

Planting Connections: How Urban Gardens Enhance Community Participation

A photograph of an urban garden. In the foreground, there is a concrete sidewalk. To the left, a blue two-wheeled trailer is parked on a grassy area. In the middle ground, there is a large, dark, rectangular planter box filled with soil and small plants. To the right of the planter box, there is a wooden barrel repurposed as a planter, containing a small tree or shrub. In the background, there is a house with a white roof and a fence. The overall scene is a well-maintained urban garden.

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Jubilee Gardens



❖ Youngstown, Ohio

❖ Briar Hill region

❖ Only community gardening organization in Youngstown that owns land, machinery, and has a paid employee

❖ Space for 32 gardeners on approximately 2 acres

Research Question

A photograph of a community garden. In the foreground, there is a concrete path and a grassy area. The garden itself is filled with various plants, including small trees and shrubs. A blue table is visible on the left side. In the background, there is a two-story house with a white roof and a fence. The sky is overcast.

Does participation in community gardening lead to participation in other community projects or programs?

Thesis

By analyzing qualitative interviews with gardeners at Jubilee Gardens, this study examines how participation in urban agriculture creates networks between participants that leads to their involvement in other community projects and programs.

Literature Review

The background image shows a community garden setting. In the foreground, there are several raised garden beds made of white plastic, containing various green plants. A red garden hose runs diagonally across the beds. In the middle ground, two people are visible: one on the left wearing a blue shirt and a dark cap, and another on the right wearing a red cap and dark overalls. A black wheelbarrow is parked on the right side. The background features a white building with windows and some greenery.

❖ Popularization of Local Agriculture:

❖ Shiness, Glover and Parry (2004)

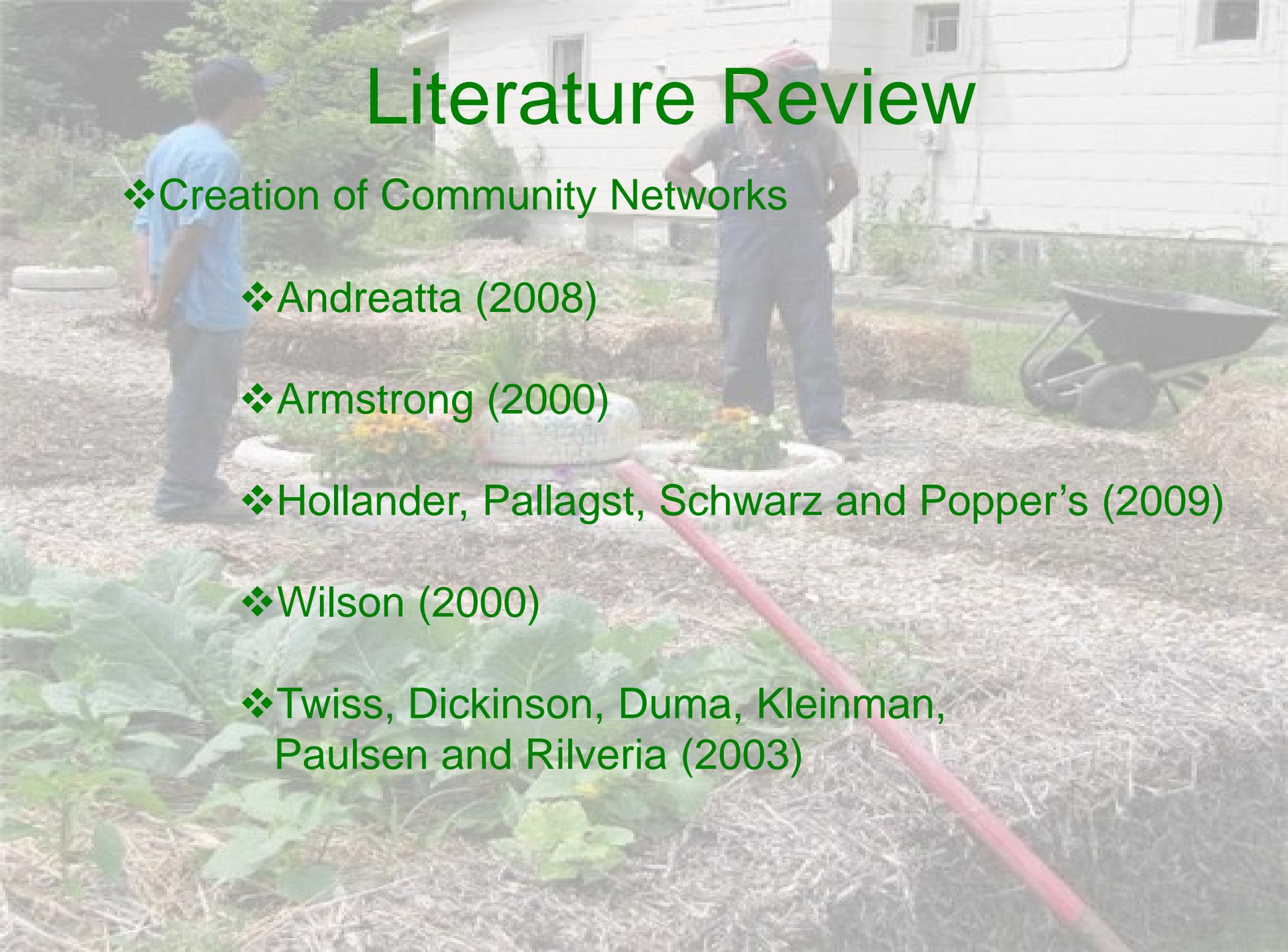
❖ Macias (2008)

❖ Premat (2005)

❖ Wakefield, Yeudall, Taron, Reynolds and Skinner (2007)

❖ Guthman (2008)

Literature Review

The background image shows a community garden scene. In the foreground, there are several large green leafy plants, possibly zucchini or squash, growing in a bed of mulch. A red garden hose lies on the ground. In the middle ground, two people are standing in a garden bed. One person on the left is wearing a light blue shirt and dark pants, looking towards the right. The other person on the right is wearing a dark shirt, dark pants, and a red cap, with their hands on their hips. A black wheelbarrow is visible on the right side of the garden. In the background, there is a white house with windows and a fence.

