and everything. When I was a teenager, my parents were working, so it was a different generation. There was no 8 to 5. They were working, working, working. Trying to push their kids to the next level, trying to break the middle-class barrier, so there was that. The generation prior, ... part of their chores would have been to get out in that garden. Because we've moved from that type of family structure, that didn't happen.*

A number of complex factors are touched upon in this excerpt—a possible attitudinal shift about gardening as it became less of a necessity for rural African American families. When there was an option to garden out of choice, it was not for Ameerah's family the chosen path. As different times brought the possibility of better opportunities, it also took a lot of work to achieve them. Her explanation shows the effort put forth by her parents and herself through education and sheer graft to improve the life of the next generation. And

perhaps it is only now, at this stage in life, that she and others of her generation can reclaim that heritage.

#### **4.4.3.2      *Moving back to the skills***

The movement to do that was often initiated not by the millennial parents but by their children. Priscilla observed, *“Their kids go home and they talk about what they did, and then the parents automatically become a part of it because of the excitement from the young people”*. From this explanation, an appreciation for gardens seemed to be developing from the children doing gardening activities in school, at church, or through a project like Youth4Health, which then has a knock-on effect on the millennial parents. Ameerah pointed out that this put her and her child at the same level of learning:

***Ameerah***—*People my age and a little younger would have to get the skill-set, so we would have to learn, like the kids are learning (laughing)! We’d have to learn what to do and how to do it, and pass it on, and not let the gap continue.*

For that to happen, these two generations seem to be looking behind them to previous generations for assistance. And it is the seniors at the churches, the keepers of these skills, to whom they will turn. In this section, I have shown that living with the gardens at the churches has meant acknowledging the different sets of skills that come with different generations.

## **4.5 Hope and Grace garden sustainability—a perennial challenge**

As well as having a retrospective side to them, the church gardens also prompted conversations about the present and the future. Here the discussion turned to the pressing things that participants felt currently needed to be addressed for the gardens to thrive over the immediate term and ideas about how they might continue in the years ahead. In this section, the issues around the sustainability of the gardens at Hope and Grace Baptist churches are discussed.

### **4.5.1 Areas of concern**

Even though they were expressed differently for each site, three areas of current concern were highlighted in both of the gardens:

- The plants
- The people
- The structures

#### **4.5.1.1 Hope Baptist—plants, people, and structures**

The discussion that now follows considers these three factors in more detail for Hope Baptist Church gardens.

#### **4.5.1.2 Hope Baptist—plants**

At Hope Baptist garden, the plant concerns seemed to be caused by two parties in the gardens making their presence known in the grow-tubs, and one of the seniors who made reference to them both:

***Thelma**—The insects! You call them just worms or tomato worms. The insects ... and the people (laughing).*

While the worms were surreptitiously beginning to eat away at Thelma's precious tomatoes, the inclusion of the people here within the same sentence foreshadowed a greater concern.

#### **4.5.1.3 Hope Baptist—people**

Perhaps even more frustrating than the tomato worms was the human presence doing some further damage to the carefully tended vegetable plants:

***Thelma**—Well, they just ... when the produce is ready, they take the produce! The problem that I have with them, and I'm not over the garden, but they crop the top. Instead of getting the collard green leaves off, they break the whole stalk. Now that is a problem. If you leave the top and just crop them getting the greens, that wouldn't be a problem, but when you break the top of them, you're doing more damage because they wouldn't come back next year and won't grow ... I don't mind folks getting the tomatoes, the okras, but just don't damage the rest just because, you don't have the input in it, you know.*

Finding the identity of the mystery picker was less pressing than what the picker represented, which was that the garden was now more of a communal

space than before, and as such, there was added movement going on in it at different times of the day. Prior to its presence being promoted at the church, the garden had gone largely unnoticed at the back of the campus with only a small collection of seniors working together in it and the children from the day care passing through it. Now, more people were coming by, and what had been a taken for granted etiquette between the seniors about picking and contributing labor, was inadvertently being challenged and had initiated something of a proprietorial reaction among them about the garden. In so doing it raised questions about who had the right to harvest if labor had not been contributed, and how this was to be carried out. Thelma's almost incidental comment relinquishing authority over the garden might also be read as a question (who is 'over' the garden?) or even a statement of need (we need someone 'over' the garden).

Another people-related issue was with regards to the children at Hope:

**Cynthia** (day care director)—*Well, it'd be nice for the kids to have something separate to do, and just to see something grow.*

**Taneka** (day care teacher)—*For the children, I think it needs more ... something that'll be sweet to them, and a plant that's theirs. If you get a plant that starts off and basically grows with the kids over time, they can see that. You also want a plant that has beautiful colors because children are attracted to color.*

This wish list was a reminder that even though some church members were already moving to a new level of relationship with the space and were starting to pick at the vegetables, the children had still not become a significant

presence within the garden and their tastes and preferences were yet to be addressed.

#### **4.5.1.4 Hope Baptist—structures**

There were also structural decisions that needed to be made regarding Hope Baptist's recently moved garden:

**George**—*And one of the things we gotta do is get some kind of organization about it—where we're putting the tubs and stuff ... I want it to have that wow effect.*

**Denise**—*I would move these tubs around in a more organized fashion, and maybe bring out some little bricks or some little stones and make a little path ... I would just prefer it to be a little neater.*

A feeling of moving forward with the physical space was clear, and alongside this was now the desire for a more appealing and functional design. We see how this emphasis on physical organization was accompanied by the need for a more defined organizational role for the garden. It was clear that the different constituents who could use the space were starting to grow—the day care, the children of the church, the seniors, the new church members, but with this expanded number came also the necessity for greater clarity about how this would now be done so that all parties would feel equally included and that those who were already working in the space would not feel excluded by this shift.

## **4.5.2 Grace Baptist—plants, structures, and people**

The discussion that now follows considers these three factors in more detail for Grace Baptist Church gardens.

### **4.5.2.1 Grace Baptist—plants**

In Grace Baptist Church garden, the condition of what was going on in the raised beds and grow-tubs caused some participants to make comments about what they noticed:

***Oleta**—All the other stuff needs re-doing, so they're gonna have to get some more soil and pull up these weeds.*

***Yasmin** (age 14)—No one has been taking care of the plants; they probably just forgot about it.*

***Tarsha**—Well, I've been noticing that we haven't been ... keeping it up, watering it and just, really, seeing about it.*

There was a recognition in these comments that the plants and the contents of the grow-tubs were not thriving as well as they might have. The observations indicate that what was required was more regular attention than that which was currently being given.

### **4.5.2.2 Grace Baptist—structures**

At Grace Baptist Church, the garden's physical structures also evoked different remarks about them:

**Jennifer**—*This wood is treated, but if you don't put something on it, it's gonna do just what this is doing right here; it's gonna buckle and that causes it to ... after a while, we're gonna have to change these boards out.*

**Jacinta**—*We need to stain the wood and get it back looking good again.*

**Tarsha**—*We could make the walkway a little bit more nicer, and put down some more mulch like it was in the beginning. I do have pictures from when it was first done, and I often look back at them and think, 'OK. What can we do to make it look like this again?'*

Here we see how the exposure of the wooden structures to the natural weathering process meant that the wear and tear on them was beginning to show. As well as sounding like a practical inventory of tasks that needed to be undertaken, these comments also contain a cautionary tone. The sense of things fading sounded like a call to action, bringing with it an urge to do something, to reclaim the garden structures before it was too late. Tarsha's question was also perhaps a lament expressing the feeling of loss that occurred when she compared the garden structures in her photographs with the ones she was looking at in reality.

#### **4.5.2.3      Grace Baptist—people**

The concerns around the upkeep of the garden centered around factors of time and other practical matters that made it harder for the congregants at Grace to work in the garden:

**Jacinta**—*Different things were going on and we didn't keep it, or spend the time out here that we should have to keep it up.*



**Glynis**—*It's time-consuming work and people just don't have the time to take out of the day to upkeep the garden.*

**Jennifer**—*Being honest, I don't find myself coming out here a lot because (laughing) and it's just something that I ... I find myself being busy doing other things.*

**Kimya** (age 19)—*I don't come out here as much, just because I have other stuff to do now in church ... I feel that the kids are involved. Like if you ask them to come out here, they'll want to come. But like the older people, I don't think they're really involved. I just don't think ... they have other stuff; they're more concerned about what's going on in the church.*

In the *genius loci* section of Grace Baptist, I discussed how the gardens had had the capacity to slow many of these church members down and that when they were outside, the seating was integral to that experience—for some, it was a welcome interruption to sit outdoors. The opinions above reveal the other side of their presence at the church, a busyness and a concern with other matters, predominantly church-related, that demanded their attention inside the building and that this clearly took priority as this was the very reason that they were at the site in the first place.

Angela expands on this and adds some further dimension to the issue:

**Angela**—*This year anyway, it seems to have been ... the connection between the youth, the adults, and what can actually be done, I think is still a little unclear. Finding a champion for the garden seems to be a little bit of a challenge, and you really ... you really need that to sustain anything. The young lady that was the youth leader during the program is no longer the youth leader. And so, priorities change with different leaders.*

An identity shift was occurring in this space. There was still the impression that the gardening responsibilities were associated mainly with the youth program at the church and this link meant that it was reliant on a youth leader who could do the tasks. However, there was also the realization that it now needed wider input from willing church members. The call for a garden champion was also a call for someone to take over more of a coordinating role for the garden and for the church members in order to work out a strategy for the space. There was another people-related issue of concern that was raised:

**Angela**—*It's unfortunate that the lady here at our church who is an avid gardener is limited because of transportation. She doesn't drive ... and so the time of day that she would prefer to be out here ... she doesn't really have the access to come.*

This issue of access was key not only for the lady being described in the quote but for all of the members who attend church here. It has already been described, how its setting gave the garden at Grace a particular atmosphere in terms of wildlife and evoking a sense of peace, but its rural location is also somewhat remote, and all participants drive to the church by car or are brought there by church bus, with many traveling some distance to get there (see further discussion below) and others car-sharing. This means that there are time constraints around people arriving and leaving and how they use their time when they are up at the church site. When the participants at Grace spoke about being busy, it was both an observation about their lives, and it was also a sense of only having a limited amount of time available when they were up at the church and having to get certain things done during this period. In order to work in the garden, many would have to take time away from

another task, such as meetings, choir practice, Bible study, or worship, or they would need to make extra time for the garden on other days, which might not always be feasible.

#### ***4.5.3 Finding a garden rhythm for Hope and Grace***

What participants at both churches were now indicating was that in their different ways there had been an original rhythm to each site in terms of who came and went there, and when and how that happened. The presence of the gardens had brought with them an interruption to that original rhythm. It was not necessarily unwelcome, for we have seen how the gardens at Grace brought about a state of rest and relaxation—people interrupted their limited time at church to go outside and sit or play. Whereas the gardens at Hope heralded change; they had been moved in order to allow for expansion and were very much considered a part of this growth. The individual comments from church members were recognition that the lived experience of both gardens was requiring from them a closer attunement to the different rhythmic and constantly changing demands that came with growing seasons, maintenance, and people coordination that the gardens' presence brought with them, and in some ways, it was by attending to this rhythm that they might also contribute to their gardens' sustainability.

#### **4.5.4 Sowing seeds—the gardens in potentia**

A space is also lived through the imaginary. By envisioning how something might be, we can project meaning as to its potential. Throughout the interviews, participants shared thoughts and ideas about how the concerns regarding the plants, the structures and the people that they currently faced might actually be turned into practical solutions to sustain each garden as they looked to the future. In order to do that, it was important to identify what was already in place. One participant emphasized:

***Laverne**—Well, church is the focal point of a lot of people’s lives ... The church is the bedrock of the community, so to me it all comes together and starts with the church.*

A number of the suggestions given tapped into this idea of the church being central to the lives of many rural African Americans. They reflected how the members’ church rhythms (the activities that the members are already doing at the sites) might accommodate a prospective garden rhythm (the ways in which the gardens might have more of a role at the sites). In bringing these two rhythms closer together, the seeds of sustainability for the gardens in both settings were being sown.

The suggestions for the garden given were presented in the following ways (see Figure 4.13 below):

<b>Prospective garden rhythm</b>
Use the gardens for food and fellowship
Have the gardens function as a central resource
Incorporate the gardens into learning routines
Organize people at the gardens

**Figure 4.13: Suggestions for the prospective garden rhythms given by participants**

To this, I added the church rhythm that was already in place and matched it to a prospective garden rhythm that the participants suggested, creating a potential plan for garden sustainability (see Figure 4.14 below):

<b>Church rhythm already in place</b>	<b>Prospective garden rhythm</b>
The rhythm of cooking at the churches	Using the gardens for food and fellowship
The rhythm of the churches' centrality	Having the gardens function as a central resource
The rhythm of learning at the church sites	Incorporating the gardens into learning routines
The rhythm of church meetings	Organizing people at the gardens

**Figure 4.14: Merging church rhythm with prospective garden rhythm for garden sustainability**

The combined possibilities will now be discussed below.

#### **4.5.4.1 The rhythm of cooking at the church—using the gardens for food and fellowship**

For many there was a natural connection between the church gardens and the church kitchens and this progression from one to the other was identified as a way in which the gardens might be of practical use to those at the churches.

For those at Hope Baptist cooking for others had already been adopted, and it was explained how easily the garden could be incorporated into this:

**George**—*What we've done this year is really unique. Everybody that had a family member that died this year in the church, we provided the food for the family in the aftermath. Because of that, there's other avenues we've gotta look into to help us financially ... if every time we have a burial, we're gonna do this to feed the family. So, we're thinking that this could help us, especially with the greens and the peas, you know the beans area, and then the garlic and the herbs all that stuff could be a help to the ladies in the kitchen.*

The idea of growing and using the garden produce during these times as a means of caring for others made it seem as if the gardens could help the church members as they planned their menus and prepared these meals of comfort and fellowship for grieving families.

At Grace, some church members recalled that the garden had enabled them to try different kinds of produce in their kitchen:

**Jacinta**—*It's beneficial, because [during the Youth4Health project] sometimes we were getting different things, and experimenting with them in the kitchen ... like we grew different herbs and stuff like dill out here ... you know, we didn't have to purchase it; we could use it and see how we liked it.*

In this garden, they were able to explore new tastes and preferences over a shared meal together that they might not otherwise have tried at home. This also indicates that people are more likely to try something if they have grown it themselves. Consequently, the gardens could have a practical use by

supplying the two church kitchens with potential produce for gatherings and special events and that brought with it the possibility of experimentation.

**4.5.4.2      *The rhythm of church centrality—having the gardens function as a central resource hub***

Some suggested that the gardens at the sites could also function as a central resource for those at the church who might need it. First of all, for the church members who were more rurally located, the presence of the gardens would prevent them from having to travel long distances to purchase fresh vegetables:

***Jacinta** (Grace Baptist)—Like we live out here in the country and there's no grocery stores, so if I need a tomato, I have to go to Ruston to get it, but if the church has tomatoes, I can just say, 'Well, let me go to the church and get some' ... There's about 15 members that live in the [name of] area and the closest supermarket is Super One ... Well, we have a Dollar General, but like if we needed tomatoes or an onion, you have to either go to somebody's house or to Ruston.*

***Ameerah** (Hope Baptist)—I think it is community changing ... 'Cause when you think about it, we're from [name of town], and it is a food desert. There is no grocery store there; we've gotta go to Ruston.*

In the above observations, something growing in the gardens could mean that the members who lived closer to the church would not have to make an up to 23-mile round trip journey to the closest small city in order to get basic fresh vegetables for a meal. It also speaks of the heightened level of preparedness that those who live in rural areas must constantly live at in terms of food stocks running low or having to choose processed food from the local dollar store

because this is a closer shopping option. In this way, knowing that there might be something fresh growing closer at hand in the church gardens could ease such concerns.

In addition, for some, going to their church was not only about the spiritual sustenance that comes from being in a place of worship and praise, but the practical sustenance that their churches provide as well. Here too, the gardens could make a contribution. The following comments describe how:

**Ameerah** (*Hope Baptist*)—*If there is something you need, you should be able to find it at the church! Part of that is this garden, so when people need help, they should be able to come here and find whatever it is. Whether it is a food pantry ... We have a clothes closet upstairs, so to me in my mind this [the garden] is just an extension of that or another possibility for us to expand the type of help we offer.*

As a central access point, people could go up to church, somewhere that they are already going to, and know that, should they require it, they would be provided for by the gardens as well as in other ways. Many stressed that this service need not be limited just to church members alone.

Also, the gardens could be used to enhance the interior and exterior of the churches:

**Priscilla**—*I like the way you can beautify your surroundings with flowers. You can even pick them and give them away as gifts and other things, especially on Mother's Day (see Figure 4.15 below). Also, we do decorate the church with some potted plants. I think that there are even some plants by the fountain and the new bell.*





**Figure 4.15: Priscilla's flowers**

#### **4.5.4.3      *The rhythm of learning at church—incorporating the gardens into learning routines***

We have already seen how the gardens are incidental sites of learning and discovery. In the suggestions given below, participants now shared how they might contribute to the faith-based and practical learning that occurred at the sites.

First, one of the Sunday school teachers at Hope explained how it might be fit in with tasks that were already being planned:

**Laverne** (*Hope Baptist*)—*Now with our curriculum ... some of the lessons are based on growing vegetables and fruit, and when we have those lessons we can come out and let the kids pick some of the vegetables. In one lesson we'll be making vegetable kabobs. They'll be eating fresh vegetables and fruits, so we can definitely use what's in the garden for those.*

Next, one of the children explained how working in the gardens could develop into a larger idea:

**Kayla** (age 9)—*I think it'd be a good benefit for children ... Because children can become entrepreneurs. If they can make their own fruit and vegetables, they can set up a stand ... and they can, like, sell things.*

This creative project would really develop a number of skills for some of the children if it were to materialize. And at the day care center, a teacher discussed how the children might benefit from the garden:

**Denise** (Hope Baptist)—*I would love to teach them of the things that a seed goes through from when you plant it and it becoming a full-grown plant ... 'cause it doesn't take long for it to sprout up, so taking them through the process ... I think they'll enjoy seeing a plant change.*

One of the ministers at Grace emphasized that the garden setting could also be used for learning for the adults as well:

**Sherri** (Grace Baptist)—*Maybe one day, have Sunday school, or Bible study outdoors ... because sometimes things need to be done outside instead of just within the four walls. I think Sunday school in the morning would be awesome. I think the adult class will enjoy it too, because it's different than being inside.*

In these different ways, the garden might contribute to, and even enhance, the kind of learning already going on at the church or it could open them up to exploring learning experiences in unusual ways.

#### **4.5.4.4      *The rhythm of church meetings—organizing people into the gardens***

At both sites, participants indicated that the extra help in the gardens was going to have to come from the adults supporting the children and the seniors.

Many began to express the ways in which this could be done:

***Michelle** (Hope Baptist)—I think the pastor—it would be a good idea for him to keep speaking about it.*

As a constant talking point, it would be on people's minds more often. At Grace, it was commented on that more hands would make light work:

***Jennifer** (Grace Baptist)—We are able bodies, but one person can't do it all. If we would come together as a group ... we could make this really beautiful if we would come together as one.*

Creating a group of interested members would be an important start, but people at both sites also went further:

***Michelle** (Hope Baptist)—We need to incorporate one Sunday, where this is when we [the Sunday school] need to come out and tend to the garden. We also have like choir, deaconesses, the deacons and ushers. You know, all the different ministries. So, if each of those had some form of responsibility, then I think that would keep everyone included.*

***Kimya** (age 19; Grace Baptist)—If people got more interested ... like we have different committees in the church and if people actually got committed to the garden and had a gardening committee, it would be something.*

All these suggestions show that addressing the needs of the gardens would then become easier if it became a shared task among the groups that were already meeting regularly at the churches or among interested parties who could divide responsibilities for the garden between them. With that in place, the children could then also establish a routine of garden responsibility at the sites too.

#### **4.5.4.5** *Being out of sync with the soil—attending to the garden type in the design*

There is one last seed to sustainability in these gardens that is worth highlighting. It is less to do with the participants' church life rhythm and more to do with something in the gardens being out of sync with the participants' rural garden expectations, and that is the need to attend to the garden type in the gardens' design. It is included here as a final thought on the gardens' sustainability as the garden type was a constant refrain during the interviews and the source of many observations about what comprised a garden.

