Building Relationships, Accessing Resources: Mobilizing Social Capital in Community Garden Contexts

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The preservation and advancement of grassroots associations, such as commu-
nity garden groups, often depend upon an association's ability to leverage a
variety of resources situated within itself, that is, among its membership and
outsiders whom it can convince to support its cause. With the salience of re-
source mobilization in mind, this study aimed to understand how the social
relationships formed within community garden settings assisted community gar-
den leaders in accessing resources. The findings suggest "leisure episodes" are
particularly important to building strong ties, a common source of social capital,
and therefore serve as the social lubricant for social capital production.

KEYWORDS: *Social capital, leisure episodes, community gardening, resource mobili-
zation, qualitative research.*

Introduction

Fundamental to the survival of any organization is its ability to mobilize
necessary resources to forward its own purposes. In recognition of this ne-
cessity, the leisure literature is ripe with citations associated with acquiring
financial resources, (Brayley & McLean, 1999; Crompton, 1999a; Havitz &
Glover, 2001; Howard & Crompton, 1980, 2003), as exemplified by the variety
of references associated with agency budget allocations (Connolly & Smale,
2001/2002; Crompton & McGregor, 1994), partnerships (Crompton, 1998;
Glover, 1999; Thibault, Frisby, & Kikulis, 1999), foundation support and do-
nation vehicles (Crompton, 1999b; Stier, 1994), and sponsorship (Berrett &
Slack, 2001; McCarville & Copeland, 1994; Mowen & Graefe, 2002; Webb &
Carter, 2001). Finance, however, represents only one resource, albeit an in-
disputably crucial one, upon which most leisure-oriented organizations de-
pend. Connections, knowledge, time, and skills, among other intangible and

tangible resources, are also key to the ultimate success of organizations, particularly grassroots associations which invariably have fewer institutional resources upon which to operate. For grassroots associations, their preservation often depends upon their ability to leverage a variety of resources situated *within* themselves, that is, among their membership and outsiders whom they can convince to support their cause (Chaskin, Brown, Venkatesh, & Vidal, 2001). Yet, despite its obvious importance to the sustainability of grassroots associations, resource mobilization remains absent from the leisure literature, evidently because grassroots associations themselves have received scant attention (Smith, 2000; Stebbins, 2002). Our aim in this paper is to rectify this omission.

Admittedly, the involvement of citizens in the production of a public service, otherwise known as co-production (Crompton, 1999), has emerged relatively recently to partially address this gap (see Backman, Wicks & Silverberg, 1997). Surprisingly, however, research on co-production rarely, if ever, examines the resources made available *from* and *through* volunteers. Meanwhile, resource mobilization theory, which concentrates on the dynamics *inside* social movement organizations and examines how those resources are mobilized, has continued to guide research in social movement studies (Jenkins, 1983; Kitschelt, 1991; McCarthy, 1977; McCarthy & Wolfson, 1996). Mobilization, in this context, refers to "the process by which a group secures collective control over the resources needed for collective action" (Jenkins, 1983). Accordingly, resource mobilization theory rests upon the notion that the ability to mobilize key resources is largely dependent upon how well a social movement performs necessary mobilization tasks. With this in mind, our concerns in this paper were: What do leisure-oriented grassroots associations with few financial resources do to mobilize resources? What tasks are required of them? And most importantly, what role does leisure play, if any, in facilitating the mobilization of resources?

Writing about resource mobilization, Jenkins (1983) suggested research should concentrate on (1) the processes by which a group pools its resources and directs them toward its collective aims, and (2) the extent to which outsiders increase the group's pool of resources. Fittingly, our focus here is on those resources leveraged from and through members of social networks, namely grassroots networks of community gardeners. Community gardens are sustained by quasi-leisure networks—"quasi" in the sense that sustaining a community garden requires of the network physical chore-like labor, yet the object of such laborious activity is a space in which gardeners can engage in activity about which they derive great satisfaction (e.g., leisure). Sustainability of the gardens necessarily requires the resources of network members, as well as those of outsiders. How do community gardeners, then, access resources to forward the growth and development of their community gardens? Moreover, what role does relationship building play in accessing such resources? Does leisure play a role? With the objective to address these questions, we explored how the social relationships formed within community garden settings assisted community garden leaders in accessing resources. In

so doing, we also aimed to understand the role of leisure in this process. We turn next to a review of relevant literature pertaining to resource mobilization.

Social Capital as Resource Mobilization

Because of its focus on social relationships as resources that can facilitate access to other resources (Bebbington, 2002), social capital theory offers a relatively new perspective for understanding resource mobilization. A sociological construct rooted in social theory, social capital is defined as

> the aggregate of actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition—or in other words, to membership in a group— which provides each of its members with the backing of collectively-owned capital, a 'credential' which entitles them to credit, in the various senses of the word. (Bourdieu, 1986, p. 248-249)

In other words, it is a collective asset that grants members social "credits" that can be used as capital to facilitate purposive actions. Social relations, in this fashion, constitute useful resources for actors through processes such as establishing obligations, expectations and trustworthiness, creating channels for information, and setting norms backed by efficient sanctions (Coleman, 1988). Like other forms of capital, social capital is premised upon the notion that an investment (in social relations) will result in a return (some benefit or profit) to the individual or social unit (Lin, 2001). Presumably, by drawing on the social capital in their relationships, individuals can further their own goals (Bourdieu, 1986; Coleman, 1988, 1990; Lin, 2001) and the goals of their networks or social structures (Putnam, 2000; Putnam & Feldstein, 2003). In short, social capital makes it possible to achieve certain aims that cannot be achieved by individuals alone in its absence (Putnam, 2000).

Presumably, networks associated with leisure activity play an important role in facilitating the production of social capital. Indeed, the seminal thinkers associated with social capital theory have all noted the relevance of leisure with respect to social capital development. Putnam (1995, 2000), who popularized the concept of social capital and can claim responsibility for its entry into mainstream political discourse, used the dramatic figure of a lone bowler to capture the journalistic imagination; Coleman (1988, 1990) focused on the importance of extra-curricular activities in forging influential networks among school-aged children; and Bourdieu (1984) showed how golf club memberships helped drive business transactions. In short, leisure networks have always played prominently in social capital scholarship.

Given that social capital is obtained by virtue of membership in social structures (Coleman, 1990; Portes, 1998), its maintenance and reproduction are made possible only through the social interactions of members and their continued investment in social relationships. Naturally, individuals have limited resources themselves (human and economic capital), so they must access

other resources through their social ties, which they use (as social capital) for purposive actions. For this reason, Bourdieu (1986) argued, "the volume of the social capital possessed by a given agent thus depends on the size of the network of connections he or she can effectively mobilize and on the volume of the capital (economic, cultural or symbolic) possessed in his or her own right by each of those to whom he or she is connected" (p. 249). Social capital, therefore, grows by bringing together resources from disparate sources. As a result, networks and network structures represent dimensions of social capital that influence the range of resources that may be accessed. These structures constitute a valuable resource as channels or conduits for resource mobilization.

Lin (2001) noted, however, that "access to and use of these resources is temporary and borrowed in the sense that the actor does not possess them" (p. 56), so individuals must persistently build and sustain relationships if they wish to (continue to) access resources (Coleman, 1990; Portes, 1998). In other words, without continued investment, an individual potentially compromises his or her stockpile of social capital and jeopardizes his or her (future) access to it. Nevertheless, even if an individual is successful at building and maintaining relationships, the social networks to which he or she belongs must be "appropriable" to be social capital (Foley, Edwards & Diani, 2001). Consequently, Portes and Landlot (1996) pointed out a distinction must be made between the ability to access resources and the quality of those resources. That is, having networks is insufficient; social networks must have sufficient resources *of value* to make a difference. For this reason, Foley, Edwards, and Diani (2001) argued, "Without some knowledge of the content of ties, and of the specific resources available through networks, we have no way of judging how much social capital an individual or group actually has at its disposal" (p. 277). Thus, the study of tie strength, which was first articulated by Granovetter (1973), is increasingly gaining recognition as fundamental to research on social capital (Burt, 1997; Foley, Edwards & Diani, 2001; Lin, 2001; Portes, 1998).

The study of tie strength stresses the relationships among individuals and the patterns and implications of these relationships. It assumes actors and actions are interdependent rather than dependent, and that the social ties between actors "are channels for the transfer or flow of material and nonmaterial resources" (Schuller, Baron & Field, 2001, p. 19). The study of tie strength, therefore, deals with what Scott (1991) refers to as relational data, "the contacts, ties and connections, the group attachments which relate one agent to another and so cannot be reduced to the properties of the individual agents themselves" (p. 3). In this regard, as Chaskin, et al. (2001), drawing upon Granovetter's (1973) work, explained,

> Two aspects of local networks are particularly important influences on [social capital]. One concerns the degree of network closure—the extent to which people know the people who you know . . . The second has to do with what are often called 'weak ties'—casual or instrumental rather than intimate

> bonds—which can connect individuals to networks of association held by others and thereby provide access to information, resources, influence, and opportunities beyond their networks of close association. (p. 20-21)

These "strong" and "weak" ties presumably influence access to resources, which has implications for resource mobilization.

An analysis of tie strength, however, deals with the instrumental nature of relationships, and focuses on individual benefits in "a way that does not sit easily with the wider civic benefits claimed for other forms of social capital" (Schuller, Baron & Field, 2001, p. 21). Indeed, our field has tended to champion social capital to forward a communitarian vision (see Arai & Pedlar, 2003). Nonetheless, network analysis is an important approach for those interested in understanding how certain leisure-related groups develop and more or less maintain social capital as a collective asset. Our interest in this manuscript, therefore, was to explore the elements and processes in the production and maintenance of the collective asset. Community gardening, presumably, was one context in which social capital can be studied. With this in mind, we turn next to the relationship between community gardening and social capital.

Community Gardening and Social Capital

Community gardens are:

> . . . plots of urban land on which community members can grow flowers or foodstuffs for personal or collective benefit. Community gardeners share certain resources, such as space, tools, and water. Though often facilitated by social service agencies, nonprofit organizations, park and recreation departments, housing authorities, apartment complexes, block associations, or grassroots associations, community gardens nevertheless tend to remain under the control of the gardeners themselves. (Glover, 2003a, p. 264-265)

As its name implies, a community garden is a collective venture that entails the formation of a social network (Jamison, 1985). It voluntarily brings together the collective resources of neighbors to address pressing neighborhood issues, notably, in this study, urban decline and sustenance needs (Glover, 2003b). The participants' willingness to share resources is only enhanced by the social connections they make during their participation in the shared act of gardening and other activities related to the establishment and operation of the project, activities such as grant-seeking, fundraising efforts, and community cook-outs, which are connected only peripherally to gardening. In this sense, community gardens are less about gardening than they are about community. They offer non-commercial "third places" outside of work and home (Oldenburg, 1999) where people can gather, network, and identify together as residents of a neighborhood (Linn, 1999; Moncrief & Langsenkamp, 1976; Schrieber, 1998). The social interactions facilitated by the project can foster norms of reciprocity and trust—conventional forms of social capital (Fukuyama, 1995; Putnam, 2000)—among members of the garden network (Chavis, 1997). Indeed, garden friendships often become

year-round social ties for those involved (Landman, 1993). In addition, the gardens are venues for active citizen participation (Glover, 2003b; Jamison, 1985), which Schuller, Baron, and Field (2001) noted is at the very heart of civic life and therefore central to social capital. Garden volunteers, not their city officials, deliberate to make decisions that impact directly upon the locality in which the garden is situated. Such behavior resonates with Hemingway's (1999) notion that leisure activities that generate social capital are more conducive to greater democracy. By promoting local control, Jamison (1985) and Linn (1999) reasoned community gardens have the potential to empower residents to take on more active roles in the further development of their neighborhoods. In short, community gardens serve as potential sites for community building, a common indicator of the presence of social capital (Putnam, 2000; Gittell & Vidal, 1998). Without social capital, community building would be impossible. A community garden, therefore, provides a promising context in which to explore the theoretical nature of social capital.

Subsequently, for the purposes of this study, we aimed to understand how community gardeners used their social capital to access resources to forward the growth and development of their community gardens. Accordingly, we were primarily interested in the role relationship building played in accessing such resources. Our objective, therefore, was to explore the elements and social processes associated with resource mobilization for the purpose of producing and maintaining community gardens. To achieve this objective, we examined the mechanisms and processes by which embedded resources in community garden networks were captured as investment. The next section details the methods we used to achieve these aims.