When discussing the idea of a garden at a church, a number of participants spoke about how uncommon it was to have one in the area:

***Oleta** (Grace Baptist)—It would never have occurred to me to have a garden at a church.*

***Xavier** (Hope Baptist)—We're doing something that is unusual at most churches because there are not too many churches with gardens on site, and so that is a privilege, a blessing for us.*

From these comments, the gardens were seen as quite an unusual

occurrence at the churches which might also make the churches more attractive or even set a trend:

**Priscilla** (Hope Baptist)—*I can see a lot of potential. You know it's starting off as a project, but it may eventually turn to where other churches might want to actually have this too.*

And others spoke about the distinctiveness of using the grow-tubs and the raised beds as places to plant in:

**Tamar** (Hope Baptist)—*It's showing me. Not only me, but when I saw it [the grow-tub], I said, 'what in the world?' But I had been seeing it out in people's yards. So, it's a good idea. It's learning you how to do different stuff.*

**Glynis** (Grace Baptist)—*It's so neat! The whole format, but what do you call them ... raised beds? The beds are raised so that you can actually ... I think somebody actually got a chair and sat there to weed. One of the elderly ones. I think they sat there and did that to help with the raised beds. It's just neat. The whole set up is very unique to me (see Figure 4.16 below).*



**Figure 4.16: Glynis' raised beds photo**

Here we see how the raised bed and grow-tub garden format garnered multiple comments about them. There are many good reasons to plant with containers in a public setting, especially as there are often concerns about contaminants in the soil, like lead, in places where many community gardens are created, such as vacant lots in cities. Using organic soil in raised beds is considered a preventative to such exposure.

However, despite the benefits and positive responses, for many of these rurally situated participants having a container garden simply was not in keeping with what they envisaged or knew a garden to be. Consequently, people at both sites overwhelmingly expressed the wish to break out of the grow-tubs or raised bed format in favor of something more familiar:

**Nadine** (*Grace Baptist*)—*it would be nice to have a, you know, a garden with little rows. You could have rows over here, you could have rows over there.*

**Priscilla** (*Hope Baptist*)—*Well, I think this is a starting point. I guess I can envision an actual community garden, not restricted to tubs alone, but rows.*

For some, the smallness of the tubs was in contrast with the vastness of the land that was available at both sites, and for others, it contrasted with the needs of the plants:

**Thelma** (*Hope Baptist*)—*I would prefer to have the ground instead of these containers. I have a favorite, some favorite plants, like watermelons, that I'd like to put out here, but the tub's too small.*

Certain plants have a need to run or to climb, and this would be limited in a grow-tub. Other participants explained how rows were a reminder of gardens from childhood:

***Sherri (Grace Baptist)—... because that's what my parents had. We didn't have tubs (laughing).***

***Denise (Hope Baptist)—... make it more like a real garden ... I guess growing up, my grandmother's garden, and every garden I've seen, was a little bit more organized. It's not just stuff thrown out there, there's rows of things.***

One of the children explained how vital it is to be able to really touch the Earth directly:

***Kayla (age 9, Hope Baptist)—We can have like rows of stuff instead of these tubs ... and put it in the ground ... Because when we put the soil in the tub, it's not like connected to the ground.***

These comments all indicate that the gardens designed by the Youth4Health team, while they incorporated certain elements that were requested by the participants, also missed an important opportunity to add others that would have been more culturally appropriate for the growing methods and styles that many of these participants expressed. The rows were symbolic of abundance and having space to grow and spread out, they were a reminder of a childhood lived on the land and a historical legacy left within it, and they acted as a direct connection to the Earth.

#### ***4.5.5 Closing thoughts—garden sustainability***

This section has considered how living with their gardens meant for the church members identifying some of the logistics and problems that came with them and providing ideas for possible solutions to them. Lefebvre (1991) observed that we live our lives according to certain rhythms, and as participants look to sustain the gardens at Grace and Hope Baptist churches, one possible solution might come from attending to their joint church and garden rhythms. Bringing the two closer together might help create a role for the gardens to complement the kinds of activities that were already in place at the churches.



## **CHAPTER FIVE—LOOKING BACK, LOOKING FORWARD**

### **5.1 A look back at the research questions of the study**

My study looked at two rural African American church gardens that were created through a university-community educational outreach project, called Youth4Health. Using Lefebvre's (1991) spatial triad, I first reviewed the many, varied, and contested meanings associated with community gardens, like those of this study, in the academic literature. The discussion then led me to ask the driving question of the study—how do your gardens grow? This question acknowledged that by shining a spotlight on the lived experience of the gardens at Hope Baptist Church and Grace Baptist Church, it would be possible to learn more about the unique meanings that they held for those who used the spaces. This had been largely overlooked by the project that departed soon after the gardens were built.

The research sought to find answers to the additional guiding questions:

- What has become of the gardens established at the end of the Youth4Health project, and what have they come to mean to the participants of the churches where they are located?
- If they are still spaces of learning, then what kind of learning and teaching is going on there? What is the source of this knowledge? Who are the learners and who are the teachers? How does this complement the activities of these churches?

- What is drawing people out of the churches and into the gardens? Who is using the gardens and how are they being used?
- Has the presence of the gardens initiated any discussion or mobilization around wider social issues?
- What do my findings teach us about how people come into relationship with and find meanings in these rural African American church gardens?

### ***5.1.1 Review of research methodology***

In order to explore these guiding questions, my research was designed as a phenomenological study. As discussed in chapter three, even though he did not identify himself as such, the ideas of Lefebvre (1991) were influenced by the work of French phenomenologists (Schmid, 2008), and so, as he introduces us through his triad to the concept of spaces as being perceived, conceived, and lived, it is the lived spaces that for him take on paramount importance in that they hold meanings that are unique and personal to those who use them. He stresses that these are not easily understood from the outside looking in; therefore, it is vital to get closer to the insider's perspective of the meaning of that space. A phenomenological methodology provided me with such an approach.

One element that phenomenological researchers have to contend with is that it is actually rather challenging to access the lived aspect of a phenomenon (van Manen, 1997, p. 10), for we often do so from the perspective of the past

(see chapter three). Both van Manen (1997) and Finlay (2011) emphasize that it is up to the researcher to find what will work best for the phenomenon being studied. I found it, therefore, very helpful to follow Vagle's (2018, pp. 17-18) recommendation that, "... since context is important in interpretive phenomenology, it is equally important to gather phenomenological material in which the phenomenon is lived". As the gardens were the phenomena, I felt that our presence within the context of these spaces would be an appropriate way for the participants to talk about their garden—Quinn Paton (2015, p. 115) reminds us that this comes from how they "... perceive it, describe it, feel about it, judge it, remember it, make sense of it, and talk about it with others". However, we were not just physically in the gardens. This study utilized mobile interviewing methods, which included moving through them during the walking interviews, gardening in them during the activity-based children's focus groups, and photographing them during photography-elicitation, and thereby, the embodied and interactive nature of these data collection experiences helped to generate that vital interconnection that exists in phenomenology between body and place.

I found that adopting a phenomenological attitude (Finlay, 2011, pp. 23-24) meant, in a very practical sense, moving away from my perceptions of the gardens as I had remembered them when the Youth4Health project departed and incubated them while I planned the study, and rather returning to them with a perspective that was reflexive and "discovery oriented" (van Manen, 1997, p. 29) in its intent. As a result, at times my perceptions of what I saw or heard were challenged, but the setting of the gardens and the activities

triggered various threads of discussion that I had to remain open to. What I had not anticipated through this process, was the way in which I would also be privy to witnessing a number of Lefebvrian lived “moments” with the participants. These are brief expressions of heightened real-time wonder, awe, or the jolt of memory that break into an everyday experience and manage to bring the lived even more to life. In all these different ways, I feel that this methodology was effective in allowing me to gain a multiplicity of insights as the participants shared with me the rich experiences of their garden.

### **5.1.2 Review of findings**

My findings about the lived nature of the gardens at Hope and Grace Baptist churches drew upon three key themes. The first theme unearthed the *genius loci* of both garden sites. I found that each garden had its own spirit in relation to the natural setting, the material structures, and the human needs of those at the churches. This is in keeping with the work of a number of garden researchers (Kurtz, 2001; Chitov, 2006; Cameron et al., 2010; Pearson and Firth, 2012; McVey et al., 2018), who emphasize how vital it is to attend to these perceived aspects of a garden space (see section 2.4.5.1).

I described Hope Baptist Church garden as a garden on the move rooted in history. Here, the participants had moved the original garden left at the end of the Youth4Health project. This was part of a wider renewal taking place at the site and was reflected in the garden areas that had been recently established around the campus. As the oldest African American church in the locality,

there was a growing need to acknowledge the history of the church, and the newly defined gardens became a symbolic site to celebrate this while at the same time creating a space to welcome new members.

The garden at Grace Baptist Church was characterized as a garden that grows people through relationship. This garden brought a sense of connection to the area outside the church where participants were able to develop relationships to the self, to nature, to each other, and to God.

Following discussion of these separate *genius loci*, two joint themes were explored. The first joint theme concerned the way in which different kinds of garden skill-sets had evolved differently across the generations. While these generational distinctions were broadly defined, I found that many of the seniors were the skill keepers who expressed expertise and had a historical and contradictory legacy with the land, which was also rooted in the racial inequities of their southern history. The children were the schooled skill-set and had knowledge of gardening through school gardens or through projects like Youth4Health. Finally, the millennial adults were found to have a missing skill-set. These adults had not had as many opportunities to learn about gardening, which might have come about as the parents of the millennials (the seniors) shifted away from the land and its associations.

The next joint theme covered issues of garden sustainability. Both churches had reached a turning point where they were seeking to define a clearer role for their gardens. Participants explained some of their concerns regarding

people, plants, and structures and also shared how possible solutions to sustain the gardens might come about. Using Lefebvre's (1991, p. 205) concept of a "rhythm analysis" that attends to the way in which everyday spaces and everyday people have a rhythm, I combined the rhythm of the churches already in place with the prospective garden rhythm that the participants suggested as a possible way forward for the gardens. I also noted how the garden design was out of sync with many participants' ideas of what constituted a garden and that attending to this might also contribute to the gardens' sustainability.

### ***5.1.3 Discussion of findings***

In describing the lived experiences of their gardens, the participants at Grace and Hope Baptist Churches shared that they held a number of different kinds of meanings for them ranging from the practical to the highly personal and symbolic. As a result, this study contributes to the literature around rurally situated African American church gardens in a number of ways:

First, it adds an additional understanding to the ways in which gardens contribute to health. Many of the studies that occur in African American church settings (Warren-White et al., 2009; Barnidge et al., 2013; De Marco et al., 2016) focus predominantly on how growing and eating produce from a garden can improve people's health. As explained in the discussion of Lefebvre's conceived realm, this is often one of the justifications for garden-related projects (see section 2.5); it too was a main focus for the Youth4Health project.

However, my research found that the garden at Grace Baptist Church was considered more of a place for sitting, quietude, and prayer, which also had positive effects on the mental, emotional, and spiritual health of the adults and the children of this study, allowing them to make clearer decisions and feel more centered. These anecdotes are not quantifiable but are nevertheless vital aspects of people's well-being and ought to be given greater emphasis as benefits that arise from being in a garden.

My study found that transport to the rural location of the sites was at times challenging for the participants and that it influenced their movements to and from the churches and the gardens, as well as the amount of time available when they were up at the sites. This is in keeping with McIlvaine-Newsad and Porter (2013) and De Marco et al. (2016) who point out how access to their gardens is also an issue for their rurally situated participants. Another side to this is the distance many people in rural areas have to travel in order to access a supermarket (Eisenhauer, 2001; United States Department of Agriculture, 2009; McEntee, 2011; Porter and McIlvaine-Newsad, 2013), which was also consistent with my findings. However, the participants of my study attempted to provide a possible solution. They proposed that the gardens could function as a central hub for those who lived closer to the churches. They could go there and pick fresh vegetables, and this would alleviate them from having to travel all the way to the nearest city when they needed certain produce. Nevertheless, this would still be contingent upon an ability to gain access to the church gardens.

Unlike De Marco et al. (2016) who found that the children and adults worked together in the gardens of their study, I found that at Grace Baptist they played together through art and celebration and that the gardens were key places for discovery, situated learning, and relationship building that came from simply being with others in the garden space. However, in both African American churches, the members of different generations had differing levels of garden skills, which also reflected a deeper story about gardening through the generations. A lot of concern was expressed about the needs of the seniors and the children of the churches. The seniors had the most experience with gardens, and it was felt to be important to preserve their knowledge and provide the gardens as an outlet for their skills. A number of the children were starting to learn about gardening at school, which is part of a wider trend not only at the local level but nationally and internationally as well (Gaylie, 2009; Williams and Brown, 2012; Passy, 2014; Moore et al., 2015; Kincy et al., 2016; Loftus et al., 2017; Murakami et al., 2018). Many pointed out the valuable life lessons that the children might learn because of this. Between these two generations were the millennial adults, some of whom had missed out on learning about gardening at home or school, so, often interest in the gardens was initiated by their children. By exploring possible reasons for each generation's differing garden skill-set, my findings add a more nuanced perspective to the idea of gardens as sites of inter-generational activity and learning.

In focusing on the lived, it is important to emphasize how these two rural African American church gardens were similar to the gardens in Eizenberg's



(2012, p. 770) study (see section 2.7.2) in that they can be considered as “carriers of culture”, but my findings add another layer to his perspective in that much of the culture was rooted in a strong sense of church and personal history. Lefebvre (1991, p. 41) emphasizes that lived spaces are “Redolent with imaginary and symbolic elements, they have their source in history – in the history of a people as well as in the history of each individual belonging to that people”. As a historical carrier of culture, Hope Baptist Church gardens became a place of collective and individual memory for the church members. The newly built bell structure marked a history of African American presence at the site for over 150 years, and the fountain was a place of commemoration for many at the church. In describing how places are lived, Schmid (2008, p. 37) explains that this reflects “... the process of signification that links itself to a material symbol”. These meanings were not immediately visible but were revealed through the sharing that occurred during the interviews. However, culture is not only materially manifested. Through the recollections of a number of the seniors at both sites, the gardens were places where their personal history as African Americans being raised on southern soil was shared. In this way, the seniors were themselves *living* carriers of culture.

#### **5.1.4 Limitations to the study**

There are some limitations to the study that must be noted:

#### **5.1.4.1      *Interruptions during data collection***

Whilst one of the strengths of the study came from it being carried out within the garden setting, this may also have been one of its weaknesses. According to Vagle (2018, p. 87), in phenomenological research "... all interviews are treated as exciting opportunities to potentially learn something important about the phenomenon ... The goal is to find out as much as you can about the phenomenon from each particular participant". It is anticipated that this goal is usually achieved through an in-depth discussion about the phenomenon in question. As the interviews took place outside and often whilst we were in motion, there was more possibility for interruptions to occur, which may well have prevented the deeper expression of an idea. Occasionally, it was because of others wandering into the garden during the interview, but more often it came from a loss of focus because in real-time in the outdoors other things arose that were unpredictable. This might have come from a sudden gust of wind, a noticing of something in the garden that drew away the attention from what was being expressed resulting in a change of focus, or even the way in which we might have happened upon things all of a sudden that distracted the train of thought so that something that was being expressed was lost mid-sentence. As I became more familiar with this as a part of the interview process, I also became more adept at handling the interruptions and finding ways to return to a topic or understanding that the topic might find a way to return to us as the movement continued. I do believe that the setting was more of a help than a hindrance as it was integral to re-constituting the lived experience *in situ*.

#### **5.1.4.2      *An alternative to the digital camera***

During photography-elicitation (see section 3.7.5), I described the difference that the digital camera made. However, whilst it allowed participants to see their images upon taking them, the small screen at the back of the pocket-sized camera was really not ideal if this was to be the participants' only opportunity to see their pictures. A tablet device would have allowed for them to comfortably view and edit their images more easily and comment and take ownership of them within the setting of the garden. As the average number of photographs taken per person was about five, it would not have added much more time to the end of the interviews and could have been incorporated into the debriefing experience; once we had finished, the images could easily have been sent directly to the participants so that they would have had ownership of the images shortly after the interview. This would also have resulted in a more meaningful ending for the participants as regards the photography (see section 3.7.8.2).

#### **5.1.4.3      *Missing voices***

Twenty-five adults participated in this study, but only three adult males were included among this number. I had recruited at both sites in the presence of both male and female church members, but those who chose to take part were predominantly female. There may be a few reasons for this. First, many may still have associated me with the Youth4Health project, and as a result, many of those women who took part in that project also agreed to be part of my

study, so there could have been some resonance from the former project in that it attracted a similar, largely female, population. In addition, as it was a mixed adult-child study, it is possible that some males present may have associated it with the youth ministry, which in both sites had female youth directors and youth ministers. As a result, males that were present during my presentation may have thought that this was not something for them to be a party to.

## **5.2 Contributions to knowledge**

This study has made contributions to knowledge in the following ways:

Whilst carrying out the data collection, I happened upon an unexpected distinction between photo- and photography-elicitation. I found that whilst I had anticipated the former, it was the latter that manifested itself during the interviews and allowed the photography to initiate an act of elicitation in real-time. At the time of writing, little information was found about the possible benefits of photography-elicitation during the mobile interviewing process. My examination of this discovery builds on the work of Larsen (2008) and will be of help to those seeking to learn about it for their research, as it provides an alternative to the more familiar photo-elicitation model.

From the outset, the research question was posed to discover more about the two gardens built at the end of the Youth4Health project. As explained in chapter one, this was instigated by a genuine lack of knowledge about the

spaces, and it sought to find out what the gardens had come to mean to the participants of the study; van Manen reminds us that:

*Phenomenological questions are meaning questions.* They ask for the meaning and significance of certain phenomena. Meaning questions cannot be 'solved' ... Meaning questions can be better or more deeply understood, so that, on the basis of this understanding I may be able to act more thoughtfully and more tactfully in certain situations. (van Manen, 1997, p. 23).

The understandings that now arise as a result of this research will provide for the university team, and those undertaking similar projects, a sense of how our partners develop relationships with gardens that are built through university-community educational outreach. In chapter three, I refer to the fact that the phenomenological project has a potentially transformational relational approach (Finlay, 2011, pp. 24-25). On one level, Singh (2015) stresses how important this can be:

For participants from historically marginalized groups, the time and attention that phenomenology requires often provide the first space to tell their story in depth. It may also be the first time that they have been valued for telling it. (Singh, 2015, p. 102).

Yet it must be emphasized that genuine transformation is multi-directional; it is vital that we as university researchers question and reflect upon our own practices in relation to our partners. This brings with it the realization that as we conduct our outreach, we may equally be reached-into through what we learn and experience. On this level too, it has the potential to both challenge and change us, and as a result, it might re-direct the course of our future interactions and work.

This study provides further information about the role of community gardens in rural settings. In chapter two, I explore how community gardens are regarded predominantly as located within an urban environment, so much so, that only a handful of studies (McIlvaine-Newsad and Porter, 2013; Porter and McIlvaine-Newsad, 2013; Barnidge, et al., 2013; McCready and Durden, 2016; Kraml and Holben, 2016; DeMarco et al., 2016) make reference to their rural location. My findings add to this small body of work that attempts to address the ways in which rurally situated community gardens might serve rurally situated people.

Moreover, while much has been written about African American churches as important sites of education, learning, and social justice, little research has been conducted in African American church gardens and even less in rural African American church gardens (De Marco et al., 2016). My study is one of the very few to address this gap in the literature, and my findings (as outlined in sections 5.1.3, and 5.3) provide valuable insights that are worthy of further exploration.

### **5.3 Suggestions for future action and research**

In this section, I will make some recommendations about future directions and possible ways to proceed.

### **5.3.1 *Sharing findings***

It would be useful to go back to share my findings with the members of Grace and Hope Baptist churches. During the interviews, some participants indicated that their gardens might at some point also be an example for other churches in the area, and as they grapple with the next stage of creating a more defined role for their gardens, it would be helpful for me to return to the churches with the insightful suggestions that they gave regarding the possible ways to address their gardens' sustainability.

As the members of the churches consider the impact of their gardens, it would also be helpful if educators like myself, Master Gardeners involved in university-community outreach through the building of gardens at places of worship, could also provide more details about their endeavors. There is such a breadth of information about community gardens but a dearth of information when those gardens are established at rural churches. It is clear that the general community garden model is only one model to follow, and it would be helpful if the body of literature about them could as become as extensive as that which is now found about school gardens.

### **5.3.2 *Digging deeper***

There is clearly a historical story that is yet to be told about the local soil and the garden skill-keepers at the two African American churches. Some of the adults at the sites spoke about the seniors knowing "the old ways" and holding

“the old stories”, but as the seniors age, there is a concern that this wisdom and legacy might be lost. In her recent book, *Freedom farmers: agricultural resistance and the black freedom movement*. White (2018), presents her research around the lesser-known account of:

... black land owners as well as the civil rights activism of sharecroppers, tenant farmers and domestic workers. It focuses its attention on those who refused to migrate and who fought to stay in the South and maintain communities around agriculture. (White, 2018, p. 3).

She emphasizes how the skills of growing, whether they were utilized on a large (farm) or small (garden) scale, tell an overlooked story of African American agency and resilience (White, 2018, p. 3). It would be invaluable to speak more to the seniors about their childhoods on the land in north Louisiana to see how and if they might align with White’s findings.

#### **5.4 Closing thoughts**

I embarked upon this study with the research question, “How do your gardens grow?” This question enabled me to learn that the gardens at the rural African American churches of this study grow in multiple directions and hold multiple meanings. They are sites of change and structures of memory, spaces to build relationships, to discover, to learn, and to pray. However, as church members look to the future, the growth of their gardens requires facing the perennial challenges of maintenance, upkeep, and identity. Perhaps it is no small coincidence that these gardens that were built to mark the Youth4Health



project's sustainability now face issues of sustainability of their own, for as Cresswell (2015, p. 68) emphasizes, "In general places are never complete, finished, or bounded but are always becoming—in process".

## REFERENCES

Abi-Nader, J., Dunnigham, K. and Markley, K. (2005) *Growing communities community gardening: community building and organizational development curriculum*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. The American Community Gardening Association.

Adey, P. (2017) *Mobility*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Abingdon: Routledge.

Anderson, J. (2004) Talking whilst walking: a geographical archaeology of knowledge, *Area*, 36 (3), pp. 254-261.

Anderson, J. and Moles, K. (2008) Walking into coincident places, *Qualitative researcher*, 9, pp. 5-7.

Alm, S. and Olsen, S.O. (2016) Using photo interviews to explore children's food preferences, *International Journal of Consumer Studies*, 41, pp. 274-282.

American Horticultural Society (2019) *Master Gardeners*. Available from: <https://www.ahsgardening.org/gardening-resources/master-gardeners> [Accessed 14 February 2019].

Armstrong, D. (2000a) A survey of community gardens in upstate New York: implications for health promotion and community development, *Health & Place*, 6, pp. 319- 327.

Armstrong, D. (2000b) A community diabetes education and gardening project to improve diabetes care in a Northwest American Indian tribe, *The Diabetes Educator*, 26 (1), pp. 113-120.

Aptekar, S. (2015) Visions of public space: reproducing and resisting social hierarchies in a community garden, *Sociological Forum*, 30 (1), pp. 209-227.

Banks, M. (1998) Visual anthropology: image, object and interpretation, in: Prosser, J. (ed.) *Image-based research: a sourcebook for qualitative researchers*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. London: Routledge Falmer, pp. 9-23.

Banks, M. and Zeitlyn, D. (2015) *Visual methods in social research*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. London: Sage.

Barker, J. and Smith, F. (2012) What's in focus? A critical discussion of photography, children and young people, *International Journal of Social Research Methodology*, 15 (2), pp. 91-103.

Barnidge, E. K., Hipp, P. R., Estlund, A., Duggan, K., Barnhart, K. J. and Brownson, K. J. (2013) Association between community garden participation and fruit and vegetable consumption in rural Missouri, *International Journal of Behavioral Nutrition and Physical Activity*, 10 (128), pp. 1-8.

Barthes, R. (1981) *Camera lucida: reflections on photography*. New York, NY: Hill and Wang.

Beaulac, J., Kristjansson, E. and Cummins, S. A. (2009) A systematic review of food deserts, 1966-2007, *Preventing Chronic Disease: Public Health Research Practice and Policy*, 6 (3) pp. 1-10.

Bhatti, M. (1999) The meaning of gardens in an age of risk, in: Chapman, T. and Hockey, J. (eds.) *Ideal homes? Social change and domestic life*. London: Routledge, pp. 181-193.

Blake, A. and Cloutier-Fisher, D. (2009) Backyard bounty: exploring the benefits and challenges of backyard garden sharing projects. *Local Environment*, 14, pp.797-807.

Braun, V. and Clark, V. (2013). *Successful qualitative research: a practical guide for beginners*. London: Sage.

Brenner, N. and Elden, S. (eds.) (2009) *State, space world: Henri Lefebvre selected essays*. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.

British Educational Research Association (BERA) (2018) *Ethical guidelines for educational research*. Available from: [https://www.bera.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/BERA-Ethical-Guidelines-for-Educational-Research\\_4thEdn\\_2018.pdf?noredirect=1](https://www.bera.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/BERA-Ethical-Guidelines-for-Educational-Research_4thEdn_2018.pdf?noredirect=1) [Accessed 1 August 2018].

Bourke, J. (2017) Children's experiences of their everyday walks through a complex urban landscape of belonging, *Children's Geographies*, 15 (1), pp. 93-106.

Butler-Kisber, L. (2010) *Qualitative inquiry: thematic, narrative and arts-informed perspectives*. London: Sage.

Cameron, J., Manhood, C. and Pomfrett, J. (2010) Growing the community of community gardens: research contributions, in: *Community Garden Conference*, Canberra, Australia, 2010. Available from: <https://www.communityeconomies.org/publications/conference-papers/growing-community-community-gardens-research-contributions> [Accessed 27 July 2018].

Capello, M, (2005) Photo interviews: eliciting data through conversations with children, *Field Methods*, 17 (2), pp. 170-182.

Carney, P., Hamada, J. L., Rdesinski, R., Sprager, L., Nichols, K. R., Liu, B. Y., Pelayo, J., Sanchez, M. A. and Shannon, J. (2012) Impact of a community gardening project on vegetable intake, food security and family relationships: a community based participatory research study, *Journal of Community Health*, 37, pp. 874-881.

Carpiano, R. (2009) Come take a walk with me: the “go-along” interview as a novel method for studying the implications of place for health and well-being. *Health & Place*, 15, pp. 263-272.

Castleden, H., Garvin, T. and Huu-ay-aht First Nation (2008) Modifying photovoice for community-based participatory indigenous research, *Social Science & Medicine*, 66, pp. 1393-1405.

Castrodale, M. A. (2018) Mobilizing dis/ability research: a critical discussion of qualitative go-along interviews in practice, *Qualitative Inquiry*, 24(1), pp. 45-55.

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention U.S. Dept of Health and Human Services (2017a) *National diabetes statistics report*. Available from: <https://www.cdc.gov/diabetes/pdfs/data/statistics/national-diabetes-statistics-report.pdf> [Accessed 17 February 2019].

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention U.S. Dept of Health and Human Services (2017b) *Diabetes report card*. Available from: <https://www.cdc.gov/diabetes/pdfs/library/diabetesreportcard2017-508.pdf> [Accessed 17 February 2019].

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention U.S. Dept of Health and Human Services (2018) *State indicator report on fruits and vegetables*. Available from: <https://www.cdc.gov/nutrition/downloads/fruits-vegetables/2018/2018-fruit-vegetable-report-508.pdf> [Accessed 17 February 2019].

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2019) *Nutrition, physical activity, and obesity: data, trends and maps*. Available from: <https://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpao/data-trends-maps/index.html> [Accessed 20 September 2019].

Chevalier, S. (1998) From woolen carpet to grass carpet: bridging house and garden in an English suburb, in: Miller, D. (ed.) *Material cultures: why some things matter*. London: Routledge, pp. 47-72.

Chitov, D. (2006) Cultivating social capital on urban plots: community gardens in New York City, *Humanity and Society*, 30 (4), pp. 437-462.

Clark, A. (2012), Visual ethics in a contemporary landscape, in: Pink, S. (ed.) *Advances in visual methodology*. London: Sage, pp. 17-35.

Clark, A. (2013) Haunted by images? Ethical moments and anxieties in visual research, *Methodological Innovations Online*, 8 (2), pp. 68-81. Available from: <http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.4256/mio.2013.014> [Accessed August 2nd 2018].

Clark, A. and Emmel, N. (2010) *Using walking interviews*, *ESRC National Centre for Research Methods Realities toolkit #13*, pp.1-6. Available from: <http://eprints.ncrm.ac.uk/1323/1/13-toolkit-walking-interviews.pdf> [Accessed 15 October 2016].

Clark-Ibáñez, M. (2004) *Framing the social world with photo-elicitation interviews*, *The American Behavioral Scientist*, 47 (12), pp. 1507-1527.

Clark-Ibáñez, M. (2008) Gender and being “bad”: inner-city students’ photographs, in: Thompson, P. (ed.) *Doing visual research with children and young people*. Oxon: Routledge, pp. 95-113.

Cresswell, J. W. (2007) *Qualitative inquiry and research design: choosing among five different approaches*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. London: Sage.

Cresswell, T. (2015) *Place an introduction*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell.

Cronin, O. (1998) Psychology and photographic theory, in: Prosser, J. (ed.) *Image-based research: a sourcebook for qualitative researchers*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. London: Routledge Falmer, pp. 69-83.

De Leon, J. P. and Cohen, J. H. (2005) Object and walking probes in ethnographic interviewing, *Field Methods*, 17 (2), pp. 200-204.

Delgado, M. (2013) *Social justice and the urban obesity crisis: implications for social work*. New York, NY: Columbia University Press.

De Marco, M. M., Woods Smith, T., Kearney, W. and Ammerman, A. (2016) Harvest of hope: the impact of a church garden project on African American youth and adults in the rural American South, *Journal of Hunger and Environmental Nutrition*, 11 (3), pp. 317-327.

Doughty, K. (2013) Walking together: The embodied and mobile production of a therapeutic landscape, *Health & Place*, 24, pp.140–146.

Douglas, K. (1998) Seeing as well as hearing: Responses to the use of an alternative form of data representation in a study of students’ environmental perceptions in: *23<sup>rd</sup> Annual meeting of the association for the study of higher education*, Miami, Florida, 5-8 November.

Draper, C. and Freedman, D. (2010) Review and analysis of the benefits, purposes, and motivations associated with community gardening in the United States, *Journal of Community Practice*, 18 (4), pp. 458-492.

Eckhoff, A. (2017) Images of play experiences through a child’s lens: an exploration of play and digital media with young children, *International Journal of Early Childhood*, 49, pp. 113-129.

- Edensor, T. (2010) Walking in rhythms: place, regulation, style and the flow of experience, *Visual Studies*, (25) 1, pp. 69-79.
- Eisenhauer, E. (2001) In poor health: supermarket redlining and urban nutrition, *GeoJournal*, 53, pp. 125-133.
- Eizenberg, E. (2012) Actually existing commons: three moments of space of community gardens in New York City, *Antipode*, 44 (3), pp. 764-782.
- Elden, S. (2004a) Between Marx and Heidegger: politics, philosophy and Lefebvre's the production of space, *Antipode*, 36 (1), pp. 86-105.
- Elden, S. (2004b) *Understanding Henri Lefebvre: theory and the possible*. London: Continuum.
- Emerson, R. M., Fretz, R. I. and Shaw, L. L. (1995) *Writing ethnographic fieldnotes*. Chicago, IL. University of Chicago Press.
- Emmel, N. and Clark, A. (2009) *The methods used in connected lives: investigating networks, neighbourhoods and communities*, ESRC National Centre for Research Methods, working paper series, pp.1-26. Available from: [http://eprints.ncrm.ac.uk/800/1/2009\\_connected\\_lives\\_methods\\_emmel\\_clark.pdf](http://eprints.ncrm.ac.uk/800/1/2009_connected_lives_methods_emmel_clark.pdf) [Accessed 15 October 2016].
- Epstein, I., Stevens, B., McKeever, P. and Baruchel, S. (2006) Photo elicitation interview (PEI): using photos to elicit children's perspectives, *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 5 (3), pp. 1-9.
- Epstein, J., Collins, K. K., Bailey-Burch, B., Walker-Thoth, D. and Pancella, T. (2007) Space scouts: a collaboration between university researchers and African American churches, *Journal of Ethnicity in Substance Abuse*, 6 (1), pp. 31-43.
- Ernwein, M. (2017) Urban agriculture and the neoliberalisation of what? *ACME: An International Journal for Critical Geographies*, 2017, 16 (2), pp. 249-275.
- Evans, J. and Jones, P. (2011) The walking interview: methodology, mobility and place, *Applied Geography*, 31, pp. 849-858.
- Ey, L. A. (2016) An analysis of young children's engagement with single and group interview methods, *Journal of Family Theory & Review*, 41 (1), pp. 36-44.
- Ferdman, R. (2018) *How Dollar General is taking over rural America*. Available from: [https://news.vice.com/en\\_us/article/7xd44g/how-dollar-general-is-taking-over-rural-America](https://news.vice.com/en_us/article/7xd44g/how-dollar-general-is-taking-over-rural-America) [Accessed 20 May 2018].

- Ferris, J., Norman, C. and Sempik, J. (2001) People, land, and sustainability: community gardens and the social dimension of sustainable development, *Social Policy & Administration*, 35 (5), pp. 559-568.
- Fincham, B., McGuinness, M. and Murray, L. (2010) Introduction, in: Fincham, B., McGuinness, M. and Murray, L. (eds.) *Mobile methodologies*. Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 1-10.
- Finlay, L. (2011) *Phenomenology for therapists: researching the real world*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell.
- Firth, C., Maye, D. and Pearson, D. (2011) Developing "community" in community gardens, *Local Environment*, 16 (6), pp. 555-568.
- Flachs, A. (2010) Food for thought: the social impact of community gardens in the greater Cleveland area, *Electronic Green Journal*, 1 (30), pp. 1-9.
- Floyd, M. F. (2009) Southeast Raleigh minority faith-based health promotion project, *Californian Journal of Health Promotion: Special Issue (Obesity Prevention)*, 7, pp. 87-98.
- Floyd-Thomas, S., Floyd-Thomas, J., Duncan, C. B., Ray, S. G. and Westfield, N. L. (2007) *Black church studies: an introduction*. Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press.
- Francis, M and Hester, R. T. (1990) (eds.) *The meaning of gardens*. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press.
- Fraser, B. (2015) *Toward an urban cultural studies: Henri Lefebvre and the Humanities*. New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Freeman, M. and Mathison, S. (2009) *Researching children's experiences*. New York. The Guildford Press.
- Gallagher, M. (2008), 'Power is not an evil': rethinking power in participatory methods. *Children's geographies*, 6 (2), pp. 137-150.
- Gallagher, L. and Gallagher, M. (2008) Methodological immaturity in childhood research? Thinking through 'participatory methods', *Childhood*, 15 (4), pp. 499-516.
- Gardner Burt, K. (2016) A complete history of the social, health and political context of the school gardening movement in the United States: 1840-2014, *Journal of Hunger & Environmental Nutrition*, 11 (3), pp. 297-316.
- Gaylie, V. (2009) *The learning garden: ecology, teaching and transformation*. New York, NY: Peter Lang.

Gibson, J. E. (2012) Interviews and focus groups with children: methods that match children's developing competencies, *Journal of Family Theory & Review*, 4 (June), pp. 148-159.

Glover, T. D. (2003) The story of the Queen Anne Memorial Garden: resisting a dominant cultural narrative, *Journal of Leisure Research*, 35 (2), pp.190-212.

Glover, T. D. (2004) Social Capital in the Lived Experiences of Community Gardeners, *Leisure Sciences*, 26, pp. 143-162.

Gottlieb, R. and Anupama, J. (2010) *Food Justice*. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press.

Graham, A., Powell, M., Taylor, N., Anderson, D. and Fitzgerald, R. (2013). Ethical Research Involving Children (ERIC) Project Compendium. Florence: United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) Office of Research - Innocenti. Available from <https://childethics.com/> [Accessed 9 October 2016].

Guest, G., Namey, E. and Mitchell, M. (2013) *Collecting qualitative data: a field manual for applied research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Gulson, K. N. and Symes, C. (eds.) (2007) *Spatial theories of education: policy and geography matters*. Oxon: Routledge.

Guthman, J. (2008) Bringing good food to others: investigating the subjects of alternative food practice, *The Professional Geographer*, 60 (3), pp. 431-447.

Guthman, J. (2011) *Weighing in: obesity, food justice and limits of capitalism*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

Hales, C. M., Carroll, M. D., Fryar, C. D. and Ogden, C. L. (2017) *Prevalence of obesity among adults and youth: United States, 2015-2016*. Hyattsville, MD: National Center for Health Statistics.

Hall, T. (2015) Reframing photographic research methods in Human Geography: a long-term reflection, *Journal of Geography in Higher Education*, 39 (3), pp. 328-342.

Hall, T., Lashua, B. and Coffey, A. (2003) Stories as sorties, *Qualitative Researcher*, 3, pp. 2-3.

Harmon, K. (2011) Lessons in the dirt: school gardens grow in Brooklyn, *SiteLINES: A Journal of Place*, 6 (2), pp. 14-16.

Harper, D. (2002) Talking about pictures: a case for photo elicitation, *Visual Studies*, 17 (1), pp. 13-26.



Hartwig, K. A., and Mason, M. (2016) Community gardens for refugee and immigrant communities as a means of health promotion, *Journal of Community Health*, 41, pp. 1153-1159.

Harvey, D. (1991) Afterword, in: Lefebvre, H. *The production of space*. Oxford: Blackwell, pp. 425-434.

Hill, A. (2011) A helping hand and many green thumbs: local government, citizens and the growth of a community-based food economy, *Local Environment*, 16 (6), pp. 539-553.

Hill, M. (2006) Ethical considerations in researching children's experiences, in: Green, S. and Hogan, D. (eds.) *Researching children's experience- approaches and methods*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. London. Sage Publications, pp. 61-86.

Hitchings, R. (2007) How awkward encounters could influence the future form of many gardens, *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, 32 (3), pp. 363–376.

Hitchings, R. and Jones, V. (2004), Living with plants and the exploration of botanical encounter within human geographic research practice, *Ethics, Place and Environment*, 7, pp. 3-18.

Holland, L. (2004) Diversity and connections in community gardens: a contribution to local sustainability, *Local Environment*, 9 (3), pp. 285-305.

Ingold, T. and Vergunst, J. L. (2008) *Ways of walking: ethnography and practice on foot*. Aldershot: Ashgate.

International visual sociology association (2009) *IVASA Code of Ethics*. Available from: <http://visualsociology.org/wp-content/uploads/IVSA-Ethics-and-Guidelines.pdf> [Accessed 1 August 2018].

Jagger, S., Sperling, E. and Inwood, H. (2016) What's growing on here? Garden-based pedagogy in a concrete jungle, *Environmental Education Research*, 22 (2), pp. 271–287.

Jerme, E. and Wakefield, S. (2013) Growing a just garden: environmental justice and the development of a community garden policy for Hamilton, Ontario, *Planning Theory and Practice*, 14 (3), pp. 295-314.

Jones, P., Bunce, G., Evans, J., Gibbs, H. and Ricketts Hein, J. (2008) Exploring space and place with walking interviews: an examination of the use of new technologies for social research, *Journal of research practice*, 4 (2), pp. 1- 9.

Kellett, M. (2010) *Rethinking children and research: attitudes in contemporary society*. London: Continuum.

Kelly, M. (2001) The education of African American youth: literacy, practices and identity representations in church and school, in: Moje, E. B. and O'Brien, D. G. (eds.) *Constructions of literacy: studies of teaching and learning in and out of secondary schools*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Earlbaum Associates, Inc., pp. 239-259.

Kincy, N., Fuhrman, N. E., Navarro, M. and Knauff, D. (2016) Predicting teacher likelihood to use school gardens: a case study, *Applied Environmental Education & Communication*, 15 (2), pp. 138-149.

Kraml, G. and Holben, D. H. (2016) Development of a community gardening program in a rural Appalachian county for adults with diabetes, *Journal of Hunger & Environmental Nutrition*, 11 (2), pp. 292-294.

Kullman, K. (2012) Experiments with moving children and digital cameras, *Children's Geographies*, 10 (1), pp. 1-16.

Kurtz, H. (2001) Differentiating multiple meanings of garden and community, *Urban Geography*, 22 (7), pp. 656-670.

Kusenbach, M. (2003) The go-along as ethnographic research tool, *Ethnography*, 4(3), pp. 455-485.

L'Annunziata, E. (2010) Following the plant: the political ecology of a Hmong community garden, *Humboldt Journal of Social Relations*, 33 (1/2), pp. 97-134.

Larsen, J. (2008) Practices and flows of digital photography: an ethnographic framework, *Mobilites*, 3 (1), pp. 141-160.