Methods

Given that social capital can be seen in many forms (e.g., trust, norms, sanctions, authority, and so on), Coleman (1990) noted, "its current value lies primarily in its usefulness for qualitative analyses of social systems" (p. 304-305). Thus, multiple sources of qualitative data allowed us to clarify our interpretations, explore emerging concepts, and collect feedback about our ideas. This practice was consistent with Denzin and Lincoln (2000), who pointed out,

> qualitative researchers deploy a wide range of interconnected interpretive practices, hoping always to get a better understanding of the subject matter at hand. It is understood, however, that each practice makes the world visible in a different way. Hence there is frequently a commitment to using more than one interpretive practice in any study. (p. 3-4)

Along these lines, three sources of data proved to be a rich source of information in this study. What follows is a description of each one.

Data Source #1: To some degree, this study was a follow-up, albeit independent, of a larger research project we conducted on community gardening in St. Louis (see Glover, Shinew & Parry, 2005; Shinew, Glover & Parry, 2004). After completing an interviewer-administered telephone ques-

tionnaire during the original research project, study participants eager to discuss their involvement in their community gardens beyond the close-ended survey questions were invited to participate in a lengthier, in-depth telephone discussion about their experiences as community gardeners. Ten of the participants agreed to do so. Subsequently, fifteen months after the original project was completed, we sent formal letters to those individuals to reconfirm their willingness to participate. Of those ten people, seven reaffirmed their commitment to take part (as for the remainder, two had relocated to another city and one chose not to participate because he was no longer involved with his garden). All seven were associated with *Gateway Greening,* a not-for-profit organization that promotes community gardening in low-to-moderate income neighborhoods in St. Louis through the provision of tools, training, and material resources. As participants in the original study, they were identified by *Gateway Greening* as the main contacts for their community gardens, which meant they were either formal garden leaders or had leadership responsibilities within their gardens.

Telephone interviews were conducted because they were deemed more convenient than face-to-face interviews. That is, telephone interviews were scheduled at times that suited participants' schedules and allowed the participants to remain in the comfort of their own homes without having to host an interviewer with whom they were only vaguely acquainted. In addition, face-to-face interviews were more difficult to arrange, given our proximity to the participants, a distance that amounted to a three-hour car ride. While rapport might seem difficult to build in such instances, the study participants enthusiastically welcomed a forum in which they could speak passionately about their gardens, as represented by a visual scan of the responses recorded in their transcripts, which were quite lengthy in contrast to the text representing the interviewer's contribution to the dialogue. All told, the interviews, which, lasted between 45 and 90 minutes, were based on open-ended questions to elicit qualitative data.

During the conversations, the research participants were encouraged to talk about their experiences in their community gardens. In particular, they were asked:

- What are the keys to maintaining a sustainable community garden?
- Besides financial support, what resources do you need to keep your garden going?
- How do you acquire these resources? What do you have to do to acquire them?
- In what ways do gardens rely on the support of others, that is, non-members, for assistance?
- How important, if at all, are social connections to the success of the garden?

While these questions provided a basic structure for the interview, we encouraged the gardeners to share stories about their community gardens to illustrate their points. All of the interviews were audio tape recorded and later transcribed for analysis purposes.

Data Source #2: Two months after the telephone interviews were completed, we arranged to conduct a focus group in St. Louis with three members of the staff at *Gateway Greening,* namely the executive director, program manager, and volunteer coordinator. Our focus group had two purposes: First, we aimed to ask the staff members the same questions we asked the community gardeners to collect their observations based on their experiences in the field, and second, we wanted to gather the staff members' interpretations of our initial findings. This latter purpose was not intended to serve as a member check or verification of our findings, but rather as further data for our analysis. In total, the focus group lasted one hour and a half. It was audio tape recorded and later transcribed.

Data Source #3: Immediately following the focus group, the staff at *Gateway Greening* took us on a three-hour tour of four community gardens during which we had an opportunity to ask them, as well as people who happened to be working in the garden, further questions about resource mobilization. The staff took us to see only gardens they deemed "successful" and "sustainable." The impromptu interviews we conducted with community gardeners in the field served as a rich source of additional data. The people we encountered were informed about our research project and asked if they were willing to answer a few questions about the nature of their involvement with their community gardens. All participants enthusiastically agreed to be interviewed and have their responses tape recorded. Undoubtedly, the presence of the *Gateway Greening* staff lent credibility to our request. Moreover, prior to the tour, the *Gateway Greening* staff had notified the leaders of the gardens we visited that we would be stopping by, so gardeners were presumably expecting our arrival. In total, we spoke to six people working in their gardens. The gardeners appeared very excited about the attention we paid to their gardens and their involvement in community gardening, particularly after they learned we had traveled three hours to tour and talk with them.

The field interviews with the six gardeners were relatively short in comparison to our telephone, face-to-face, and focus group interviews, lasting between 10 and 30 minutes. Like the other interviews we conducted, they, too, were tape recorded and later transcribed. Unlike the other interviews, however, the field interviews were unstructured and largely guided by the participants. Nonetheless, we did encourage the participants to talk about resource mobilization by asking questions such as, "how do you keep this garden is such good shape?" and "where do you get the resources to maintain it?" Field notes were written after the tour to help organize our analysis of these impromptu interviews by revealing at what garden we talked to what person, as well as other important identifying features unclear in the transcripts themselves.

Profile of Research Participants

Overall, we interviewed thirteen community gardeners and three staff associated with *Gateway Greening.* Of the sixteen total, twelve were female and four were male. While this gender imbalance is striking, we were informed

by the staff at *Gateway Greening* that it was more common to find women in leadership roles. This topic is something we have explored in a separate manuscript (Parry, Glover & Shinew, 2005). With respect to race, seven of the thirteen gardeners were African American. The three staff members at *Gateway Greening* with whom we spoke were Caucasian. The ages of the participants ranged from 32 to 83 years. Regrettably, more specific demographic data were not collected. All participants were identified in advance as belonging to sustainable gardens (e.g., the gardens were operated by a functioning network of gardeners and they had been in existence for at least 3 years), as confirmed by *Gateway Greening* staff who were intimately familiar with the gardens to which participants belonged.