Lawson, L. J. (2005) *City bountiful: a century of community gardening in America*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

Lawson, L., Drake, S., and the American Community Gardening Association (2013) 2012 Community gardening organization survey, *Community Greening Review*, 18 (2013), pp. 20-48.

Lee, J. and Ingold, T. (2006) Fieldwork on foot: perceiving, routing, socializing, in: Coleman, S. and Collins, P. (eds.) *Locating the field: space, place and context in anthropology*. Palo Alto, CA: Ebrary, pp. 67-86.

Lee-Kwan, S. H., Moore, L. V., Blanck, H. M., Harris, D. M. and Galuska, D. (2017) *Disparities in state specific adult fruit and vegetable consumption-United States, 2015*. Atlanta, GA: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Lefebvre, H. (1991) *The production of space*. Oxford: Blackwell.

Lichtman, M. (2013) *Qualitative research in education: a user's guide*. 3rd ed. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Lloyd, J. L. (2019) From farms to food deserts: food insecurity and older rural Americans, *Generations: Journal of the American Society on Aging*, 43 (2), pp. 24-32.

Loftus, L., Spaulding, A. D., Steffen, R., Kopsell, D. and Nnakwe, N. (2017) Determining barriers to use of edible school gardens in Illinois, *Journal of the American College of Nutrition*, 36 (7), pp. 507-513.

Loopstra, R. and Tarasuk, V. (2013) Perspectives on community gardens, community kitchens and the Good Food Box program in a community-based sample of low income families, *Canadian Journal of Public Health*, 104 (1), pp. 55-59.

McClintock, N. (2011) From industrial garden to food desert: demarcated devaluation in the flatlands of Oakland, California, in: Alkon, A. H and Agyeman, J. (eds.) *Cultivating food justice: race, class and sustainability*. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, pp. 89-120.

McCready, T. and Durden, E. T. (2016) An exploration of the primary motivations, perceived benefits, and challenges of two rural community gardens, in: *Rethinking social movements: can changing the conversation change the world?* Seattle, WA, 20-23 August. Washington, DC: conference papers - American Sociological Association, pp. 1-14.

McCreary, M., Jones, M., Tademy, R. and Fife, J. (2009) A partnership with the African American church, IMPACT and S.P.I.C.E.S. For Life, in: Evans, Y. S., Taylor, C. M, Dunlap, M. R. and Miller, D. S. (eds.) *African Americans and community engagement in higher education*. Albany, NY: State University of New York, pp. 173-187.

McEntee, J. C. (2011) Realizing rural food justice: divergent locals in the northeastern United States, in: Alkon, A. H and Agyeman, J. (eds.) *Cultivating food justice: race, class and sustainability*. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, pp. 239-259.

McIlvaine-Newsad, H. and Porter, R. (2013) How does your garden grow? Environmental justice aspects of community gardens, *Journal of Ecological Anthropology*, 16 (1), pp. 69-75.

McVey, D., Nash, R. and Stansbie, P. (2018) The motivations and experiences of community garden participants in Edinburgh, Scotland, *Regional Studies, Regional Science*, 5 (1), pp. 40-56.

Meinen, A., Friese, B., Wright, A. and Carrel, A. (2012) Youth gardens increase healthy behaviors in young children, *Journal of Hunger and Environmental Nutrition*, 7 (2-3), pp. 192-204.

Meo, A. I. (2010) Picturing students' habitus: The advantages and limitations of photo elicitation interviewing qualitative study in the city of Buenos Aires, *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 9 (2), pp. 149-171.

Merrifield, A. (2006) *Henri Lefebvre: a critical introduction*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Middleton, S. (2012) Putting Sylvia in her place: history, geographical theory and the new education, *Paedagogical Historica*, 48 (2), pp.263-282.

Middleton, S. (2014) *Henri Lefebvre and education: space, history, theory*. Oxon: Routledge.

Middleton, S. (2017) Henri Lefebvre on education: critique and pedagogy, *Policy Futures in Education*, 15 (4), pp. 410-426.

Miller, K. (2016) Learning about children's school preparation through photographs: the use of photo-elicitation interviews with low-income families. *Journal of Early Childhood Research*, 14(3), pp. 261-279.

Mitchell, C. (2011) *Doing visual research*. London: Sage.

Moje, E. (2000) Critical issues: circles of kinship, friendship, position and power: examining the community in community-based literacy research, *Journal of Literacy Research*, 32 (1), pp. 77-112.

Moore, L. V., Thompson, F. E. and Demissie, Z. (2013) Percentage of youth meeting federal fruit and vegetable intake recommendations, youth risk behavior surveillance system, United States and 33 States, *Journal of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics*, 117 (4), pp. 545-553.

Moore, S. A., Wilson, J., Kelly-Richards, S. and Marston, S. A. (2015) School gardens as sites for forging progressive socioecological futures, *Annals of American Geographers*, 105 (2), pp. 407-415.

Morales, A. (2011) Growing food and justice: dismantling racism through sustainable food systems, in: Alkon, A. H and Agyeman, J. (eds.) *Cultivating food justice: race, class and sustainability*. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, pp. 149-176.

Murakami, C. D., Chang, S. and Manfra, L. (2018) Analyzing teacher narratives in early childhood garden-based education, *The Journal of Environmental Education*, 49 (1), pp. 18-29.

Murimi, M. (2011) *Youth for health grant proposal*. Ruston, LA: [no publisher].

Murray, L. (2009) Looking at and looking back: visualization in mobile research, *Qualitative Research*, 9 (4), pp 469-488.

Noddings, N. (1996) On community, *Educational Theory* 46 (3), pp. 245 – 267.

Obama, M. (2012) *American grown: the story of the White House kitchen garden and gardens across America*. New York, NY: Crown Publishers.

Office for Human Research Protection (OHRP) (2016) *Regulations policy and posting*. Available from: <https://www.hhs.gov/ohrp/regulations-and-policy/index.html> [Accessed 1 August 2018].

Packard, J. (2008) 'I'm gonna show you what it's really like out here': the power and limitation of participatory visual methods, *Visual Studies*, 23 (1), pp. 63-77.

Parent, L. (2016) The wheeling interview: mobile methods and disability, *Mobilities*, 11(4), pp. 521-532.

Passidomo, C. (2016) Community gardening and governance over urban nature in New Orleans's Lower Ninth Ward, *Urban Forestry & Urban Greening*, 19, pp. 271–277.

Passy, R. (2014) School gardens: teaching and learning outside the front door, *Education 3-13*, 42 (1), pp. 23-38.

Patman, S. (2015) A new direction in garden history, *Garden History*, 43 (2), pp. 273-283.

Paulos, E. and Goodman, E. (2004). The familiar stranger: anxiety, comfort, and play in public places in: *Proceedings of the SIGCHI conference on human factors in computing systems*, Vienna, Austria, 24-29 April, pp. 223-230. Available from: [http://www.paulos.net/papers/2004/Familiar%20Stranger%20\(CHI%202004\).pdf](http://www.paulos.net/papers/2004/Familiar%20Stranger%20(CHI%202004).pdf) [Accessed 21 October 2018].

Pearson, D. H. and Firth, C. (2012) Diversity in community gardens: evidence from one region in the United Kingdom, *Biological Agriculture & Horticulture*, 28 (3), pp.147-155.

Peele-Eady, T. P. (2011) Constructing membership identity through language and social interaction: the case of African American children at Faith Missionary Baptist Church, *Anthropology and Education Quarterly*, 42 (1), pp. 54-75.

Pink, S. (2006) *The future of visual anthropology: engaging the senses*. London: Routledge.

Pink, S. (2007) Walking with video, *Visual Studies*, 22 (3), pp. 240-252.

Pink, S. (2009) *Doing sensory ethnography*. London: Sage.

Porter, R. and McIlvaine-Newsad, H. (2013) Gardening in green space for environmental justice: food security, leisure and social capital, *Leisure/Loisir*, 37 (4), pp. 379-395.

Pudup, M. B. (2008) It takes a garden: cultivating citizen-subjects in organized garden projects, *Geoforum*, 39, pp.1228-1240.

Purcell, M. and Tyman, S. (2015) Cultivating food as a right to the city, *Local Environment*, 20 (10), pp. 1132-1147.

Quinn Patton, M. (2015) *Qualitative research and evaluation methods: integrating theory and methods*. 4<sup>th</sup> ed. London: Sage.

Reed, A. (2002). City of details: interpreting the personality of London. *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, 8, pp. 127-141.

Reese, A. M. (2019) *Black food geographies: race, self-reliance and food access in Washington, D.C.* Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press.

Reynolds, W. M. (2017) Introduction: forgotten places in the new gilded age of greed and insensitivity, in: Reynolds, W. M. (ed.) *Forgotten places: critical studies in rural education*. New York, NY: Peter Lang, pp. xix-xxvi.

Ritchie, J., Lewis, J., McNaughton Nicholls, C. and Ormston, R. (2014) *Qualitative research practice: a guide for social science students and researchers*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. London: Sage.

Rodriguez, R. M. and Grahame, K. M. (2016) Understanding food access in a rural community: an ecological perspective, *Food, Culture and Society*, 19 (1), pp. 171-194.

Rose, G. (2007) *Visual methodologies: an introduction to the interpretation of visual materials*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. London: Sage.

Rosol, M. (2012) Community volunteering as neoliberal strategy? Green space production in Berlin, *Antipode*, 44 (1), pp. 239-257.

Schmelzkopf, K. (1995), Urban community gardens as contested space, *Geographical Review*, 85 (3) pp. 364-381.

Schmid, C. (2008) Henri Lefebvre's theory of the production of space: towards a three-dimensional dialectic in: Goonewardena, K., Kipfer, S., Schmid, C. and Milgrom, R. (eds.) *Space, difference, everyday life: reading Henri Lefebvre*. New York, NY: Routledge, pp. 27-45.

Seidman, I. (2013) *Interviewing as qualitative research: a guide for researchers in education and the social sciences*. 4<sup>th</sup> ed. New York, NY: Teachers College Press.

- Seyfang, G. (2006) Ecological citizenship and sustainable consumption: examining local organic food networks, *Journal of Rural Studies*, 22, pp. 383-395.
- Singh, A. (2015) Leaning into the ambiguity of liberation: phenomenology for social justice, in: Johnson, C. W. and Parry D. C. (eds.) *Fostering social justice through qualitative research: a methodological guide*. Walnut Creek, CA: Left Coast Press, inc., pp. 101-127.
- Smith, F. L. (2012) *Church community gardens: case studies from Durham, NC*. NEM dissertation, North Carolina: Duke University.
- Smith, J. A., Flowers, P. and Larkin, M. (2012) *Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis: theory, method and research*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. London: Sage Publications.
- Strand, K., Maruillo, S., Cutforth, N., Stoecker, R. and Donohue, P. (2003) *Community-based research and higher education: principles and practices*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Strong, R. (2011) Interactions among instructional efficacy, motivational orientations and adult characteristics on Master Gardener tenure, *Journal of Agricultural Education*, 52 (4), pp. 65-75.
- Strunk, C. and Richardson, M. (2017) Cultivating belonging: refugees, urban gardens, and placemaking in the Midwest, U.S.A., *Social and Cultural Geography*, 20 (6), pp. 826-848.
- Sunstein, B. and Chiseri-Strater, E. (2012) *Fieldworking: reading and writing research*. Boston, MA: Bedford/St. Martins.
- Tammivaara, J. and Enright, S. D. (1986) On eliciting information: dialogues with child informants, *Anthropology & Education Quarterly*, 17 (4), pp. 218-238.
- Thupayagale-Tshweneagae, G. and Mokomane, Z. (2012) Needs of South African adolescents orphaned by AIDS: evidence from photography and photo-elicitation, *International Nursing Review*, 60, pp. 88-95.
- Tinker, P. (2013) *Using photographs in social and historical research*. Los Angeles, CA: Sage.
- Torrence, W. A., Phillips, D. S. and Guidry, J. J. (2005) The assessment of rural African-American churches' capacity to promote health prevention activities, *Journal of Health Education*, 36 (3), pp. 161-165.
- Turner, B. (2011) Embodied connections: sustainability, food systems and community gardens, *Local Environment*, 16 (6), pp. 509-522.

Turner, B., Henryks, J. and Pearson, D. (2011) Community gardens: sustainability, health and inclusion in the city, *Local Environment*, 16 (6), pp. 489-492.

United States Department of Agriculture (2009) Access to affordable and nutritious food: measuring and understanding food deserts and their consequences. Available from <https://naldc.nal.usda.gov/download/55310/PDF> [Accessed 14 March 2019].

US Department of Health and Human Services Office for Human Research Protection (OHRP) (2016) *Informed Consent Tips*. Available from: <https://www.hhs.gov/ohrp/regulations-and-policy/guidance/informed-consent-tips/index.html> [Accessed 1 June 2018].

Vagle, M. D. (2018) *Crafting phenomenological research*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. New York, NY: Routledge.

van Manen, M. (1997) *Researching lived experience: human science for an action sensitive pedagogy*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Oxon: Routledge.

Vergunst, J. (2010) Rhythms of walking: history and presence in a city street, *Space and Culture*, 13(4), pp. 376–388.

Waliczek, T. M. and Zajicek, J. M. (1999) School gardening: improving environmental attitudes of children through hands-on learning, *Journal of Environmental Horticulture*, 17 (4), pp. 180–184.

Wallbank, S. and Wonnacott, J. (2015) The integrated model of restorative supervision for use with safeguarding. *Community Practitioner*, (May), pp. 41-45.

Walter, P. (2013) Theorising community gardens as pedagogical sites in the food movement, *Environmental Education Research*, 19 (4), pp. 521-539.

Warren-White, N., Moorman, P., Dunn, M. J., Mitchell, C. S., Fisher, A. and Walter, P. (2009) Theorising community gardens as pedagogical sites in the food movement, *Environmental Education Research*, 19 (4), pp. 521-539.

Westerberg, A. (2014) Leaving, changing, managing: visions of a school on the move, in: Burke, C., Grosvenor, I. and Norlin, B. (eds.) *Engaging with educational spaces: visualizing spaces of teaching and learning*. Umea: Umea University, pp. 30-40. Available from: <http://umu.diva-portal.org/> [Accessed 30 July 2018].

Westmacott, R. (1993) The gardens of African Americans in the Rural South, in: Hunt, J., D. and Wolschke-Bulmahn, J. (ed.) *The vernacular garden: Dumbarton Oaks colloquia on the history of landscape architecture*. Washington, DC: Dumbarton Oaks trustees for Harvard University, pp. 77-105.



White, M. M. (2018) *Freedom farmers: agricultural resistance the black freedom movement*. Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press.

Whitley, S. (2013) Changing times in rural America: food assistance and food insecurity in food deserts, *Journal of Family Social Work*, 16, pp. 36-52.

Wiles, R., Prosser, J., Bagnoli, A., Clark, A., Davies, K., Holland, S., Renold, E. (2008) Visual ethics: ethical issues in visual research, *Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) National Centre for Research Methods Review Paper*. Available from: <http://eprints.ncrm.ac.uk/421/1/MethodsReviewPaperNCRM-011.pdf> [Accessed August 2nd 2018].

Wiles, R., Clark, A. and Prosser, J. (2011) Visual research ethics at the crossroads, in: Margolis, E. and Pauwels, L. (eds.) *The sage handbook of visual research methods*. London: Sage, 685-706.

Williams, D. and Brown, J. (2012) *Learning gardens and sustainability education: bringing life to schools and schools to life*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Williamson, W. and Kautz, D. D. (2009) "Let's get moving, let's get praising": promoting health and hope in an African American church, *ABNF Journal*, Fall, pp. 102-105.

Winne, M. (2017) *38th Annual American community gardening association conference, keynote address*. Available from: <http://www.markwinne.com/the-most-important-word-in-community-gardening-is-not-gardening/> [Accessed 09 December 2017].

Winton, A. (2016). Using Photography as a creative, collaborative research tool, *The Qualitative Report*, 21 (2), pp. 428-449.

Wright, S. D. and Wadsworth, A. M. (2014) Gray and green revisited: a multidisciplinary perspective of gardens, gardening, and the aging process, *Journal of Aging Research*, (March), pp. 1-13.

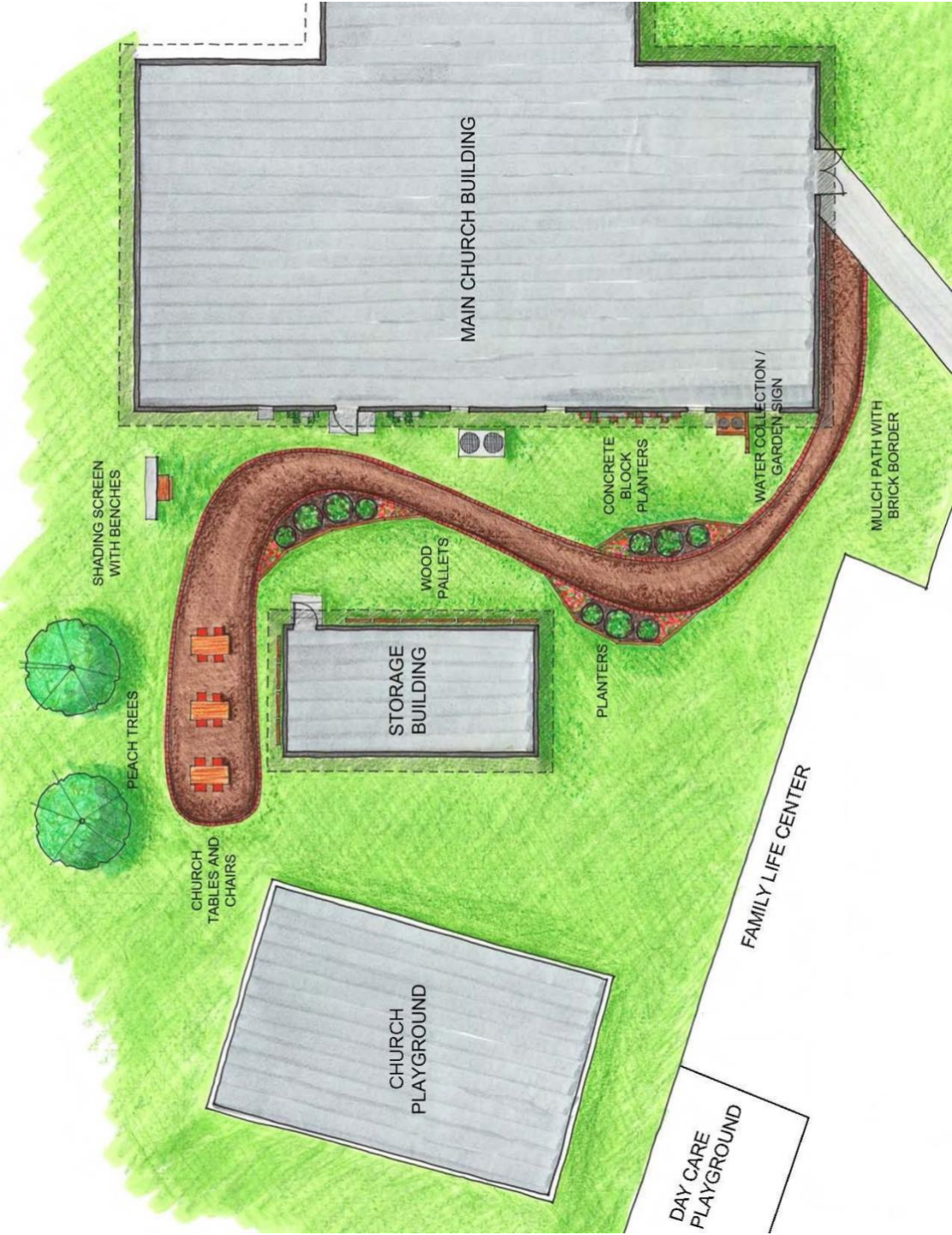
Zartler, U. and Richter, R. (2014) Family through the lens: photo interviews with children and sensitive aspects of family life, *Children and Society*, 28 (1), pp. 42-54.

## APPENDIX 1: Chart showing the main phases of the gardens during the Youth4Health project

Phase & Date	Garden Type	Description	Activities	Key Turning Point
<b>PHASE I</b>				
<b>May 2012– Aug. 2012</b>	Demonstration Garden for summer camp at Hope Baptist	8 grow -tubs to Hope Baptist	Spring planting in readiness for the summer camp  Used during the summer camp for gardening demonstrations  A picking garden for the summer camp children (from the participating churches non-church members) to choose their cooking ingredients	Director leaves after summer camp. Project enters a period of transition
<b>PHASE II</b>				
<b>Feb 2013– Oct. 2014</b>	Grow-tub gardens at Hope and Grace Baptist churches	More grow-tubs delivered to Hope Baptist  8 grow -tubs to Grace Baptist	Spring garden planting at both sites  Quarterly “round up” meetings through the year at either site with garden themed or garden placed activities  Summer camp at Hope Baptist – grow-tub garden used for garden-themed activities, demonstrations and cooking ingredients  Fall garden planting at both sites	New director joins Youth4Health more emphasis on the role of the gardens
<b>PHASE III</b>				
<b>March–Oct. 2014 March–Oct. 2015</b>	May 2014 Hope Baptist garden redesigned  May 2015 Grace Baptist garden redesigned	Gardens formed around a central pathway between church kitchen, a storage building and the Family Life Center. Hope requested that their commemorative bricks be included in the design and they were used as to line the outer edge of the mulch pathway  Garden set off a pathway from the church building. Grace requested more elements of accessibility and shade into their garden design, so standing raised beds and shaded seating was incorporated into the design of the beds	2014 Spring garden planting at Grace Baptist only. Hope Baptist gardening suspended until after the architects had finished working in the garden  Quarterly “round up” meetings through the year at both sites with garden themed activities, but the focus was on home planting while the gardens were being designed  Summer camp at university, on-campus garden used for garden themed activities  Fall garden planting at both sites  2015 Spring garden planting at Hope Baptist only Grace Baptist gardening suspended until after the architect students had finished working in the garden  Quarterly “round up” meetings at both sites with garden themed or garden placed activities	Emphasis in the last year of the project was on the sustainability of the Youth4Health project gardens and leaving a garden structure in place for both partnership sites

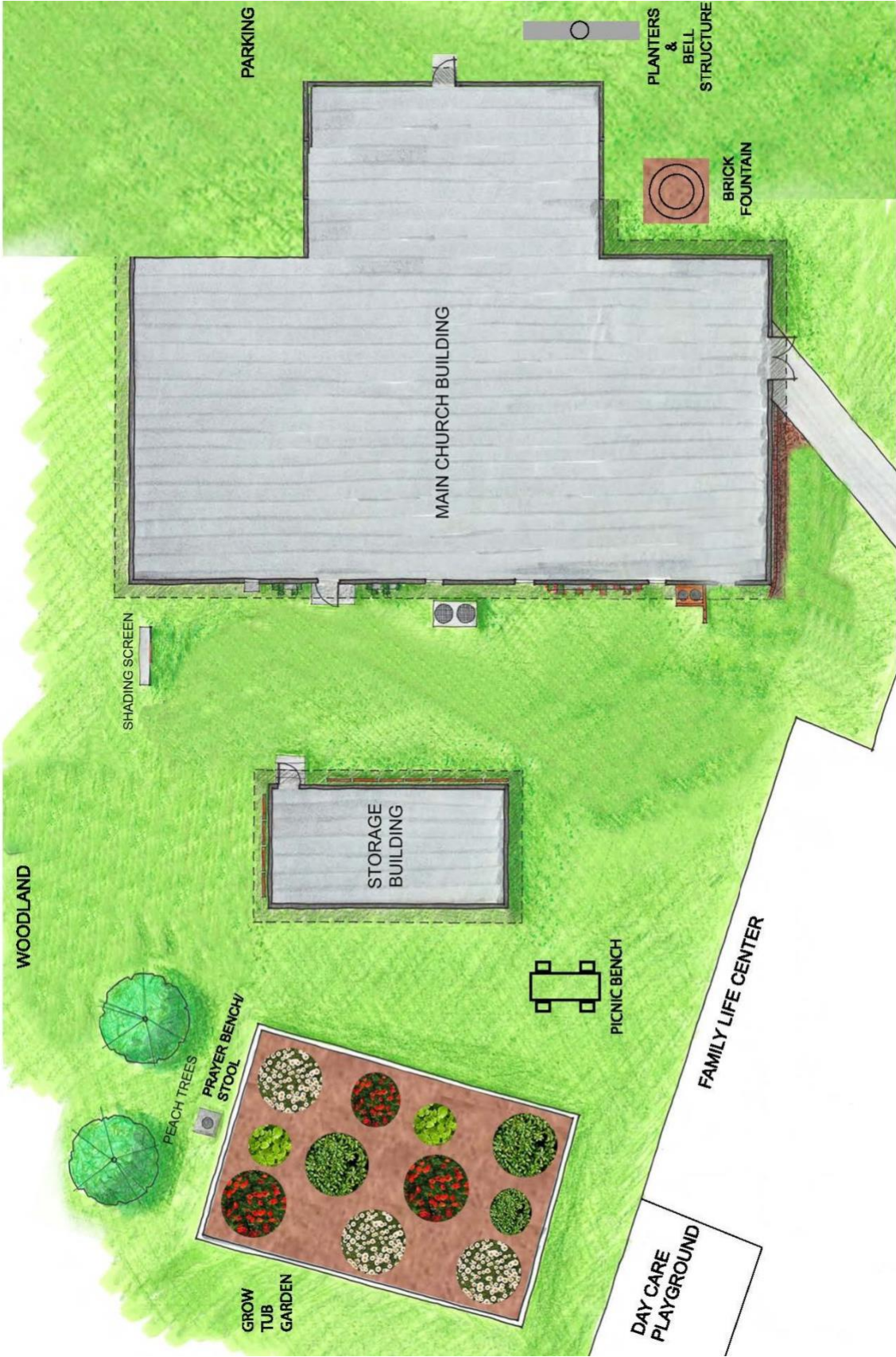
**APPENDIX 2: Hope Baptist Church garden**

**A. Hope Baptist Church garden: original design**

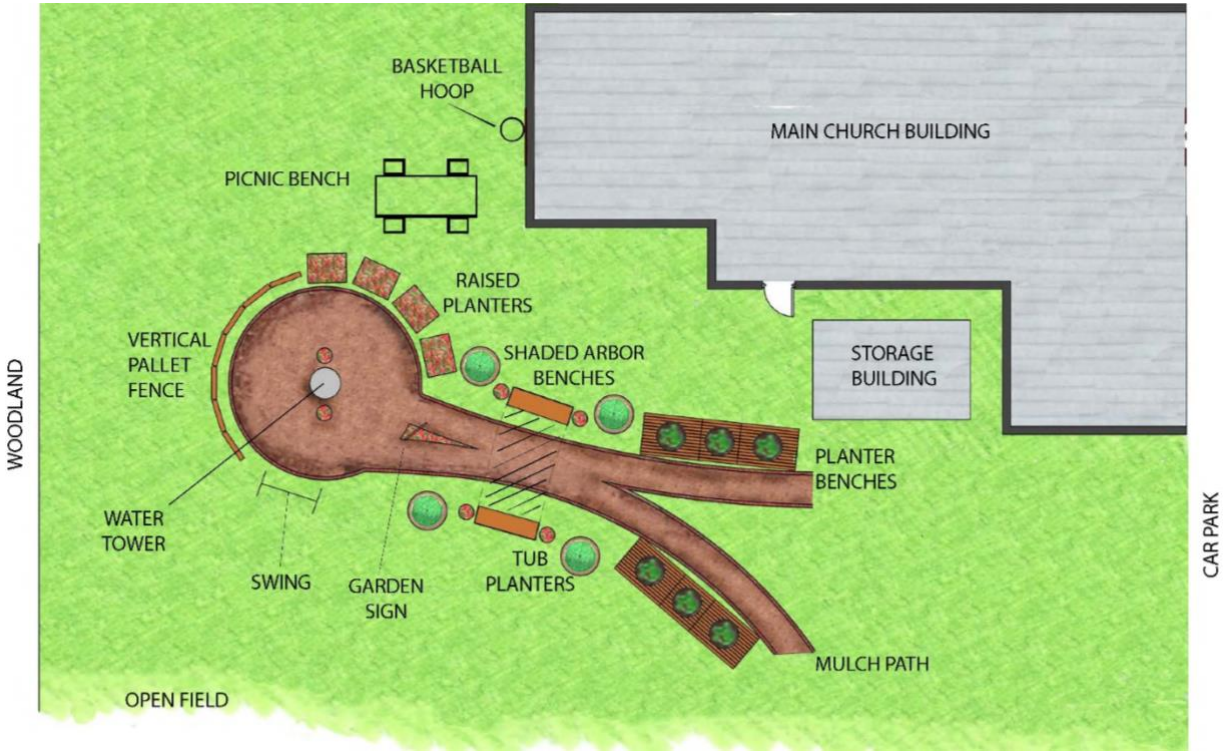




B. Hope Baptist Church garden after the move



**APPENDIX 3: Grace Baptist Church garden**



## APPENDIX 4: LSBU approval letter 2017



E-mail: [ethics@lsbu.ac.uk](mailto:ethics@lsbu.ac.uk)  
UEP RefNo: **UEP0117**

17<sup>th</sup> May 2017

Dear Isabel Lamptey,

**RE: 'How do your gardens grow? Unearthing meanings in African American church gardens'**

Thank you for submitting this proposal for review.

I am writing to inform you that ethics approval has been given by the LSBU University Ethics Panel.

I wish you every success with your research.

Yours sincerely,

Ms. O. Imonioro  
Compliance and Systems Manager – on behalf the LSBU University Ethics Panel

cc:  
Prof Shushma Patel, Chair, LSBU University Ethics Panel



## APPENDIX 5: LA Tech approval letter 2017



# LOUISIANA TECH UNIVERSITY

## MEMORANDUM

OFFICE OF UNIVERSITY RESEARCH

TO: Ms. Isabel Lamptey  
FROM: Dr. Stan Napper, Vice President Research & Development  
SUBJECT: HUMAN USE COMMITTEE REVIEW  
DATE: March 29, 2017

In order to facilitate your project, an EXPEDITED REVIEW has been done for your proposed study entitled:

**"How Do Your Gardens Grow? Unearthing Meanings in African American Church Gardens"**

HUC 17-077

The proposed study's revised procedures were found to provide reasonable and adequate safeguards against possible risks involving human subjects. The information to be collected may be personal in nature or implication. Therefore, diligent care needs to be taken to protect the privacy of the participants and to assure that the data are kept confidential. Informed consent is a critical part of the research process. The subjects must be informed that their participation is voluntary. It is important that consent materials be presented in a language understandable to every participant. If you have participants in your study whose first language is not English, be sure that informed consent materials are adequately explained or translated. Since your reviewed project appears to do no damage to the participants, the Human Use Committee grants approval of the involvement of human subjects as outlined.

Projects should be renewed annually. *This approval was finalized on March 29, 2017 and this project will need to receive a continuation review by the IRB if the project, including data analysis, continues beyond March 29, 2018.* Any discrepancies in procedure or changes that have been made including approved changes should be noted in the review application. Projects involving NIH funds require annual education training to be documented. For more information regarding this, contact the Office of University Research.

You are requested to maintain written records of your procedures, data collected, and subjects involved. These records will need to be available upon request during the conduct of the study and retained by the university for three years after the conclusion of the study. If changes occur in recruiting of subjects, informed consent process or in your research protocol, or if unanticipated problems should arise it is the Researchers responsibility to notify the Office of Research or IRB in writing. The project should be discontinued until modifications can be reviewed and approved.

Please be aware that you are responsible for reporting any adverse events or unanticipated problems.

If you have any questions, please contact Dr. Mary Livingston at:

A MEMBER OF THE UNIVERSITY OF LOUISIANA SYSTEM

## APPENDIX 6: Letter / email church pastor

I. Lamptey

Reference Number: UEP0117

---

How do your gardens grow? Unearthing meanings in African American church gardens

---

Dear Pastor ...

My name is Isabel Lamptey and I am an instructor at Louisiana Tech University. You may remember me as the garden educator during the Youth4Health project that was carried out at (name of church) from 2012-2015 with (name of Youth4Health director) and (name of church contact member).

I am currently studying for a doctorate in education with a special focus in sustainability, equality and diversity at London South Bank University, UK. For my thesis, I am considering the significance of garden outreach projects to African American churches such as (name of church). I am trying to learn about what the gardens have come to mean to the members of the church and how they have been received within this setting.

As this is an off-shoot of the Youth4Health project mentioned above, I am writing to seek permission from you to conduct up to ten interviews or more with church members both youth and adults. Once your permission has been granted, I will contact (name of youth minister or church contact) to recruit prospective participants. The interviews will take place in the church gardens at a time that is convenient to the interviewees and when the weather is nice enough to be outside.

I would be happy to talk to you further about this project or to answer any questions that you may have. Please could you contact me at the email or phone number below.

Thank you for your time and assistance with this matter.  
I look forward to hearing from you soon,

Isabel Lamptey



## APPENDIX 7: General recruiting announcement to church members

How do your gardens grow? Unearthing meanings in African American church gardens

I. Lamptey Reference Number: UEP0117

---

[Pick the date]

Hello Everyone,  
It is good to be back at (name of church).

My name is Isabel Lamptey, and I am an instructor at Louisiana Tech University. You may remember me as the garden educator during the Youth4Health project that was carried out at (name of church) from 2012-2015 with (name of Youth4Health director) and (name of church contact member).

I am currently studying for a doctorate in education at London South Bank University, UK. For my thesis, I am considering the significance of garden outreach projects to African American communities such as (name of church). I am trying to learn about what the gardens have come to mean to the members of the church and how they have been received within this setting.

Pastor (name) has given permission for this research to be carried out at (name of church), and I am hoping to recruit church members, both children and adults who would be interested in being interviewed about the church garden. As this is an off-shoot of the Youth4Health project, it would be great to have people who were part of the project as well as any other church members who would be willing to take part in the study. I would really value your opinions and I think I could learn a lot from your feedback.

The interviews would take place in the garden and you would be asked to tell me more about the space and how it is used.

I have some more information about the study, which I will hand out and we can talk about it now. (*Hand out Participant Information Sheet and talk about its contents.*)

If there is anyone who would like to join this study then please fill in the contact information list so that I can set up an interview time and date.

I would be happy to talk about this project further or to speak with you by phone to answer any questions that you may have. I will leave my details on a recruitment letter that I will post on the church notice board.

Thank you for your time and any help that you can give me with this matter. I look forward to hearing from you soon.

## APPENDIX 8: General recruiting announcement to church notice board

Lamptey  
UEP0117

Reference Number:

How do your gardens grow? Unearthing meanings in African American church gardens

---

[Pick the date]

Dear (Church Members)

My name is Isabel Lamptey, and I am an instructor at Louisiana Tech University.

You may remember me as the garden educator during the Youth4Health project that was carried out at (name of church) from 2012-2015 with (name of Youth4Health director) and (name of church contact member).

I am currently studying for a doctorate in education at London South Bank University, UK. For my thesis, I am considering the significance of garden outreach projects to African American churches such as (name of church). I am trying to learn about what the gardens have come to mean to the members of the church and how they have been received within this setting.

Pastor (name) has given permission for this research to be carried out at (name of church), and I am hoping to recruit church members, both children and adults, who would be interested in being interviewed about the church garden.

I would be happy to stop by at the church to talk to you further about this project or to speak with you by phone to answer any questions that you may have. Please could you contact me at the email or phone number below.

Thank you for your time and any help that you can give me with this matter. I look forward to hearing from you soon,

Isabel Lamptey

## APPENDIX 9: Information sheet for adult participants

Lamptey

Reference Number: UEP0117

How do your gardens grow? Unearthing meanings in African American church gardens

---



### INFORMATION SHEET FOR PARTICIPANTS

**Name of Research Project:** How does your Garden Grow? Unearthing meanings of [CHURCH NAME] Garden

Dear [CHURCH NAME] member:

With this letter you are invited to take part in a research study about your church garden. *Before you decide whether or not to take part, it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully.*

#### **Who is organizing the study?**

My name is Isabel Lamptey, and I am an instructor at Louisiana Tech University. You may remember me as the garden educator during the Youth4Health project that was carried out at (name of church) from 2012-2015 with (name of Youth4Health director) and (name of church contact member). I am currently studying for my doctorate in education at London South Bank University in the UK. For my thesis, I am considering the significance of garden outreach projects to African American churches such as (name of church). This work is part of my research for my thesis.

**What is the purpose of the study?** I am interested in learning about how the gardens that were built during the Youth4Health project have become part of the churches in which they are set and the different meanings they hold for the members of this church community.

#### **Why have I been chosen?**

As a representative of [NAME OF CHURCH] and someone who has been involved in the Youth4Health garden project, your opinions about the garden are very important to me so that I can learn more about how significant the garden has become to the church community.

I am looking for people from the church, both youth and adults, who would be interested in sharing with me their opinions about the garden.

**Do I have to do this?**

*It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you do decide to take part, you will be given this information sheet to keep and be asked to sign a consent form. If you decide to take part, you are still free to withdraw at any time and without giving a reason. You can simply let me know verbally or in writing that you are no longer able to take part, and your details will be withdrawn from the study without any questions being asked.*

**What will I have to do?**

- Provide me with your contact details so that I can contact you to set up a good time for the interview.
- Using these contact details, I will contact you to set up an interview date and time that is convenient for you.
- On the day of the interview, shortly before the interview takes place, we will go over the Research Project Consent form and you can sign it then. You are welcome to take a copy of this with you today to look at and sign it in advance. If you are a child or youth, your parents or guardians will be asked to sign the form as well. They can do so before the interview takes place.
- During the interview, adults will have a microphone attached to you, and then you will be asked to take me on a walk around the church garden. As we walk, you will be invited to tell me about the garden. You will also be given a digital camera to use and if you want to, you can take photographs of items of interest as we go along.
- Children, you will be put into small groups and will be interviewed together whilst doing an activity in the garden. You will be given a camera, and if you want to, you can take photographs of interesting things in the garden.
- The interview should last from 40 minutes to 1 hour and will take place in the church garden.
- The interview will be recorded and later written out into text. You will be offered a copy of the interview once it has been written out in this way. You will also be shown your photos and asked to comment on them.
- Once data analysis has occurred, it will not be possible to withdraw from the study.

**What are the possible risks?**

- As we will be walking outside, there is a risk of uneven surfaces and poor weather, so we will make sure that we go at a pace that suits you and on a day and at a time when we have good weather.
- If you are unable to go outside for the interview, then we can arrange to do this at an alternative location of your choice.
- As we will be out in the open, we may meet others on our walk. As this is your interview time, we will allow them to pass by before we continue our interview.

- If you are uncomfortable at any time during the interview, then we can take a break or stop all together.

**What are the possible benefits?**

- Your opinion about the garden is very important to me and will help me learn more about the meanings that gardens hold in a setting like [Name of Church].
- This is a great opportunity to provide me with feedback about the gardens and the kind of impact that they have had on the church.
- This information can help when we are creating garden projects in the future.

***What about data collection and confidentiality?***

Your privacy and anonymity will be ensured in the collection, storage and publication of research material in the following ways:

- All the information collected about you and other participants will be kept strictly confidential (subject to legal limitations) and will remain anonymous.
- Data generated by the study will be retained in accordance with the University's Code of Practice. All data generated in the course of the research must be kept securely in paper or electronic form for a period of 10 years after the completion of the research project.
- Your personal information will not be passed on to anyone else, or used outside of researching or discussing this thesis project.

**How will the interview be used?**

Your opinions will be used as part of my research study as well as in any presentations that might be made about the gardens.

In the study and in any presentations made about the study all names and locations will be changed so that you cannot be identified by your comments.

***What will happen to the results of the research study after the interview?***

- Once the study has been completed, I will use the results to look for themes to see the different ways in which people view the garden.
- I will use these results in my doctoral thesis.
- The results will be published in my thesis and can be obtained at LSBU's library website.

***Who has reviewed the study?***

- This research has been approved by London South Bank University.
- However, if you have any concerns about the way in which the study has been conducted, then you should contact the School of Law and Social Sciences Ethics Coordinator.

**Now what?**

If you wish to accept this invitation, please fill out your contact information on the sheet provided or contact me by phone or email. If you are a parent or guardian, sign the consent form for your child.

Thank you for taking the time to consider this study; please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions.