Analysis and Interpretation

To make sense of the data, we incorporated two general analytic strategies: First, we sorted, organized, and reduced the data into manageable categories, and second, we explored ways to reassemble the data to interpret them. That is to say, we broke down the whole into its constituent parts only to reassemble the parts to understand the integrity of the whole. In this sense, the approach was consistent with Huberman and Miles (1994), Dey (1993), and Coffey and Atkinson (1996). Consistent with the tenets of qualitative inquiry, the analysis was recursive and began almost at the outset of generating data. Ultimately, however, we sought to bring order to the largely undifferentiated mass of data found in the interview transcriptions by comparing, contrasting, and labeling the text data. While attempting to maintain the character of the idiosyncratic and contextualized experiences of the research participants, our aim here was to expand and extend the data beyond their descriptive accounts. In so doing, we searched for themes and patterns. Correspondingly, the analysis was an inductive, data-led activity. Categories were developed to account for all the data. We sought to explain the relationships within and between the categories and form working assertions to explain the data. Here we attempted to provide our own interpretations of the lived experiences of the participants.

<div align="center">Findings</div>

Overall, there was a strong belief among the community gardeners with whom we talked that, as Eva[1] stated, "you're not going to be able to do it yourself." Summing up the sentiment of the other research participants, Sandy recognized, "I *couldn't* do it myself because I didn't *know* how to do it" (her emphasis). For Sandy, knowledge about gardening was a resource she needed to access from others if her garden were to succeed. To access such knowledge, like the other community garden leaders, she "started net-

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[1]Pseudonyms are used in place of the actual names of the research participants to protect their anonymity.

working and asking questions and just chatting with people who were gardeners." In her case, she looked to other parents with whom she had built relationships at the school at which she worked. "I had talked to a couple of other kindergarten moms," she revealed, "—one in particular, Jenna—and I was like, 'Jenna, the school is so ugly.' And she was like, 'You know what? My husband loves to garden.' And I was like, 'huh?' And she was like, 'we would love to help you.'" The spirit of this exchange paralleled the other gardeners' experiences. Regardless of the specific scenario, in all cases, garden leaders drew upon their social ties to recruit people to participate in their gardens. The sub-sections that follow reveal the gardeners' reliance on social ties in more detail by grouping the findings under the following subtitles: (1) sociability, (2) recruiting outside the garden network; (3) acquiring resources through strong social ties, (4) acquiring resources through weak social ties, and (5) friendships as sources for resource acquisition.

Sociability

Overwhelmingly, sociability appeared to be at the core of attracting participants and sustaining their involvement. As Sandy explained, "I know, personally, when I've done things when there has not been any fun, I won't go back, but if there's a little bit of fun, I'll be, like, 'Hey, this place is great.'" Some of the gardeners admitted they were initially attracted to their gardens because the activity appeared to be enjoyable. In Beatrice's experience, she revealed, "I had never been involved in the community . . . [but] I'm like, 'Okay, maybe it'd be fun to do this.'" With this in mind, Lucy often exploited the "fun" associated with the activity to attract new recruits:

> When I'm [in the garden], most of the people I'm with are kids. When other kids come past, they'll stop and they'll talk, or I'll act like I'm having trouble with something. I'll say, "Hey, could you help me for a minute here? I can't handle this" [laughs]. So then, they'll come in. If I can get one in the fence with me, you know, then somebody else will come along. This one kid that was helping us dig and plant lilies was having fun. He was all excited. His buddy comes by and he's leaning on the fence, and he goes, "Man, what're you doing in there?" And he's like, "Well, I'm planting lilies!" [laughs]. He just couldn't believe he was in there doing it, but then he came in, too.

The use of social enticements to attract new members was a common theme. Sandy, in particular, articulated the salience of such a strategy. "Sometimes at our garden club meetings," she mentioned, "there's not a whole lot on the agendas, but people just come to have a cocktail, and I think that's real important. I kind of started that because that was a way to bring people in. Like, 'girl, come to the next meeting. We're going to have margaritas.' I think some people enjoyed that aspect of the garden club." Sandy, as well as some other gardeners, used similar strategies to reward her gardeners for their efforts: "We'll order pizza and we'll bring coolers of beer, and, hell, I'll spend a hundred bucks on pizza and beer if that gets me fifty people out. I've done that in the past and it just makes everyone work in a more enjoy-

able environment. It's not all work. It's a little bit of work and a little bit of fun, and look what we've got in return." In other words, for Sandy, an investment in her gardeners resulted in a sustainable garden effort.

The notion that community was "not all work" was mentioned several times by other gardeners, too. However, Sandy made the point more passionately: "You really need to make it social to have yourself some fun because if you think it's just dig that hole or water that thing then you're going to get burnt out and it's not going to be fun." Given the salience ascribed to sociability, there were occasions where Sandy recruited individuals, not for their gardening skills, but rather, for their social skills:

> I've recruited people who know diddly-squat about gardening, but I know that they are fun partiers, so I think that mixes in with those smarty-pants makes it a win-win situation because you can't get all these gardeners and not have a couple of comedians in the group. That's what makes it fun. I can think of a couple of gals, in particular, and when they're there and I'm there and then we have those smarty-pants, it's a fun outing because these other gals keep us in stitches. So I think skill is important, but I think a mixture is important, too. If you can find that then you can find success.

The mix of people was paramount to the project to foster a fun environment in which people could enjoy the company of their fellow community gardeners while they worked.

Recruiting Outside Immediate Social and Garden Networks

Invariably, while family members and close friends were often the most common recruits, additional participants were desired to expand the size of the garden networks. Accordingly, garden leaders necessarily attempted to build connections with individuals who belonged outside of their immediate social circles. As Vicki explained, recruitment efforts meant garden leaders, in particular, had "to be open and friendly and willing to talk to people." The most common approach, in this regard, was to engage in door-to-door canvassing. In Harrison's case, "I went up one street and down the other and I had my ten gardeners (laughs). I guess I must've talked to about 70 or 80 people." Where no strong personal tie to the potential recruit was evident, garden leaders played to the individual's tie to his or her neighborhood. In an extreme example of this approach, Tina, a program specialist at *Gateway Greening*, revealed, "some people look at just the immediate neighbors. Who's moving in and who's moving out? 'The person who used to live in your house used to garden here, and you probably should, too' [laughs]." Recruiters, under this premise, appealed to their neighbors' sense of obligation to the neighborhood. In doing so, it implied the promise of reciprocity whereby participation could be rewarded with future assistance from neighbors.

In an altogether different approach, gardeners would often engage in spontaneous recruitment, too. For instance, Mandy noted, "I've always found it's easiest to get more people involved just by, hopefully, you bump into

them on the street, and you say, 'Hey, I know you know how to do this; you can help.'" Where gardeners knew the potential recruits, they would draw upon the relationships they had built in the past to encourage a favorable response (e.g., I *know* you know how to do this). Loraine, the executive director of *Gateway Greening*, described a similar example of spontaneous recruitment to which she was witness:

> There was a gentleman who lives on the street who helped us turn on the water because it's kind of hard to do. And then also, he came over and we recruited him into moving dirt because we had to move it from one end of a huge lot to another end. He said he was 31 years old, and he had never used a wheelbarrow before. A strapping young gentleman? You should have seen that guy trying to drive a wheelbarrow! First of all, he was pulling it backwards (laughs). He couldn't figure it out, bless his heart. And so he kept turning around and looking to see how we were doing it so that he would figure it out. Oh, it was hysterical!

In this example, the recruit acquiesced to assist in the garden, despite his unfamiliarity with the task for which he was recruited, perhaps because he felt obligated to participate after already lending his assistance. Subtle social pressure was seemingly applied by the gardeners to encourage his participation.

According to Katie, spontaneous appeals for assistance, such as the example included above, were common to most gardens:

> A lot of gardeners are out gardening and then a guy walks by. So there's a lot of, "Hey you, strong guy walking past! Come over here and lift this thing for me, will you?" There's a lot of heckling—not really heckling—but a lot of, like, if you happen to be walking by at the time I need you, then that's perfect. "You can't turn me down; I'm too damn cute!" or "you can't turn me down; I'm an old lady. You can't make me lift this thing on my own."

In such instances, recruiters relied on the individual's sense of obligation and civic duty. Such requests appealed to potential recruits general norms of reciprocity. As Harrison noted, "Well, you find that these people like other people, and you find that they're willing to give a little time to help somebody else."

Acquiring Resources through Strong Social Ties

The sustainability of the community gardens to which the research participants belonged required resources beyond the labor provided by recruits. Not surprisingly, ideas, water, tools, and other necessary resources drove the growth and development of the gardens, so members naturally looked within their own garden networks to access such resources. With respect to generating ideas, by simply talking with others, Betty argued:

> You find out you have a lot of the same concerns. And other people have thought of solutions they can't do themselves or they don't know how to carry out. And there's things you haven't thought of, that you can't think of because you're not them, you know? You don't have the same perspective exactly. When

somebody said, "Let's turn that into a garden," I went, "Wow. That's such a great idea!" I hadn't thought of it before [laughs]. Who would have? If you don't talk to people, you can't share your ideas and you can't get anything accomplished.

The collective act of deliberation expanded the pool of knowledge accessible to the garden leader, and by extension, the garden network.

Aside from ideas, in an example common to most gardens, Sara revealed she relied on a neighbor who lived in close proximity to her garden to access water. "We used the Clarks' water," she told us. "In fact, there's like four hoses that wind up in the Clarks' garage [laughs]. We would just string it across the street and water the garden." The research participants offered several other examples of resources acquired within their garden networks. In Sandy's community garden, for instance, certain members of her garden network were laborers who brought their professional skills and equipment to the effort:

Sometimes those guys have the machinery. "Oh, I'll bring my drill next week," or "I have a chainsaw in my garage. I'll bring that next Tuesday," and you're, like, God thanks! One guy in our garden club—he's got a concrete company and he's got a backhoe—if he didn't step up to the plate and come to these damn meetings, we would have never been able to take out the trees from the front of the school. He came with his backhoe one day and got it done in two hours, whereas we thought we would have to dig them out by hand. So these things come out of the woodwork. They're like these tiny little miracles. It's from these people who come with their talents and their supplies and it makes the project run so much smoother.

Indeed, the provision of "talents and supplies" contributed positively toward the collective goals of the garden network, making possible the achievement of certain aims that would have otherwise been more difficult to realize by the group in their absence. In general, then, members' resources were made available within the garden network for the common good of the project.

Acquiring Resources through Weak Social Ties

Of course, there were still resources to which members of the garden collective had no access, at least initially. In such cases, members were forced to reach outside of their garden networks. Often, this effort entailed exploiting weak social ties associated with members of the garden networks. For instance, Sara told us, "I had the notion that it would be so nice to have a little path in this garden to where we have a park bench now. Somebody knew that I had said that, and, 'Oh, this guy's getting rid of these bricks. Do you want them?' We were like, 'Oh, sure!'" Sara was able to acquire bricks through someone who was connected to a member of the garden network, yet unknown to her. She was able to draw on someone else's social connections to forward her aims and goals. While this example was incidental, many community gardeners admitted using such a strategy deliberately, albeit with benign intentions. As Eva explained,

Well, one of our neighbors is a really nice black man who is retired from teaching and he has never wheeled a wheel barrow or anything, so he isn't too much on the work part of it, but he's a very nice gentleman. I talked to him about how we could get more people—there are several other retired black men on our street—and he told me that as the opportunity arose he would talk and hopefully kind of lay the ground work so that next spring we could get them more active.

Indeed, successful recruitment, not surprisingly, involved encouraging members of a garden network to invite their friends to join the effort. Katie, the volunteer coordinator at *Gateway Greening* in St. Louis, advised garden leaders to "Be sure to get your friends to come; be sure you have a policy that everyone needs to bring somebody new every year." In doing so, she emphasized the importance of using weak ties as a source of recruitment.

In other examples, garden leaders took advantage of their social status within the community by exploiting their social connections with people who did not belong to their community garden networks. Harrison, a community gardener and activist, was particularly adept at using weak ties to access resources. He explained his strategy:

I finally got to the point where I said, "Wait a minute. Some of this stuff is specialized. Mr. Mayor, you're popular with these craftsmen around here. You know them like the back of your hand. A number of them are retired, aren't they?" He said, "Oh, yeah." And I said, "How about giving me the names of some of them for when I run into a problem and can't take care of it." And so he gave me names of people, and I called them and leaned on their faith and good will and I said, "we need your help" . . . I had myself a whole team of electricians and plumbers and carpenters.

Harrison's relationship with the Mayor undoubtedly assisted him in his ability to connect with others who could contribute toward the aims of his community garden. Social connections, in all of these examples, were essential to draw upon for gardeners to acquire additional resources.

Friendships as Sources for Resource Acquisition

Many of the research participants spoke glowingly about the garden as a space in which they forged friendships. Vivian commented, "Being a single woman and living alone, I don't get much of an opportunity to meet people, and [the garden's] one place where I have met more people. I don't go out to bars, and I don't have a big social life and go out and do a lot, so I've met, yeah, incredible people." Similarly, Lucy told us, "Well, that's what I like when we work in the garden; you get to meet people." Most of the research participants talked about friendship as a welcome by-product of participation and how it benefited them outside of the community garden context.