Isabel Lamptey

Date

Master Gardener

Researcher Youth4Health Project

## APPENDIX 10: Adult consent form

I. Lamptey

Reference Number: UEP0117

How Do Your Gardens Grow? Unearthing Meanings in African American Church Gardens

Consent Form



### Research Project Adult Consent Form

Taking part (please check the box that applies)	Yes	No
I confirm that I have read and understood the information sheet and that <b>Isabel Lamptey</b> has explained the above study. I have had the opportunity to ask questions.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time, without providing a reason.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I agree to take part in the above study.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Use of my information (please check the box that applies)	Yes	No
I understand my personal details such as phone number and address will not be revealed to people outside the project.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I agree to the interview being audio recorded.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I agree to taking photographs of items of interest (not people) in the garden.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I agree for the data I provide to be stored (after it has been anonymised and names removed) in a specialist data centre and I understand it may be used for future research.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I understand that my words may be quoted in publications, reports, posters, web pages, and other research outputs.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I would like my real name to be used in the above.		
I agree to the use of anonymised quotes in publications.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I understand that my photographs may be described, reproduced and shown in publications, reports, posters, web pages, and other research outputs.		

I agree to the use and reproduction of my photographs in publications.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I agree to assign the copyright I hold in any materials related to this project, including photographs, to <b>Isabel Lamptey</b> .	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

\_\_\_\_\_

Name of participant                      Signature                      Date

ISABEL LAMPTEY \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Researcher                      Signature                      Date

**Project contact details for further information:**

Project Supervisor/ Head of Division name:

Email address:



**APPENDIX 11: Adult contact information sheet**

Lamptey

Reference Number: UEP0117

How do your gardens grow? Unearthing meanings in African American church gardens

---

**[Name of Church] Prospective Adult Participant Contact Information**

*Please fill in your details below so that I can arrange with you an interview date and time.*

**Name (print)** \_\_\_\_\_

**Telephone** \_\_\_\_\_

**Email** \_\_\_\_\_

## APPENDIX 12: Email accompanying transcripts

Lamptey

Reference Number: UEP0117

How do your gardens grow? Unearthing meanings in African American church gardens

---

### Email Accompanying Transcripts

Dear [Participant Name],

Thank you for walking and talking me around the garden at [Church Name] on [date].

I have now finished typing out our interview and am attaching in this email a copy of the transcript and photographs for you to read and look through. If you wish to make any changes, then please let me know by [date]. Please note that from this point, all names and identifying details will be made anonymous. If you wish to make any changes, or feel the need to withdraw from the study, then please let me know by [date].

If you are happy with what has been written, then you do not need to contact me and can keep the transcript as a memory of our walk.

Best wishes,  
Isabel Lamptey

## APPENDIX 13: Outline of agenda for talk to children

I. Lamptey

Reference Number: UEP0117

### Outline of Recruiting Talk to Children ages 9-18

Hi Everyone,  
My name is Isabel. It's nice to see so many familiar faces. Do any of you remember me?

I'm really excited to be back at [Name of Church].

Can you remember what we did the last time I was here?  
Yes, we worked on the garden outside. I had a lot of fun then, and now I've come back to ask for your help.

I am trying to learn more about gardens in African American churches like the one here at [Name of Church], and I'd like to talk to as many people as possible about the garden, including you kids. So, I 'm here to see if any of you would be interested in telling me about your church garden.

Let me tell you some more about my project—

I'm going to be here at [Name of Church] in the coming weeks, and over this time, I hope to put you in small groups to do a garden activity outside. As we do our activity, I will ask you some questions, and I will record your answers using my tape recorder.

Everyone in your group will also get the chance to take pictures of things in the garden that are interesting interest to them. Once the pictures have been printed, you will be able to look at your pictures and tell me about them.

What do you think? Does anyone have any questions or comments?

If you are interested, you must get your parents or guardians' permission. I have here an information pack, which explains more about my project.  
*[Hold up the information pack]*

You can take one, and inside there is a letter for you, the children, to read with your parents/guardians; it tells you more about my study *[Hold up the **Recruiting Letter to Children**—take it closer to the children so that they can see and discuss content].*

Also, inside is this letter *[Hold up **Letter to Parents/Guardians**—take it closer so that children can see].* Can anyone see what it says? Yes, it's a letter to your parents/guardians, explaining to them about this project.

Remember, that nobody has to do this if you don't want to. But, if you do want to take part in the group activity, you have to get permission from your parents/guardians. They must sign this form [*Hold up **Consent Form for Children***]. Once you have read this with your parents, and only if you want to be in my study and you have their permission, then you can sign it too. There are two copies of this form. You and your parents/guardians need to sign both. I will be back at [Name of Church] to collect the forms next week.

Are there any questions that I can answer? If you can't think of anything now, then you can ask me a question at any time. I'd be happy to answer anything that you'd want to know.

Who would like a pack? [*Hand out packs*]

Thanks for listening, and I look forward to seeing some of you again.

## APPENDIX 14: Recruiting letter to children

Lamptey

Reference Number: UEP0117

How do your gardens grow? Unearthing meanings in African American church gardens

---

### Recruiting Letter for Children

Dear Children,

My name is Isabel Lamptey. I was the garden teacher during the Youth4Health project at your church 2 years ago. I am trying to learn more about gardens in African American churches, and I need your help. I want to find out about how you and the other children from the church use and think about your church garden. Your answers will help me to get ideas for other children's gardens.

**Are you interested in answering some questions about your garden?** If so, then you can be in my study! Here is some information about it:

**If you take part, what will you have to do?**



You and a small group of other children from the church will show me your garden. We will do some light garden tasks at the raised beds together. As we do these tasks, you will be asked some questions about the garden. I will record your answers as you speak. This will take about 40 minutes.



I will give you a camera to use and you can take pictures of interesting things in the garden. Once the pictures have been printed, you will get the chance to see them and to talk about them. I will record this discussion too. This will take about 15 minutes.



Because we will be outdoors, we will need to be careful that you don't trip or fall. If the weather is hot, we will also need to stay cool – you will get some water to drink and if you feel uncomfortable, then you can find some shade or go inside. You will also be given some garden gloves to wear. There will be some snacks and another drink after we have finished.

## **Here are some more answers to questions that you may have:**

### **Does your name have to be on my answers?**

I will record your answers, but your actual name won't be used on any of the information that I write. I will keep it private so that anyone that reads my report, like other garden teachers, will not know that I am talking about you.

### **What if you don't want to answer a question?**

If you don't want to answer a question, then you don't have to. You will also be able to think about any question before you answer it.

### **Do you have to do this?**

No. You don't need to take part in the study, and if you do take part, you can always change your mind later. It's OK for you to stop at any time.

### **If you want to do this, then what do you do next?**

Your parents or guardians have to say that it's OK for you to be in this study. Please take this letter and the packet that I give you home with you, and show it to them. Read it over together and then ask your parents or guardians to sign it. You will need to sign it too. I will be back at \_\_\_ (name of church) next week to collect the forms. Please bring them with you then.

### **What if your parents/guardians have questions?**

My telephone number is xxx-xxx-xxxx. Your parents or guardians can call me any time.

Thank you for your help,  
Isabel Lamptey



## APPENDIX 15: Recruiting letter to parents and guardians

Lamptey

Reference Number: UEP0117

How do your gardens grow? Unearthing meanings in African American church gardens

---

[Pick the date]

Dear Parents or Guardians,

I am sending this letter along with your child as I am requesting permission for him/her to take part in a research study.

My name is Isabel Lamptey, and I am an instructor at Louisiana Tech University.

You may remember me as the garden educator during the Youth4Health project that was carried out at (name of church) from 2012-2015 with (name of Youth4Health director) and (name of church contact member).

I am currently studying for a doctorate in education at London South Bank University, UK. For my thesis, I am considering the significance of garden outreach projects to African American churches such as (name of church). I am trying to learn about what the gardens have come to mean to the members of the church and how they have been received within this setting.

Pastor (name) has given permission for this research to be carried out at (name of church), and as this is an off-shoot of the Youth4Health project, I am writing to recruit church members (both youth and adults) who would be interested in being interviewed about the church garden. Your daughter/son has expressed an interest in this, and with your permission, I would hope to interview your child with a small group of other children for 40 minutes to 1 hour in the garden. We will do a short garden activity and they can talk about the garden during this time on a day and time that we can all agree upon.

Your child has been given a Participant Information Sheet to read over with you. This contains further details about the study and it explains issues about protecting his or her confidentiality and the right to withdraw from the study at any time. Once you have read this together, there is also a consent form that you will be asked to read and sign. Your child will be asked to bring this with him or her on the day of the interview.

I would be happy to stop by at the church to talk to you further about this project or to answer any questions that you may have. Please feel free to contact me at the email or phone number below.

Thank you for your time and any help that you can give me with this matter. I look forward to hearing from you soon.

**APPENDIX 16: Children, parents, and guardians contact information sheet**

Lamptey  
UEP0117

Reference Number:

How do your gardens grow? Unearthing meanings in African American church gardens

---

**[Name of Church] Prospective Child Participant Contact Information**

*Please fill in your details below so that I can arrange an interview date and time for your child.*

**Name of Child (print)** \_\_\_\_\_

**Age of Child** \_\_\_\_\_

**Name of Parent/Guardian (print)** \_\_\_\_\_

**Telephone of Parent/Guardian** \_\_\_\_\_

**Email of Parent/Guardian** \_\_\_\_\_



## APPENDIX 17: Child consent form

I. Lamptey Ethics Application Form

Reference Number: UEP0117

How Do Your Gardens Grow? Unearthing Meanings in African American Church Gardens

Consent Form



### Research Project Child Consent Form

Taking part (please check the box that applies)	Yes	No
I have read the information sheet with my parents/ guardians, and I understand it. <b>Isabel Lamptey</b> has explained the above study. I have had the opportunity to ask questions.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I understand that I do not have to do this, and that I am free to stop at any time, without giving a reason.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I agree to take part in the above study.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Use of my information (please check the box that applies)	Yes	No
I understand my personal details such as my name, phone number and address will not be given to anyone not connected to the project.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I agree to the interview being recorded with a tape recorder.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I agree to taking photographs of interesting things in in the garden (not people).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I agree for the data I provide to be stored (after all names and identifying information have been removed) in a special data centre and I understand it may be used for future research.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I understand that my words may be used in publications, reports, posters, web pages, and other research outputs.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I agree to the use of my words in publications and understand that my real name will not be used – it will be made anonymous.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

I understand that my photographs may be described, reproduced and shown in publications, reports, posters, web pages, and other research outputs.		
I agree to the use and reproduction of my photographs in publications.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I agree to assign the copyright I hold in any materials related to this project, including photographs, to <b>Isabel Lamptey</b> .	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
For Parents/Guardians – I have read the above information with my child and agree to allowing him/her to take part in the above study.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of child participant (print)      Signature of child participant      Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of parent/guardian (print)      Signature of parent/guardian      Date

ISABEL LAMPTEY \_\_\_\_\_  
Name of Researcher      Signature      Date

**Project contact details for further information:**  
Project Supervisor/ Head of Division name:

## **APPENDIX 18: Adult subjects consent form**

Lamprey IRB Application—Louisiana Tech University

### **ADULT HUMAN SUBJECTS CONSENT FORM**

**The following is a brief summary of the project in which you are asked to participate. Please read this information before signing the statement below. You must be of legal age or must be co-signed by parent or guardian to participate in this study. Pregnant women are not eligible to participate in this study.**

#### **TITLE OF PROJECT:**

**How Do Your Gardens Grow? Unearthing Meanings in [Name of Church] Garden**

#### **PURPOSE OF STUDY/PROJECT:**

The purpose of this study is to consider the significance of garden outreach projects to African American churches such as [Name of Church]. The research will try to learn how the garden that was built during the Youth4Health project (from 2012-2015) has been received within this setting and the different meanings it may hold for the different members of this church community.

#### **PROCEDURE:**

Once consent forms have been signed, adult participants will be contacted about setting up an interview date and time. During the interview, adults will have a microphone attached to them so that their answers can be tape-recorded. They will be asked to take the interviewer on a walk around the church garden and will be asked questions about the garden. They will also be given a digital camera to take photographs of items of interest that they encounter (not people) along the way. The participants' answers will later be written out into text, which they will be invited to read if they wish. Once the pictures have been uploaded, participants will also be shown their photos and asked to comment on them. This discussion will also be audio recorded. The walking interviews should last from 30 minutes to 1 hour. The photo viewing should last about 10-15 minutes and will take place inside the building.

#### **INSTRUMENTS:**

All data will be recorded and the interviews will be transcribed. The data will then be analyzed using NVivo or a similar coding pattern to identify themes or strands. The photographs will provide a visual representation to enhance the data and will act as artifacts that can be referred to. The findings from the research and the images will be used for discussion as part of a doctoral thesis and in presentations that may be made about community gardening. All names and locations will be changed and made anonymous so that individuals cannot be identified by their comments.

#### **RISKS/ALTERNATIVE TREATMENTS:**

- As the interviews will be conducted outside, there is a risk of uneven surfaces and poor weather, so we will go at a pace that suits the participant and on a day and at a time when we have good weather.
- If the participant is unable to go outside for the interview, then we can arrange to do this at an alternative location of his/her choice.
- There is the chance of encountering others during the walking interviews. They will be allowed to pass by so that the interview can continue out of earshot.

- If the participant is uncomfortable at any time during the interview, then she/he will be offered a break or the interview can stop completely.
- The participant understands that Louisiana Tech is not able to offer financial compensation nor to absorb the costs of medical treatment should he or she be injured as a result of participating in this research.

**BENEFITS/COMPENSATION:**

Feedback from the church members is very important, and it will provide useful details about the kind of impact that the garden has had on the church. This information can help with similar community garden projects in the future. Plants will be provided for the garden and participants will be offered drinks and snacks after the interview.

**AGREEMENT**

I, \_\_\_\_\_, attest with my signature that I have read and understood the following description of the study, "How Do Your Gardens Grow?", and its purposes and methods. I understand that my participation in this research is strictly voluntary and my participation or refusal to participate in this study will not affect my relationship with Louisiana Tech University. Further, I understand that I may withdraw at any time or refuse to answer any questions without penalty. Upon completion of the study, I understand that the results will be freely available to me upon request. I understand that my responses will be confidential, accessible only to the principal investigator, myself, or a legally appointed representative. I also understand that my comments will be made anonymous so that they cannot be attributed to me individually. I have not been requested to waive nor do I waive any of my rights related to participating in this study. I am over 18 years of age, and I am not pregnant.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Adult Participant

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**CONTACT INFORMATION:** The principal experimenter listed below may be reached to answer questions about the research, subjects' rights, or related matters.

**Ms Isabel Lamptey**

**Members of the Human Use Committee of Louisiana Tech University may also be contacted if a problem cannot be discussed with the experimenters:**

## APPENDIX 19: Adult photo permission form

Lampsey IRB Application—Louisiana Tech University

How Does Your Garden Grow? Unearthing Meanings in [Name of Church]  
Garden

### ADULT PHOTO PERMISSION FORM

I, \_\_\_\_\_ agree to taking photographs of items of interest (not people) in the garden. I understand that any location specific images will not be reproduced. I will be using a digital camera that the interviewer will provide for me that I will return at the end of the interview.

I understand that the photographs of items that I take during the interviews may be described, reproduced and shown in publications, reports, posters, web pages, and other research outputs connected to this project. I agree to the use and reproduction of these photographs in publications.

I certify that I have read this information.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

## **APPENDIX 20: Child and youth assent form**

Lamptey IRB Application—Louisiana Tech University

### **How Do Your Gardens Grow? Unearthing Meanings at [Name of Church] Gardens**

#### **CHILDREN'S ASSENT FORM**

My name is Isabel Lamptey. I was the garden teacher during the Youth4Health project at your church 2 years ago. I am doing a study about gardens in African American churches, and I have come back to find out more about your church garden. I want to learn about the different ways that children from the church use and think about the garden and what they mean to you. Your answers will help me to get ideas for other children's gardens. Are you interested in answering some questions about your garden? If so, then you can be in my study. Here is some information about it:

#### **If you take part, what will you have to do?**

- You and a small group of other children from the church will show me your garden and we will do some light garden tasks at the raised beds together. As we do these tasks, you will be asked some questions about the garden. I will record your answers as you speak. This will take about 40 minutes.
- You will also be given a camera and you can take pictures of some interesting things in the garden. Once the pictures have been printed, you will get the chance to see them and to talk about them. I will record this discussion too. This will take about 15 minutes.
- As we will be outside, we will have to be careful that you do not trip or fall. If the weather is hot, we will also need to stay cool – you will get some water to drink, and if you feel uncomfortable, then you can find some shade or go inside. You will also be given some garden gloves to wear. There will be some snacks and another drink after we have finished. Someone from the church will be with us at all times.

#### **Does your name have to be on my answers?**

After I record your answers, I will write them out, but your actual name will not be used on any of the information. I will keep it private so that anyone that reads my report, like other garden teachers, will not know that I am talking about you.

#### **What if you don't want to answer a question?**

If you don't want to answer a question, then you don't have to. You will also be able to think about any question before you answer it.

#### **Do you have to do this?**

No. You do not need to take part in the study, and if you do take part, you can always change your mind later. It's OK for you to stop at any time.

#### **If you want to do this, when what do you do next?**

Your parents or guardians have to say that it's OK for you to be in this study. Please take this, and the packet that I give you, home with you and show it to them.

Read it over together and then ask your parents or guardians to sign it. You will need to sign it too. I will be back at \_\_\_\_ (name of church) next week to collect the forms. Please bring them with you then.

**What if your parents/guardians have questions?**

My telephone number is XXX-XXX-XXXX. Your parents or guardians can call me any time.

-----  
**AGREEMENT**

**I have decided to be in the study, even though I know that I don't have to do it. Isabel Lamptey has answered all my questions.**

\_\_\_\_\_ (Signature of Study Participant) \_\_\_\_\_ (date)

\_\_\_\_\_ (Signature of Researcher) \_\_\_\_\_ (date)

**Members of the Human Use Committee of Louisiana Tech University may also be contacted if a problem cannot be discussed with the experimenter:**

## **APPENDIX 21: Human subjects consent form for parents and guardians**

Lamptey IRB Application—Louisiana Tech University

### **HUMAN SUBJECTS CONSENT FORM: PARENTAL/GUARDIAN CONSENT**

The following is a brief summary of the project in which you are asked to participate. Please read this information before signing the statement below. You must be of legal age or must be co-signed by parent or guardian to participate in this study. Pregnant women are not eligible to participate in this study.

#### **TITLE OF PROJECT:**

**How Do Your Gardens Grow? Unearthing Meanings in [Name of Church] Garden**

#### **PURPOSE OF STUDY/PROJECT:**

The purpose of this study is to consider the significance of garden outreach projects to African American churches such as [Name of Church]. The research will try to learn how the garden that was built during the Youth4Health project (from 2012- 2015) has been received within this setting and the different meanings it may hold for the different members of this church community, including children and youth (ages 9-18).

#### **PROCEDURE:**

I would hope to interview your child with a small group of other children for 40 minutes to 1 hour in the garden. We will do a short garden activity and they can talk about the garden during this time on a day and time that we can all agree upon.

Once the consent forms have been signed by parents and guardians, the children and their parents/guardians will be contacted about setting up an interview date and time. They will also be invited to brainstorm a list of garden tasks that we could work on. On the day of the interviews, children will be put into small age related groups. They will be asked questions about the garden and will be interviewed together whilst doing an activity in the garden. During this time, their answers will be tape-recorded. In addition, the children will be given a disposable camera to take photographs of items of interest that they encounter (not people) along the way. The children's answers will later be written out into text, which they will be invited to read if they wish. Once the pictures have been developed, the children will also be shown their photos and asked to comment on them. This discussion will also be audio recorded. Group interviews should last 30 minutes to 1 hour. The photo viewing should last about 10-15 minutes and will take place inside the building.

#### **INSTRUMENTS:**

All data will be recorded and the interviews will be transcribed. The data will then be analyzed to identify themes or strands. The photographs will provide



a visual representation to enhance the data and will act as artifacts that can be referred to. The findings from the research and the images will be used for discussion as part of a doctoral thesis and in presentations that may be made about community gardening. All names and locations will be changed and made anonymous so that individual children cannot be identified by their comments or location.

#### **RISKS/ALTERNATIVE TREATMENTS:**

- As the interviews will be conducted outside, there is a risk of uneven surfaces and poor weather, so we will go at a pace that suits the children and on a day and at a time when we have good weather.
- Children will be instructed on garden safety and how to handle simple tools
- If your child is uncomfortable at any time during the interview, then she/he will be offered a break or the interview can stop completely. Water and refreshments will be provided
- Children will be instructed to take photographs of items and not one another. Pictures of individuals will be discarded.
- Children will not be asked intrusive questions and will have the option to refuse to answer any question that they are uncomfortable about.
- An adult from the church will be present at all times to help supervise the children.
- If a child is unable to go outside for the interview, then we can arrange to do a garden themed activity inside the building.
- Parents and guardians understand that Louisiana Tech is not able to offer financial compensation nor to absorb the costs of medical treatment should a child be injured as a result of participating in this research.