In general, the community gardens to which the research participants belonged exposed them to people from very different social circles, albeit people bound together by a mutual interest in gardening. Confirming this

sentiment, Loraine commented, "it's weird groups sitting around our picnic table. I wouldn't have collected those folks together! [laughs.]" Indeed, as Vivian described it, "I never would have been friends with or even met these people if it hadn't been for the community garden . . . [I learned] that I can find common interests with people that I wouldn't ordinarily be friends with because our other interests are so dissimilar, but [community gardening is] a real connecting thing." In short, the garden served a bridging function for these individuals.

The social interactions that took place within the community gardens clearly offered gardeners opportunities to build stronger relationships with each other. "When you're working together [in the garden]," Beatrice pointed out, "you're not working in silence." Indeed, Loraine explained, "[A community garden] is a place where people are talking about things. I mean, I can't tell you how many conversations I've had to walk away from . . . Any type of a discussion just comes up in a community garden, so they might not be hashing out decisions about the garden, but they're still talking about issues that are important to them." Often, community gardeners, not surprisingly, talked about gardening. Loraine noted,

> [Community gardeners] have a common language that they can talk to anyone about—anyone who walks into a community garden is going to get their ear talked off about the garden, about my plants, or about why I'm growing this versus something else. And so, all the barriers that you talk about don't exist because they're talking gardening . . . They will talk to you for an hour and a half about whether or not the turnip greens next door were planted too tightly in order to be harvested. "They like the big ones, but she likes the little ones", and da-da-da-da and on and on. And so, anyone that socializes in things about a garden, there's just a whole bunch to talk about that people have in common . . . It has to do with, "Hey, this variety of tomato really is much more successful" or "By the way, couldn't we get those beets in the ground a little bit sooner this year?" It's very tactile and real.

A mutual passion for gardening was clearly evident in the conversations that took place in the gardens. As such, the garden appeared to serve a *bonding* function, too.

Regardless of the topic of conversation, Katie revealed, "they also razz each other and they tease each other, and it's very loving. It's a very loving place." Eventually, Loraine noted, "people know the names of their grand-daughters and so-and-so's kid just got through school or so-and-so just made honor roll. This is not them bragging about their own kids necessarily, but about their gardeners' friends' kids. So they know what's going on in each other's families. They know who's sick and who's in trouble, who needs some help. It's nice." In describing this process, Bill explained, "People are nice to know. When you know them, find out something special about them, or maybe they shared something with you, you come together." In doing so, Maya believed it "builds a strong sense of trust."

In some cases, this trust helped transform formal relationships restricted to the garden context into genuine friendships. For instance, in her capacity

as a garden leader, by investing socially in her relationships with her recruits, Vicki found "a lot of times they'll call you for more than just gardening, if you're open and honest with them. If they have problems, they'll call you." Evidently, her relationships transcended simple leader-gardener interaction to involve genuine expressions of friendship. Other gardeners offered similar stories. For instance, through her involvement with a community garden, Vita learned her "neighbor was lonesome . . . [so she told her friend] any time you want to go [to the garden] all you have to do is call me."

Ultimately, the friendships developed within the community gardens were important because they helped sustain participation. Speaking from her own experience volunteering in a community garden, Vivian revealed,

> [The friendships I made] were probably the reason I kept going back and doing stuff with the garden because, like I said, I got incredibly busy. But this community garden is near my house, and there were these two retired ladies that started it, and they were so sweet. I got so busy doing other stuff, but I kept going back because I loved, you know, spending time with them.

Likewise, Vicki noted, "[friendships] are what keeps you involved" and "they're what keeps the garden going."

Beyond the Garden

Not surprisingly, the relationships built in the garden space led to further socializing outside of the garden space. Sandy mentioned she "hosted in the summer time a little appreciation hors d'oeuvrey, cocktaily thing at my house, and we just sit out in the backyard and there may be a dozen people that come over and we just sit and sip and it's not even related to the garden club." Similarly, Maya revealed how participation in the community garden in her neighborhood resulted in "spin-off" social gatherings among the participants:

> [One gardener] started a book of the month club. It was short-lived, but when some of the new places opened downtown, people were getting together, and I think [another gardener] had a fall equinox party or something like that. The neighborhood kind of got together and we had a Halloween party where we roasted hot dogs over the barbecue grill [laughs], you know, just some pretty nice things. And the other thing they did during the winter, they pulled together and shoveled snow for neighbors.

These activities, Maya noted, were nonexistent before the garden was built.

In addition to spin-off social gatherings, the social capital developed in the community gardens was appropriated for use in other contexts outside of the boundaries of the gardens. In particular, garden participants would often draw upon the social relationships they developed in their gardens to acquire resources for other projects separate from their community gardens. As Katie described it:

> Some of our gardeners do community stuff, but I think the other gardeners, by coming into contact with that person, automatically gets involved in other

stuff. So when I go to the McFee garden, and I see Kevin, he'll say, "Oh, by the way, there's this school trip thing going on next week" or "By the way, there's this other thing"—he's always got, like, ten other things going on [laughs]. And that happens in almost all of the gardens, where the community leader and the community garden leader also involve other people. So Tabitha, if you go to her garden, she's going to take you to her school. She's going to make you mulch her pathway possibly [laughs]. *Just knowing that person automatically involves you more in your neighborhood* (our emphasis).

Similarly, other gardeners talked about receiving assistance from their fellow gardens for their own private aims (e.g., moving furniture, fixing a sink, etc.). In sum, the friendships developed within the community gardens led to further socializing outside of the context of the garden, as well as further voluntary/reciprocal activity outside of the garden.

Relation to Theory and Literature

Building Relationships, Accessing Resources

Resource mobilization in the context of community gardening meant community gardeners capitalized on their social ties to maintain and access resources. As Lin (2001) noted, "The saying 'It's not just what you know but who you know' suggests that social capital should provide benefits for an individual who acts for a purpose. In this context, interaction is seen as a means to attain a goal of action" (p. 41). In this regard, it bears a resemblance to social exchange theory (Blau, 1964; Emerson, 1962; Kelley & Thibaut, 1979; Molm, 2000; Thibaut & Kelley, 1959), albeit with more of an emphasis on the actual production and maintenance of resources acquired through such transactions. While we suspect the relationships built in the community gardens were, in many cases, authentic and social capital was really just a by-product of them (Coleman, 1990), there is no escaping the notion that resources accessed through these relationships were integral to the sustainability of the gardens. The social capital produced, and thus, the relationships built, were clearly essential to the gardens' continued survival.