#### **BENEFITS/COMPENSATION:**

Feedback from all the church members, especially the children, is very important, and it will provide useful details about the kind of impact that the garden has had on the church. This information can help with similar community garden projects in the future. Plants will be provided for the garden and children will be offered drinks and snacks after the interview.

#### **AGREEMENT**

**I, \_\_\_\_\_, attest with my signature that I have read and understood the following description of the study, "How Do Your Gardens Grow?", and its purposes and methods. I understand that my child, \_\_\_\_\_, is participating in this research strictly voluntarily and my child's participation or refusal to participate in this study will not affect my relationship with Louisiana Tech University. Further, I understand that my child may withdraw at any time or refuse to answer any questions without penalty. Upon completion of the study, I understand that the results will be freely available to me upon request. I understand that my child's responses will be confidential, accessible**

**only to the principal investigator, myself, or a legally appointed representative.** I also understand that my child's comments will be made anonymous so that they cannot be attributed to him/her individually. I have not been requested to waive nor do I waive any of my rights related to participating in this study. I am over 18 years of age and I am not pregnant.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Adult Parent or Guardian

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**CONTACT INFORMATION:** The principal experimenter listed below may be reached to answer questions about the research, subjects' rights, or related matters.

**Ms Isabel Lamptey**

**Members of the Human Use Committee of Louisiana Tech University may also be contacted if a problem cannot be discussed with the experimenters:**

**APPENDIX 22: Parents/guardians photo permission form**

Lamprey IRB Application—Louisiana Tech University

How Does Your Garden Grow? Unearthing Meanings in [Name of Church]  
Garden

**PARENT/ GUARDIAN PHOTO PERMISSION FORM**

I, \_\_\_\_\_ agree to my child, \_\_\_\_\_,  
taking photographs of items of interest (not people) in the garden. I  
understand that any location specific images will not be reproduced. S/he  
will be using a disposable camera that the interviewer will provide that will be  
returned at the end of the interview.

I understand that the photographs of items that my child takes during the  
interviews may be described, reproduced and shown in publications, reports,  
posters, web pages, and other research outputs connected to this project. I  
agree to the use and reproduction of these photographs in publications.

I certify that I have read this information with my child.

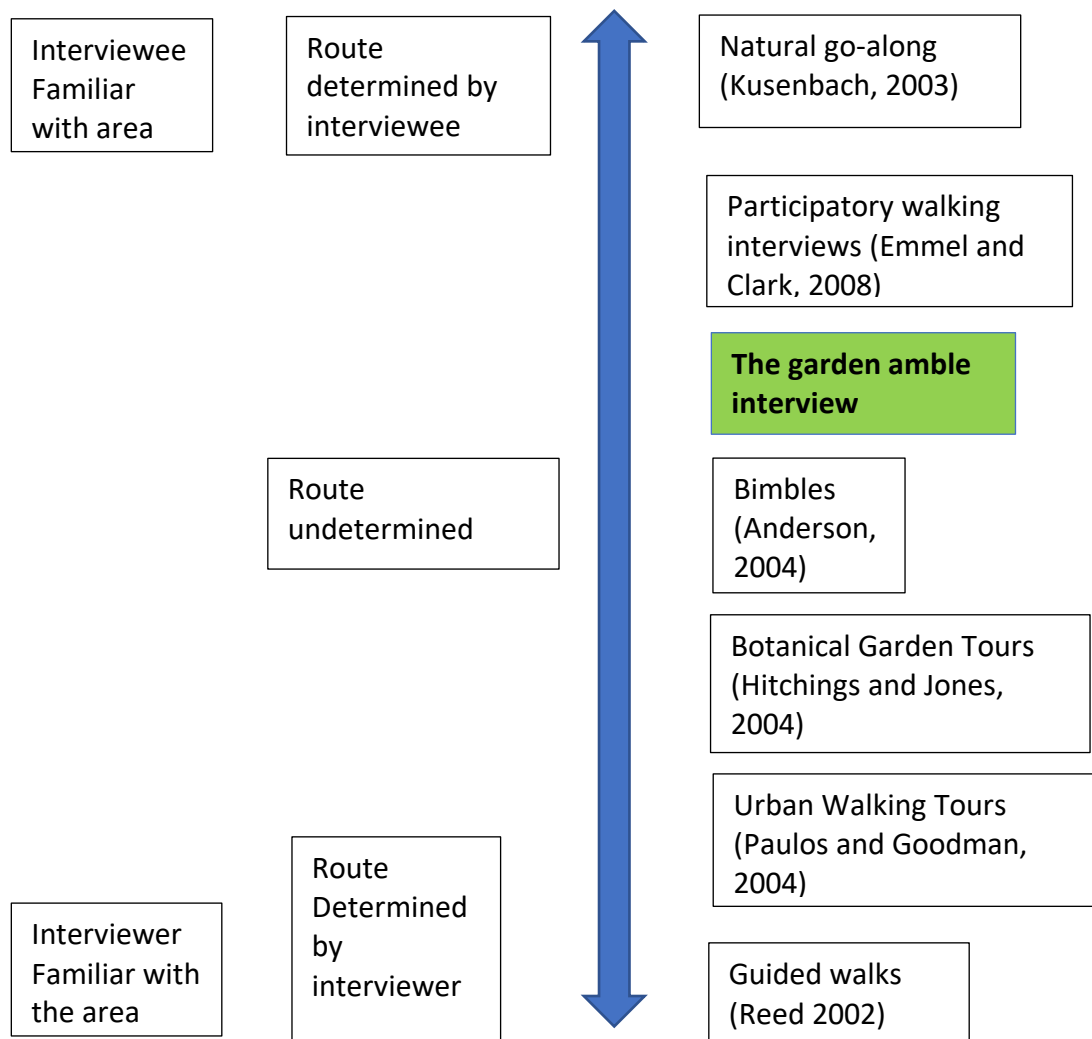
Signature (parent/ guardian) \_\_\_\_\_

Signature (child) \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

## APPENDIX 23: Typology of walking interviews

(Adapted from Evans and Jones, 2011, p. 850)



### Reference

Evans, J. and Jones, P. (2011) The walking interview: methodology, mobility and place, *Applied Geography*, 31, pp. 849-858.

## APPENDIX 24: Adult walking interview protocol

### Adult Walking Interview Protocol

(Adapted from Clark and Emmel, 2010, pp. 3 - 5)

*The script below functioned as an example of the interview process:*

**[Greeting participant and gaining permission to take part in the study, conducted in the meeting room prior to walking interview. Time: about 10-15 minutes].**

(Participant Name), Thank-you for coming today. I am looking forward to our walk. Before we go outside, I would like to go over some important issues around confidentiality and your consent. Let's take a look at the Research Project Consent Form. *(Read over consent form with the participant and make sure that they are in full understanding of its contents. Emphasize the statement from the consent form about voluntary participation and freedom to withdraw at any time.)*

Do you have any questions about this for me? *(Check for understanding and have participant sign the form. If the form is already signed, confirm signature and add my signature.)*

**[Checking the technical aspects of the interview process]** Next, I would like to get you set up with the recording device and the digital camera.

*(Test the recording equipment and familiarize the participant with the digital camera.)*

**[Reminder of the research questions and interview method]** I should like to remind you that the aim of this activity is to learn from you more about what the gardens have come to mean to you here at \_\_\_\_\_ (church name). Shall we go outside? *(Move outside into the garden.)*

**[In the Garden—Participant led exercise 20-40 minutes]** I would like us to walk about the garden together for about 20-40 minutes and for you to tell me about this space. We can go around in whatever way you choose. If we see anything that is of interest to you, then we can stop to look at it. You have the digital camera and you can use it to take a photograph (or photographs) of something that catches your eye. This should be an item and not a person.

**[Support]** If you have any questions, then please feel free to ask them at any time. Remember, if you are uncomfortable or feel the need to finish the interview early, then you just have to let me know. Now, which way would you like to go?

**[Suggested questions to prompt discussions]** Can you tell me something about what has been happening here in the garden? How do you feel it has changed over time? What activities have been going on here? Has anything interesting taken place here? What kind of memories do you have of this space? How often do you find yourself here? What do you like to do here? Who have you been here with? Do you have a favourite spot? Is there anything that you dislike or would like

to change about this garden or how it is used? When you see this space do you have any future thoughts about it?

**[Suggested follow up questions]** Can you tell me more about that? You mentioned \_\_\_\_\_, would you be able to explain that a little more? Could you say something more about that? What do you mean by \_\_\_\_\_? Describe what that is/was like?

**[Stopping to take photographs]** I see you have decided to take a picture of \_\_\_\_\_ (item/artefact), what is interesting about this item? What's significant about it? Can you tell me more about this?

**[At the end of the walking interview- providing and gaining feedback and debriefing]** Well, we have walked and talked a lot today. Thank you for taking the time to show me your garden. This research is about finding out the different meanings that a church garden like [Name of Church Garden] can hold. I was able to learn a lot about this particular garden from talking to you. It seems like this is a place where (offer feedback). It has been really useful for me to see the space through your eyes and to learn what it means to you.

What did you think about this interview process? Is there anything you are unhappy or uncomfortable about? Do you have any questions for me?

**[Checking possibility to follow up]** Once I have listened to the interview, I may need to check on something if it is not clear to me. Is it ok for me to contact you again briefly if I have a question? Also, when I finish writing out this interview, I would like to send it to you to read. At that time, if there is anything that you do not agree with or want to add, then please do so. I will also bring your photographs to the church by (date) and you can take a look at them then. Is that ok with you?

Remember, that if you have any questions or concerns that you can contact me on the contact number given on the Participant Information Sheet and that you are still free to withdraw from this study even though we have completed our interview.

**[Finish the interview]** Right, shall we head back indoors? Which way would you like to go?

*(Walk back inside the building, collect camera and disconnect recording equipment)*

Reference

Clark, A. and Emmel, N. (2010) *Using walking interviews*, ESRC National Centre for Research Methods Realities toolkit #13, pp.1-6. Available from: <http://eprints.ncrm.ac.uk/1323/1/13-toolkit-walking-interviews.pdf> [Accessed 15 October 2016].

## APPENDIX 25: Focus group interviews with children protocol

### Focus Group Interviews with Children Protocol

*On the day of the interview, I met the child participants and the trusted adult who would be accompanying us in the indoor meeting room or outside and followed the interview protocol below (adapted from Gibson 2012, pp.153-157):*

The script below will function as an example of the focus group interview process:

**[Greeting child participants and gaining permission to take part in the study, conducted in the meeting room prior to walking interview. Time: about 15-20 minutes].**

(Participant Names), thanks for coming today. I'm excited about going outside together with you. We need to go over a few things before we do this:

**[Ice breaker activity]** Make name tags- as children are doing this ask them about their favorite fruits, vegetables and flowers.

**[Explanation of Task]** I'm interested in what the kids, like you, from Name of Church think about the garden. Today we're going to plant/ weed/ seed/ tidy up one of the raised beds. As we do this, I'll ask you some questions and hope you'll tell me what is like to have this garden at your church. As we head to and from the raised beds, you can also take pictures of some of the things that interest you. Is that OK?

**[Explanation of Role]** To help us, let's take a look at these ground rules:

- You can pass on a question if you want to
- You can take time to think about an answer
- You can use any words you like to answer a question
- Let me know if you don't understand my question or if I've misunderstood your answer.
- I will keep your answers private. [Agree to boundaries of confidentiality within the group] If any of you are talking about our activity to someone, then let's not say who said what. Would that be ok?

**[Consent Form]** Let's take a look at the Research Project Consent Form. *(Read over consent form with the participants and make sure that they are in*

*full understanding of its contents. Emphasize the statement from the consent form about voluntary participation and freedom to withdraw at any time.)*

**[Check for Understanding]** Do you have any questions about this for me? *(confirm parental/guardian approval and signature.)*

**[Technical and Safety Aspects of the Interview]** Now, let's take a look at the cameras and the microphones. *(Reminder to photograph things and not people. Children test the disposable cameras and recording equipment)*

**[Safety Reminder]** Remember to be careful walking outside and use the trowels and forks only in the soil. When you are digging try to keep your trowel low so that you don't hit anyone or get dirt in their eyes. Do you all have your gloves and water? If you're hot or need to stop then just let me know. Any questions? Let's go outside? *(Move outside into the garden.)*

**[In the Garden 20-30 minutes]** You've all got your camera. Remember, you can use it to take photos of something that's interesting or special to you, but try not to take pictures of each other. *(Children walk around and take photos as we walk to the bed. During this time microphone is set up by the raised bed).*

**[Support]** Everyone OK? *(Gather children close to the bed. Turn on microphone)* Let's take a look at what we are going to plant/weed/ seed today. (Draw attention to the task. Discuss it and ask questions related to it) – Anyone know what this is? Do you remember what to do? Where did you learn that? When did you last, weed/seed/ plant? Who did you do that with?

**[Example questions to prompt discussions once the activity is underway]** So what's been happening here in the garden? What kind of activities you have been doing out here? How often are you out here? What do you like to do here? Who have you been here with? Do you have a favourite spot/activity? Is there anything that you like or don't like about the garden?

**[Suggested follow up questions]** Can you tell me more about that? You said \_\_\_\_\_, can you explain that a little more? Name of Child, say something more about that? What do you mean by \_\_\_\_\_? Describe what that is/was like? *(Use echo statements to re-state a comment and and/or acknowledging statements that recognize a child's feelings).*

**[Reference to photography]** *(To individual child)* I saw you were taking a picture of \_\_\_\_\_ (item/artefact), what's interesting about this? How about the rest of you? What were you looking at?



**[At the end of the activity—providing and gaining feedback and debriefing]**

Well, that was fun. Thanks for your help. I enjoyed learning more about the [Name of Church Garden] garden from you. It seems like this is a place where (offer feedback). This has been really helpful.

What did you think about this interview? Is there anything you are unhappy or uncomfortable about? Do you have any questions for me?

When I finish getting the photos printed, I'll bring them up to the church and we can look at them together. Also, I'll write out what you've said and we can read through it if you want to. Is that OK?

Remember, that if you have any questions or concerns that you can contact me on the contact number given on the Participant Information Sheet and that you can still change your mind about being in this study even though we have completed our interview.

**[Finish the interview]** Right, shall we head back indoors? Which way would you like to go?

*(Disconnect recording equipment. Children can take more photos as they head indoors. Once inside, collect cameras)*

Reference

Gibson, J. E. (2012) Interviews and focus groups with children: methods that match children's developing competencies, *Journal of Family Theory & Review*, 4 (June), pp. 148-159.

## **APPENDIX 26: Garden notes template**

Lamptey

Reference Number: UEP011

How do your gardens grow? Unearthing meanings in African American church gardens

---

Name of Participant, Name of Church

Date and time of interview

Weather Conditions/ Temperature/ Season

Note of route taken around the garden

How did the interview begin?

Did any reference to sensory content arise during the garden walk? Sounds sights, smells, tastes, touch, texture?

**Describe anything of interest:**

**Highlight any insights gained:**

**What surprised me?**

**What intrigued me?**

**What disturbed me?**

**How did the interview end?**

Reference

Sunstein, B. and Chiseri-Strater, E. (2012) *Fieldworking: reading and writing research*. Boston, MA: Bedford/St. Martins.

## **APPENDIX 27: Reflection of the data analysis process**

### **Introduction**

In this appendix, I will attempt to reflect on some of the processes involved in my data collection and analysis that enabled me to reduce my findings into the three key themes that were finally used for this study. To assist me, I drew on Vagle's (2018) whole-parts-whole approach, which encourages the phenomenological researcher to interact back and forth with both the whole text and its various constituent parts in the process of creating, through the interpretive findings, something new.

### **Early immersion with the data**

There might be a tendency to think that the data analysis process has a specific starting point once the data collection ends. However, Vagle explains:

In phenomenological research, like other qualitative research methodologies, it is difficult to separate the gathering of phenomenological material from analysis of phenomenological material as the two are so delicately intertwined throughout all phases of a study. (Vagle, 2018, p. 108).

Thus, I found that my initial processing of the data began before I had left the sites when I began making notes about the experience in my garden notebook as soon as the interviews were over (see garden notebook format in Appendix 26). These were later expanded upon once I was in a more reflective state.

As indicated in Table 3.1, the data collection for this study occurred in three seasonal phases:

Phase I: June 2017

Phase II: October 2017–November 2017

Phase III: March 2018–June 2018

This meant that I had time after each set of data collection phases to work with the data. Shortly after an interview had occurred, I transcribed each recording. An average interview of about 40 minutes to an hour took well over two hours to type up. To each transcript, I then added from my garden notes sensory information that may have arisen, like movements or sightings that were not caught on tape as well as weather conditions and temperature. I also downloaded and compiled each interviewee's set of images onto a PowerPoint slideshow. I also copied from the interview transcript what was spoken about shortly before, during, and shortly after the photography onto the slideshow. This meant that all images for each individual were always captured within a specific context and provided a fuller picture of the interview experience.

### **Dwelling with the data**

It was a slow and methodical process, but, as I indicated in section 3.9, it was also an immersive experience and what Findlay (2011, p. 229) describes as a way "... to dwell with the raw data"; she emphasizes how important it is to develop a deep level of involvement with the information gathered. As whole bodies of text, the interviews were familiar to me and the voices of many of

the participants became constant companions throughout this whole time, so much so, that it later became an intentional decision to intertwine their voices quite distinctly into the presentation of my findings. A lot of data had been accumulated, and my next task was then to figure out how to make my way through it all by moving from a compiling mindset to an interpretative or hermeneutic mindset. This was one that now focused on a close reading of each of the transcripts, what Vagle (2018, p.110) describes as "... getting attuned to the whole material-gathering event" to seek the possible meanings that they held. During the reading of the transcripts I would ask myself:

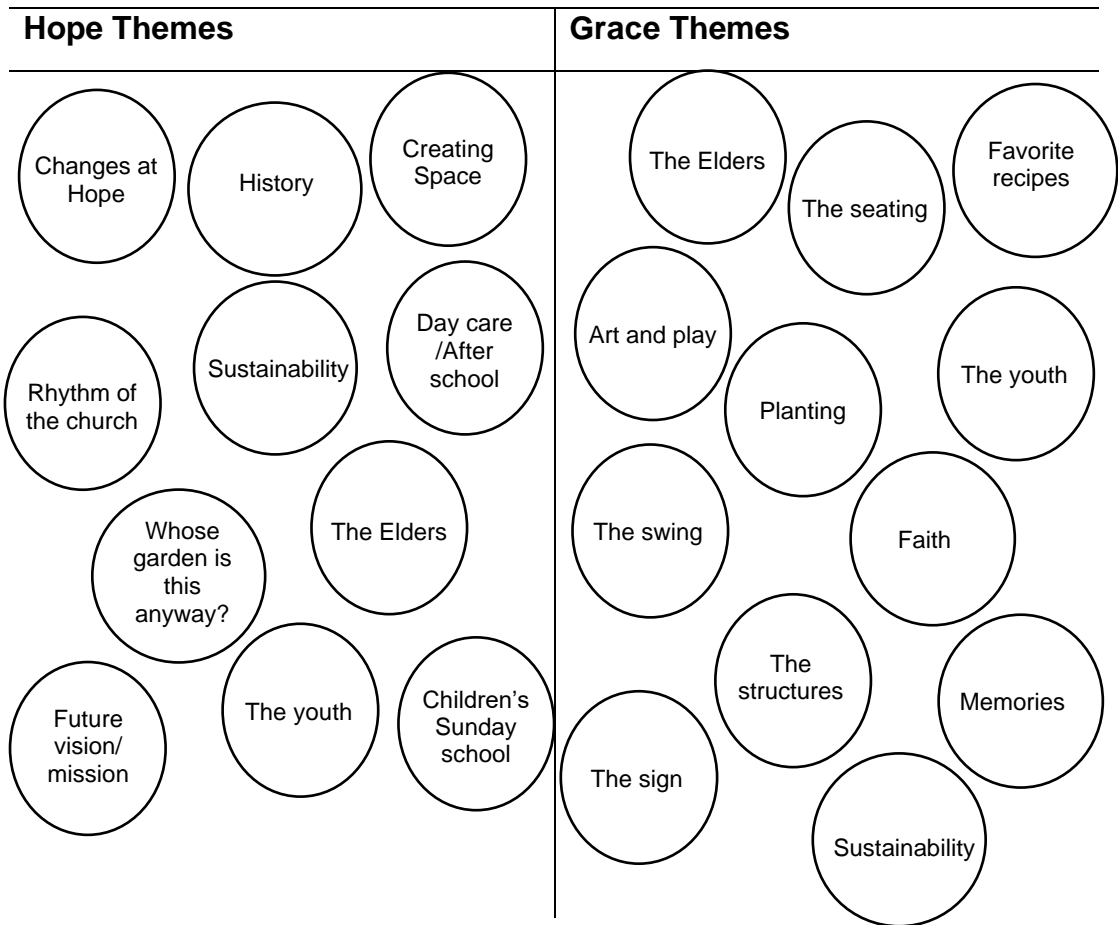
*What meanings about the garden are arising from each participant?  
How are thoughts and feelings about the garden being emphasized/  
discussed/ described?  
What ideas are developing from within each interview?*

For Vagle (2018), this process also requires a slower, more intentional, line by line examination. Thus, I would also consider single words or phrases that were used explicitly, as well as reading beyond the literal and considering how something had been expressed implicitly. I began highlighting these parts of the text and made notes of what stood out from each interview in these various ways.

### **Articulating meanings**

Once all the individual transcripts had been read closely in this way, I looked for patterns between the transcripts and began to thematize what people had spoken about at each site. Vagle (2018, p. 111) refers to this form of naming

process as “... articulating the meanings”. Below is a diagram of some of the preliminary circles of thematic meanings that I articulated for the two gardens:



Under each of these articulated thematic meanings, I copied and pasted the highlighted parts of the text that I had identified from the various participants. Vagle (2018, p. 108) emphasizes that “... once we begin to remove parts from one context and put them into dialogue with other parts, we end up creating new analytic wholes that have particular meanings in relation to the phenomenon”. For me, this then began the process of seeing new possibilities of text emerge about the individual gardens as the thematic parts were placed side by side for the first time and took on the shape of these new analytic wholes.

## **From within to between**

Once I had looked within each site, I started to look between the two sites and began to consider how the findings from the two gardens might fit together. To assist me with the process, I found it helpful to have a more tactile interaction with these new analytic wholes, moving them off the computer and onto printed thematic piles that I read and re-read and marked with ideas on post-it notes that could also be moved around. Some thematic relationships (Braun and Clark, 2013, p. 231) began to emerge quite quickly. For example, I noticed that comments about the upkeep, maintenance, and questions of logistics such as the use of the gardens, and timing issues, occurred at both sites, and I identified these as concerns about the gardens' sustainability. I also found connections to the ways in which the elders recalled stories about their youth whilst in their church garden. Much later, these did indeed become part of the common themes that I characterized for the two sites, but both would undergo further processing to get to that point. For example, I had identified the elders and their memories, what I originally referred to as a rural garden-knowing, as an important meaning unit that needed to be explored in and of itself, but I initially had not seen any relationship between this and any of the other themes. However, from my close reading of the new analytic wholes, I started to recognize a sub-text of garden attitudes which fell along inter-generational lines, and I happened to recall from my original dwelling with the data an adult participant talking about gardening and making the following comment:

**Ameerah**—*People my age and a little younger would have to get the skill-set, so we would have to learn like the kids are learning (laughing)!*

Vagle (2018, p. 109) states that “Sometimes a single statement, from one participant, at one time is so powerful that it needs to be amplified”. For me this sentence was an example of this; it was revelatory. I suddenly felt that behind the differing opinions, I might be looking at an inter-generational difference to do with skill-sets around the garden and that this required from me an exploration within the transcripts across the generations to examine how this might manifest and why. As I show in my discussion of findings (see chapter 4), this became a profound section that explored, through the context of these two gardens, a sense of history, race, unequal connections to southern soil, and attitudes to modern-day growing and eating. Later, the two common themes for both gardens were developed and represented in the following ways:

<p><b>Hope and Grace Churches: Garden skill-sets across the generations</b></p> <p>The seniors – the skill keepers (ages approximately 65-94)          The children – the schooled skill-set (ages 9-18)          The millennial adults – a missing skill-set (approximately ages 25-45)</p>
<p><b>Hope and Grace Churches: Garden Sustainability – a perennial challenge</b></p> <p>Current concerns in the short term  <i>Hope Baptist – plants, people, and structures</i>  <i>Grace Baptist – plants, structures, and people</i>          Finding a garden rhythm for Hope and Grace          Sowing seeds – the gardens in potentia</p>



### **Talking it through with others**

It was very valuable to speak about my findings to colleagues at Louisiana Tech University, to my supervisors, other faculty at LSBU, and to my cohort, some of whom were also undertaking phenomenological research. This process of discussion was also generative as it functioned as a way of making my ideas much clearer. It was sometimes quite tempting as the researcher to stay in a state of dwelling, but having to vocalize my thoughts challenged me to make them more coherent. On one such occasion, I found myself expressing concern about how to seek meanings between the gardens given their differences. During the conversations, I was encouraged to follow this thread, and I decided to pull back from pursuing common ground and look again at the separate sites to explore this further.

### **Going deeper/further**

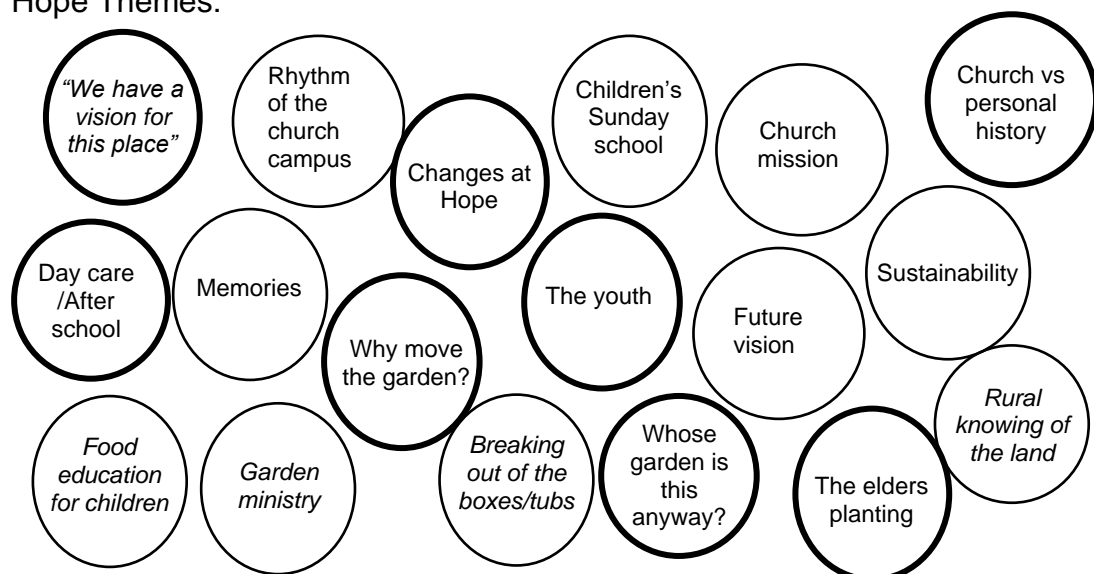
In the phenomenological process, researchers are encouraged to take a reflexive stance concerning their presence and expectations in the research. One way of acknowledging this presence is through the concept of bracketing or bridling—the act of the researcher trying to name and then work with or even put aside pre-conceptions or assumptions that might interfere with the collection or analysis process to be more receptive to the data (see section 3.8.1). I felt as though I had begun the analysis by actively seeking patterns of commonality between the sites but needed to return to the openness of discovery that is key to the “phenomenological attitude” (Finlay, 2011, p. 183), so I then chose to bracket the notion that to write about the gardens I would

have to seek such patterns between them. For a while, I went back to the original transcripts, my notes, and the slide shows, and sat again with the nuance of van Manen's (1997, p. 42) assertion that phenomenology asks "... the question of what something is 'really' like. What is the nature of this lived experience?" He urges researchers "... to be constantly mindful of one's original question and thus to be steadfastly oriented to the lived experience". I began looking through the data once more and asking:

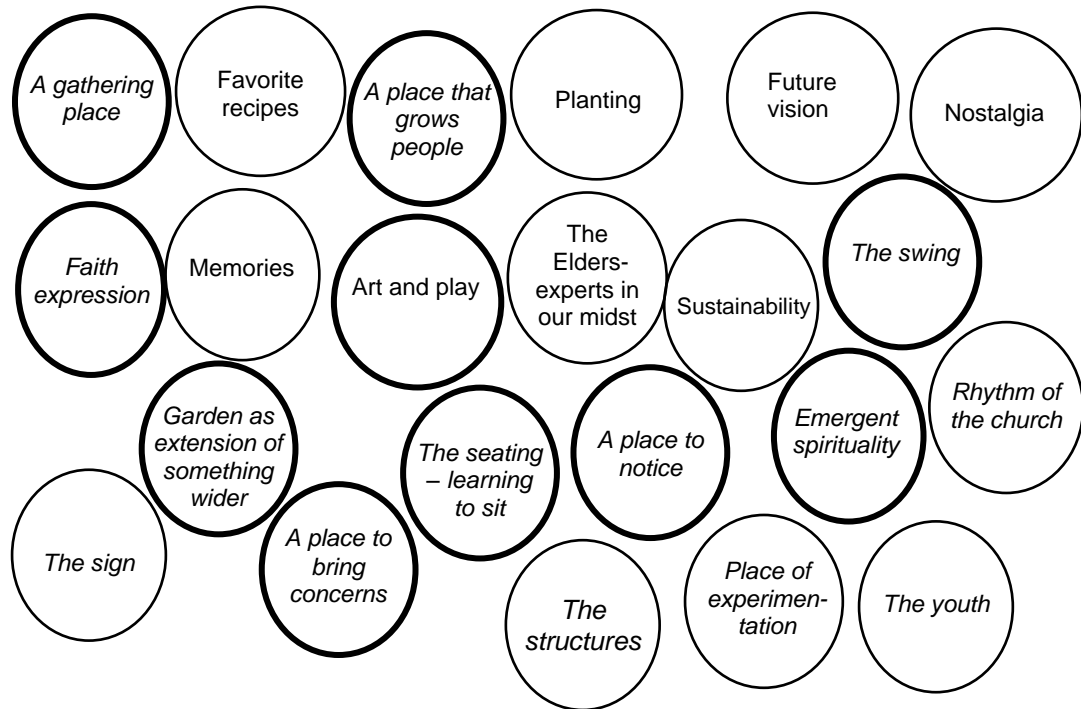
*What is the nature of the lived experience of this garden?  
 What it is really like to live with this garden?*

I felt that this might generate further ideas about the lived aspect of the different gardens at Hope Baptist and at Grace Baptist. As can be seen in the diagrams below, even though I remained with my original thematic circles, I honed in on further ideas as well as keywords and phrases that acted as guides to the lived nature of the individual gardens. This gave me a sense of the further meanings from within each site.

Hope Themes:



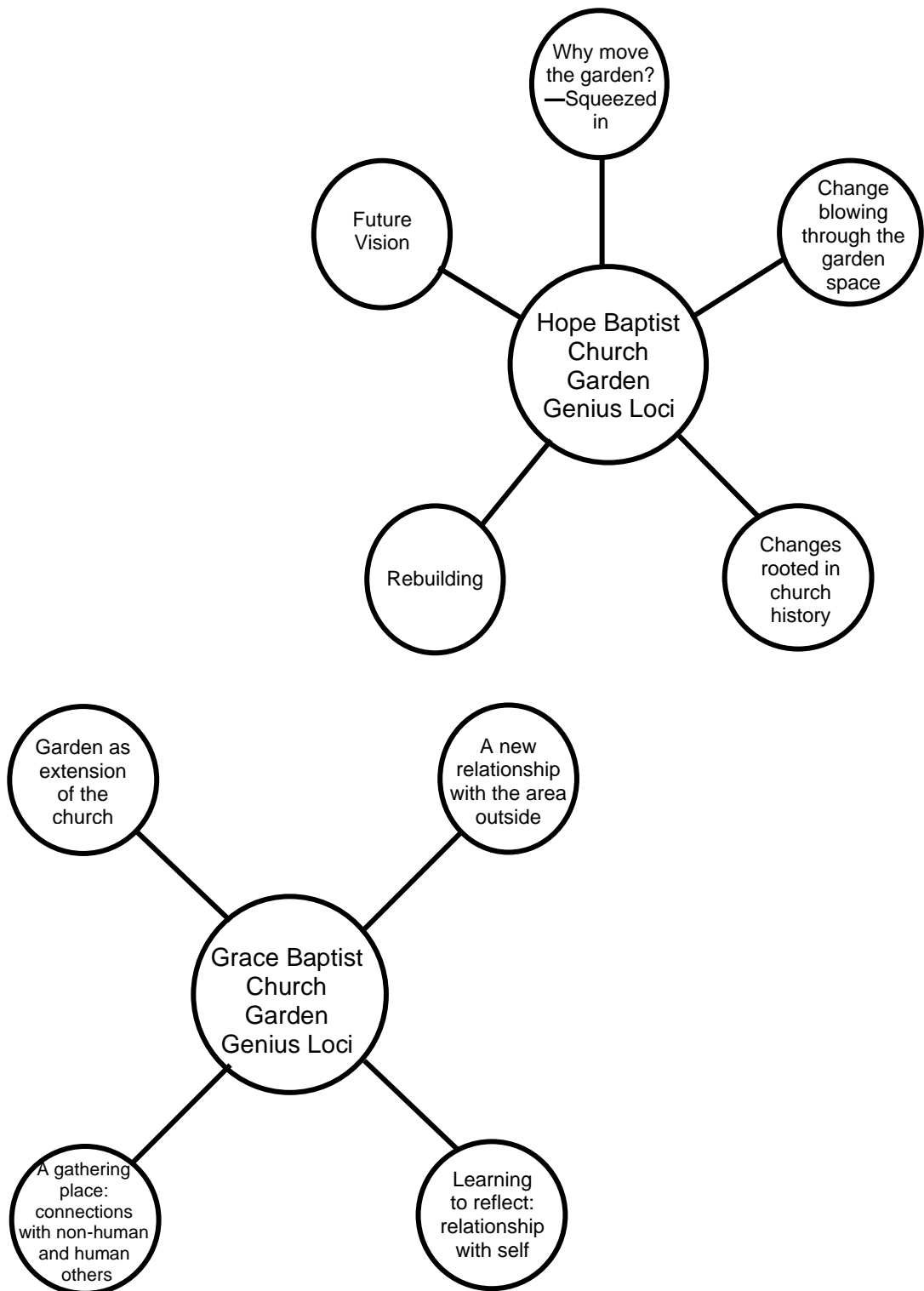
## Grace Themes:



## Convergence

I also came to see that finding a way to express the differences I had grappled with that emerged in the lived nature of the gardens at Hope and Grace was actually a major point of convergence (Vagle, 2018, p.109). My engagement with Lefebvre's (1991) ideas on lived space allowed me to consider the gardens' differences as a type of personality or uniqueness through the term that I later use from architectural phenomenologists—*genius loci*, meaning “the spirit of place” Cresswell (2015, p. 129). It became clearer to me that the spirit of the individual gardens was an essential way to start the discussion about the lived nature of the sites, not least because they acted as a form of introduction to the gardens themselves and to some of those who interacted with them. In the illustrations above, the thematic circles in bold were identified as ideas contributing to the distinctiveness of each site, and below is my first

attempt to pull these together to create a new text around each church's spirit of place from the findings.

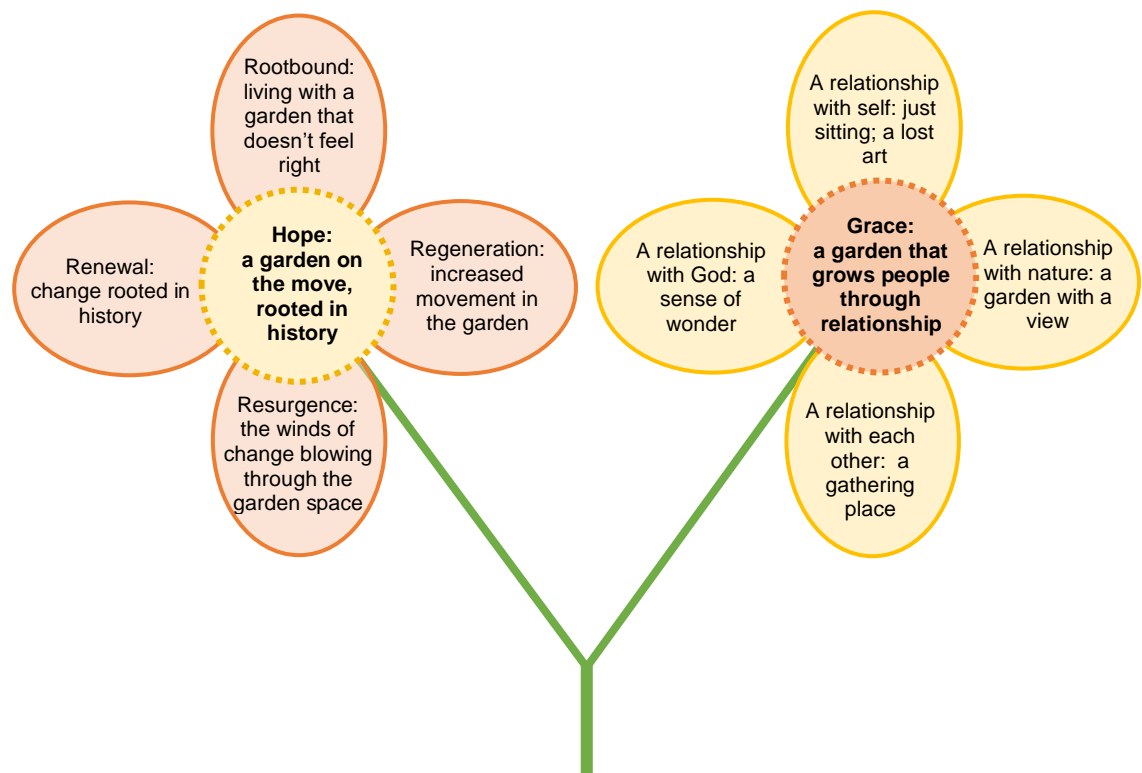


## **Trusting the process**

I hesitate to give the impression that this was a straight forward or even a clear process because as Finlay (2011, pp. 111-112) emphasizes, "... interpretation is necessary because phenomenology is concerned with meanings that are often implicit or hidden. The notion of interpretation is thus concerned with unveiling hidden meanings of lived experience". This whole-parts-whole process, referred to by some phenomenologists as the "hermeneutic circle" (Finlay, 2011, p. 115), is therefore far more subtle and is often represented visually in the literature as a spiral, indicating a circuitous movement towards the core and an ever-deeper understanding of the phenomenon. It symbolizes that the movement to delve further into an understanding of the phenomenon is far more recursive than clear and direct. This might easily be overlooked in a retrospective reflection (such as this) of the processes at work behind an interpretation. For me, it sometimes meant that I had to forgo ideas that I thought I would be working with to return, and not always with a sense of direction, to the original transcripts for further understandings. Hence, this "... process is often a messy one involving both imaginative leaps of intuition as well as systematic working through of many iterative versions" (Finlay, 2011, p. 228). As frustrating as it sometimes felt, I found myself at times simply having to trust the organic nature of the hermeneutic process.

## Creating something new

Through the above diagrams, I have attempted to visually represent how some of my interpretations evolved and grew in understanding. For Vagle (2018, p. 110), this constant back and forth with the material from parts to whole is vital for the interpretation because through this undertaking the researcher is "... crafting a text - not merely coding, categorizing, making assertions, and reporting". In this, he is highlighting how the interpretation is also conducted with the view to creating a new written whole. Vagle (2018, p.109) observes, "... what we craft is equally important to the final representation". This points to the fact that the researchers are charged with theorizing the lived experience as they bring aspects of the phenomenon to life carefully and imaginatively. The visuals below are how the genius loci at both sites were eventually represented.



## **Final thoughts**

It is emphasized by van Manen (1997), Finlay (2011) and Vagle (2018), that it is impossible to capture everything that there is about a particular phenomenon and that it is more likely that researchers will present what Finlay (2011, p. 244) calls more of “a selective glimpse”. My final reduction thus unfolded over time, and the three key themes of **Genius loci, Garden skill-sets across the generations, and Garden sustainability** discussed in chapter 4 provide such a glimpse of the lived nature of the gardens at Grace and Hope Baptist churches.