Accordingly, in many ways, the findings from this study are consistent with social capital theory. Perhaps most obviously, they support Lin's (2001) strength-of-strong-tie and strength-of-weak-tie propositions whereby "the stronger the tie, the more likely that the social capital accessed will positively affect the success of expressive action" (p. 65) and "the weaker the tie, the more likely ego will have access to better social capital for instrumental action" (p. 67) respectively. In other words, strong ties among members of the community garden networks gave the networks access to resources that helped *maintain* and *preserve* their gardens (e.g., facilitated expressive action). This finding was illustrated by members who shared their own equipment (e.g., water, tools, backhoe) or skills (e.g., ideas, labor) to assist with the collective garden efforts. With respect to weak ties, however, searching for and obtaining resources not presently possessed by the community garden networks required members to extend bridges to outsiders (e.g., facilitated

instrumental action). For instance, weak ties gave research participants access to bricks for a walkway, skilled laborers, and additional recruits from different social circles that would otherwise have been unavailable to their established networks. In sum, to maintain their community gardens, the garden networks depended upon their established networks (e.g., bonding); to further the aims of their community gardens, the garden networks depended upon outsiders otherwise not tied to their networks (e.g., bridging). Tie strength, therefore, had implications for the action, either expressive or instrumental, which its accompanying resources facilitated.

This study illustrates the difficulty associated with articulating tie strength, however. As Granovetter (1973) noted in his seminal piece, "the strength of a tie is a (probably linear) combination of the amount of time, the emotional intensity, the intimacy (mutual confiding), and the reciprocal services which characterize a tie" (p. 1361). Nevertheless, he argued tie strength is difficult to characterize. Indeed, Putnam (2000) mentioned, "bonding and bridging are not 'either-or' categories into which social networks can be neatly divided, but 'more or less' dimensions along which we can compare different forms of social capital" (p. 23). Our findings about social ties in the community gardens illustrate this challenge.

In many cases, the community gardeners in this study joined the community garden efforts with which they were associated as concerned neighbors, and they appeared to share an interest in gardening with their fellow members. These similarities were no surprise, given that Chaskin et al. (2001) noted, "increasingly, communities are forged . . . out of common interests or social activities that bring a group of individuals together over time" (p. 8). Community gardening, and especially chatting about gardening in the community garden spaces, clearly facilitated bonding among many participants. Assumedly, this bonding was necessary, as Nahapiet and Ghoshal (1998) explained: "To the extent that people share a common language, this facilitates their ability to gain access to people and their [resources]. To the extent that their language and codes are different, this keeps people apart and restricts their access" (p. 253). Evidently, "garden talk" was important to building relationships, and in some cases, friendships, within the community gardens in which the research participants were members (we will return to this point shortly). If it had not been for the garden, however, many of the gardeners would not have come to know each other as many of them belonged to different social circles. In this regard, the community gardens arguably *served a bridging function, too.* As such, it is often too simplistic to assume that a given social network is characterized by only bonding or bridging, especially in certain leisure settings where individuals may have similar interests, yet have different socio-economic backgrounds, as did the gardeners in many of the research participants' gardens. Given the challenges associated with bridging individuals from different social circles, particularly the effort required of the interacting partners who likely share different sentiments and are possibly unequal in terms of the resources they have at their disposal, leisure researchers should examine what it is about

certain leisure activities that drives such actors to bridge, and perhaps even-
tually bond, in contrast to other activities that fail to facilitate such behavior.

Leisure Episodes as the Social Lubricant for Social Capital

With the recognition that building relationships was central to resource
mobilization, the community gardeners in this study realized they needed to
be "open and friendly and willing to talk with people." That the production
of social capital in the community garden contexts was tied to social invest-
ment was, in this regard, no surprise. Portes and Landlot (1996), for one,
described social capital as "an elegant term to call attention to the possible
individual and family benefits of sociability" (p. 94). Indeed, sociability is
clearly at the core of producing social capital, as Bourdieu (1986) empha-
sized in his recognition of the fundamental need for "an unceasing effort
of sociability" (p. 250) for the reproduction of social capital in its many
forms. Social capital and sociability, then, are undoubtedly inextricably
linked, both in theory and practice.

But the salience of sociability, as illustrated in the findings, offers an
interesting, and potentially important, glimpse at the essential role of leisure
in facilitating the production of social capital. The notion that community
gardening "was not all work," as one research participant put it, implied the
fundamental importance of leisure-like moments during work-like activities,
such as community gardening, that allowed the gardeners to build the re-
lationships so central to the production of social capital. Conceivably, without
these *leisure* episodes, relationship building would be difficult, if not impos-
sible, for they are moments during which social interactions are pursued
voluntarily, as opposed to being mandated by work responsibilities. Leisure,
according to Neulinger (1974, 1981), is characterized by *perceived freedom*, "a
state in which the person feels that what he or she is doing is done by choice
and because one wants to do it" (1981, p. 15), and *intrinsic motivation*,
whereby rewards for participation are "seen as coming from engaging in the
activity itself" (1974, p. 17). Leisure episodes are, therefore, seemingly fun-
damental to the production of social capital, too, inasmuch as they facilitate
relationship building, which is the first step in the development of social
capital. And so, whether it involves friendly banter at the office water cooler
or chatting about gardening in a community garden space, these leisure
episodes, as we call them, are the moments during which the participants
open themselves up to the possibility of relationship building, thereby serv-
ing as the social lubricant (enabler) for social capital production. Therefore,
what this finding suggests is that leisure is not trivial, especially in these
instances, but rather essential to accessing resources for purposive actions.[2]

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[2]While leisure episodes *can* be essential to accessing resources, making their impetus at least
partially extrinsic, leisure episodes themselves are presumably always driven by perceived free-
dom and intrinsic motivation. Conceivably, extrinsic reward can co-exist with these dimensions,
yet its presence is not fundamental to a leisure episode. Co-existing motives should not be
confused with actual dimensions. In other instances, accessing resources is sometimes only a by-
product of leisure relations and not necessarily a deliberate outcome pursued by social actors.

The episodic nature of leisure experience (or work experience, for that matter) is by no means new to leisure studies (see Clawson & Knetsch, 1966; Lee & Shafer, 2002; Madgrigal, 2003; Mannell & Iso-Ahola, 1987; Stewart, 1998). Scholars in our field are increasingly coming to appreciate leisure experiences as "a wide-breadth of mentalistic states" (Stewart, 1998, p. 392) and ongoing experiences "marked by covarying cognitive and affective (both positive and negative emotions) elements" (Madgrigal, 2003, p. 24). These approaches frame leisure as an "emerging state of mind resulting from interactions between a leisure participant and his or her surroundings (i.e., including both human and nonhuman elements)" (Lee & Shafer, 2002, p. 291). In other words, they assume there is variability in experiential qualities assessed in different phases of leisure and work experiences. The notion of episodic leisure, therefore, is particularly relevant within the context of activities that distort the distinction between work and leisure, such as community gardens.[3]

Our proposition about the relationship between leisure episodes and the production of social capital brings us to the notion of obligation, which was an important form of social capital upon which many of the research participants drew. Clearly, community gardeners often recruited individuals by playing up the individuals' obligation to participate, either as close friends, responsible neighbors, or good citizens. Coleman (1990), in particular, wrote about how *obligations and expectations* provide incentives for individuals to invest in social relationships and accrue obligations, which investors trust will be reciprocated and repaid upon request by members of their social network. While participation in a voluntary association is ultimately *voluntary* insofar as members are free to join or leave (D'Antonio, 2000), it necessarily involves obligation whereby members feel obligated to attend meetings, assist fellow members, and take on responsibilities associated with the operation of the association. As Stebbins (2000), and Kelly (1978) before him, pointed out, however, obligation associated with such activity can be pleasant. Recently, Stebbins (2000) argued, *agreeable obligation,* "an attitude and form of behavior that is very much a part of leisure" (p. 154), accompanies positive attachment to an activity and is framed in satisfying terms. In this regard, he noted strong ties to an activity might not feel like obligation to those involved. Or perhaps, returning to the notion of leisure episodes, sense of obligation is not static, but rather dynamic. That is, while someone might feel obligated to spend time in a community garden, this sense of obligation may disappear as he or she begins to enjoy pleasant interactions with his or her fellow gardeners, interactions that lead to the production of

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[3]Here, we argue leisure episodes can be layered within any pursuit, whether it is categorized as work, leisure or a combination of both. That is, even during a leisure activity, a social actor can lose interest, perceive the activity as laborious, or fail to find enjoyment in certain tasks tied to the activity. We would describe these episodes as chore-like. By contrast, during the very same "leisure" activity, at different times, that same social actor may be captivated by the task at hand, feel pleasure from participation, and derive an intense sense of satisfaction. In short, we view work and leisure as episodic experiences.

social capital. As we have argued before, "working to sustain a community garden effort and realize the benefits associated with it can be appealing, albeit potentially challenging. Presumably, the social benefits, which are by-products of participation, [are] worth the effort" (Glover, Shinew & Parry, 2005, p. 86). Certainly, they are worth the access to resources, the by-product of such interaction.

But what about obligation when no relationship between a community gardener and passerby was built? How important is building relationships when one can freeride off the investments people have made before by relying on pre-existing social capital? In other words, civic duty is presumably tied to norms of reciprocity whereby the possessor is willing to share his or her resources perhaps because (1) he or she has been the recipient of a civic act or (2) he or she will be repaid for his or her civic behavior. While it is possible resources will be shared for these reasons, it is clear that "social relationships generally, though not always, are strengthened through inter-action but die out if not maintained" (Nahapiet & Ghoshal, 1998, p. 258). The only way to maintain them, therefore, is through strengthened relation-ships, relationships which are facilitated by leisure episodes. In other words, it is our contention, based upon our findings, that strong ties are forged through relationship building that takes place during leisure episodes, whether at work or at play, while weak ties share resources out of obligation. Nevertheless, it is conceivable that even chance encounters on the street, such as the ones described by the research participants, were leisure episodes characterized by playful banter—perhaps the episode described was actually flirting. Ultimately, a person must chose whether to share his or her re-sources, so it is conceivable that establishing the character of the individual amounts to whether the shared moment is leisure-oriented or not. Clearly, this matter requires further theoretical refinement and study.

Conclusion

This study sheds some light on the role of leisure in the production of social capital. It is our contention that *leisure episodes* are particularly impor-tant in building strong ties, which are a common source of social capital. In this regard, leisure episodes, as we refer to them, serve as the social lubricant for social capital production. Leisure, nevertheless, should not be confused as a *form* of social capital, but rather a *facilitator* for the development of social ties and networks, which are a primary source of social capital. The idea that leisure episodes are fundamental to relationship building, albeit potentially exciting for leisure researchers who have added their voices to the discourse associated with social capital, necessarily requires further theoretical refine-ment and study. We encourage the leisure studies community, therefore, to continue to forward this area of study and contribute to its development theoretically and empirically, for leisure is certainly a window into contem-porary social structures (Hemingway, 1995). In particular, we encourage re-searchers to ask a number of questions. What is it about certain leisure con-texts that facilitate bridging social capital? Do brief leisure episodes have any

implications for driving strangers to share their resources with others? Do individuals enter leisure-oriented social networks deliberately to access resources or is such access simply a by-product of the relationship building associated with social interaction in leisure activity or during leisure episodes? Addressing these and other questions, we believe, would assist leisure researchers in demonstrating the crucial nature of leisure in everyday life.

We also think it is important to point out that this study focused on the social processes in the production and maintenance of social capital in the community garden contexts without examining the *distribution* of social capital among members of community garden networks (see Glover, 2004). Yet, as Bourdieu (1986) pointed out, differential access to capital shapes both economic and social worlds. Accordingly, for some people, based on their social position within the social network, there is inequality in their actual *access* to social capital (Schuller, Baron & Field, 2001; Foley, Edwards & Diani, 2001; Lin, 2001). With this in mind, Glover (2004, p. 159) wrote, "there is a glaring need for leisure researchers to take a closer look at the actual and potential gainers and losers in transactions mediated by social capital," and challenged "leisure researchers to critically analyze social capital and study its potential for inequitable or even corrupt application, as opposed to focusing exclusively on its collective value." We join him in this call and encourage leisure researchers to adopt a more critical approach to their study of social capital in leisure contexts. Social capital undoubtedly has its merit in terms of collective action, but we must nevertheless analyze its distribution with a critical eye. If sociability and the utilization of ties is essential in the successful implementation of grassroots projects such as community gardens, the end result could possibly, depending on the types of social networks, produce a degree of homogeneity.

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