❖ Creation of Community Networks

❖ Andreatta (2008)

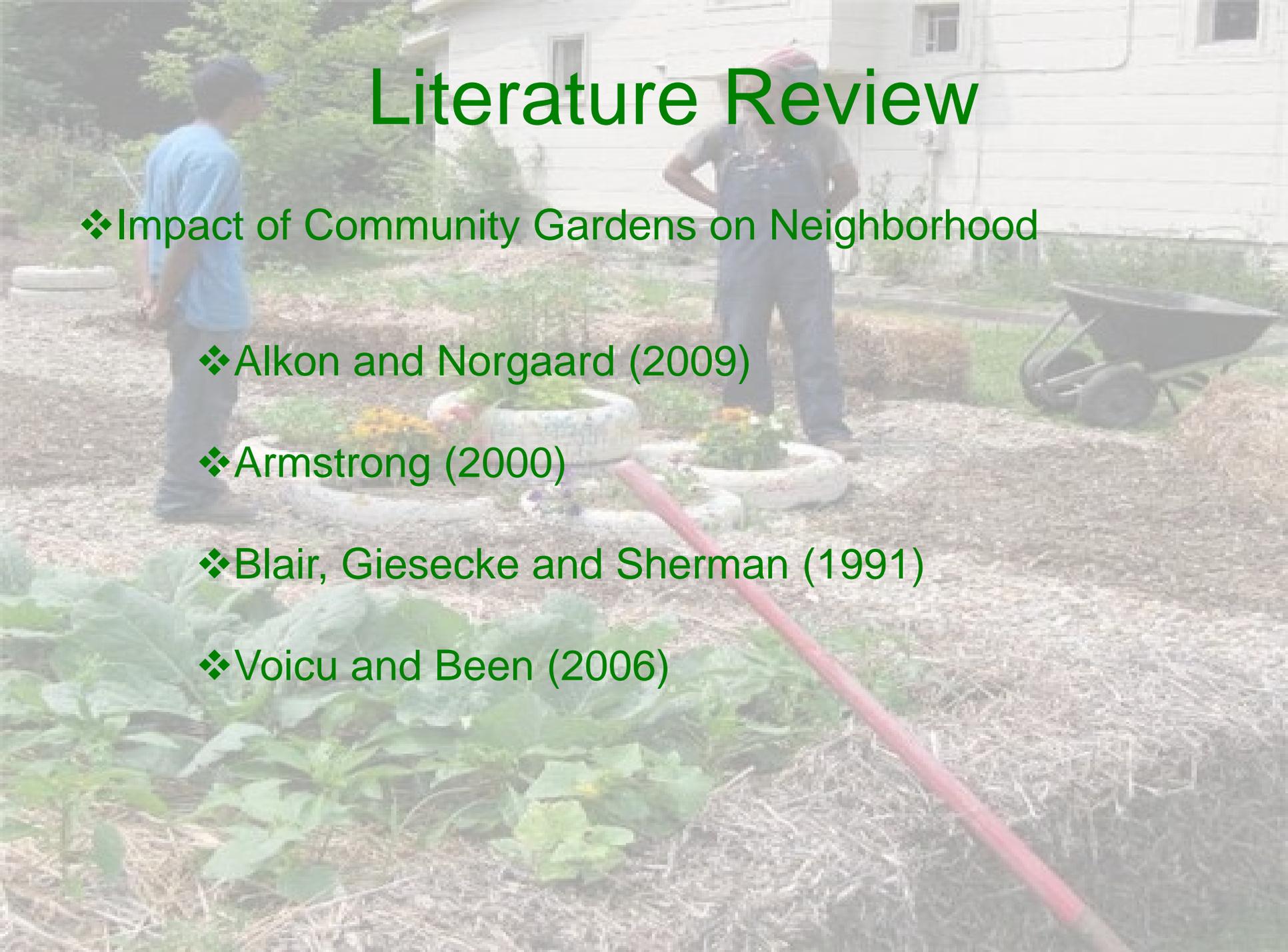
❖ Armstrong (2000)

❖ Hollander, Pallagst, Schwarz and Popper's (2009)

❖ Wilson (2000)

❖ Twiss, Dickinson, Duma, Kleinman,
Paulsen and Rilveria (2003)

Literature Review

The background image shows a community garden setting. On the left, a person in a light blue shirt and dark pants stands looking towards the garden. In the center, another person in dark overalls and a red cap stands with hands on hips. To the right, a black wheelbarrow is parked. The garden features several raised beds, some with plants, and a red hose lying on the ground. A white house is visible in the background.

❖ Impact of Community Gardens on Neighborhood

❖ Alkon and Norgaard (2009)

❖ Armstrong (2000)

❖ Blair, Giesecke and Sherman (1991)

❖ Voicu and Been (2006)

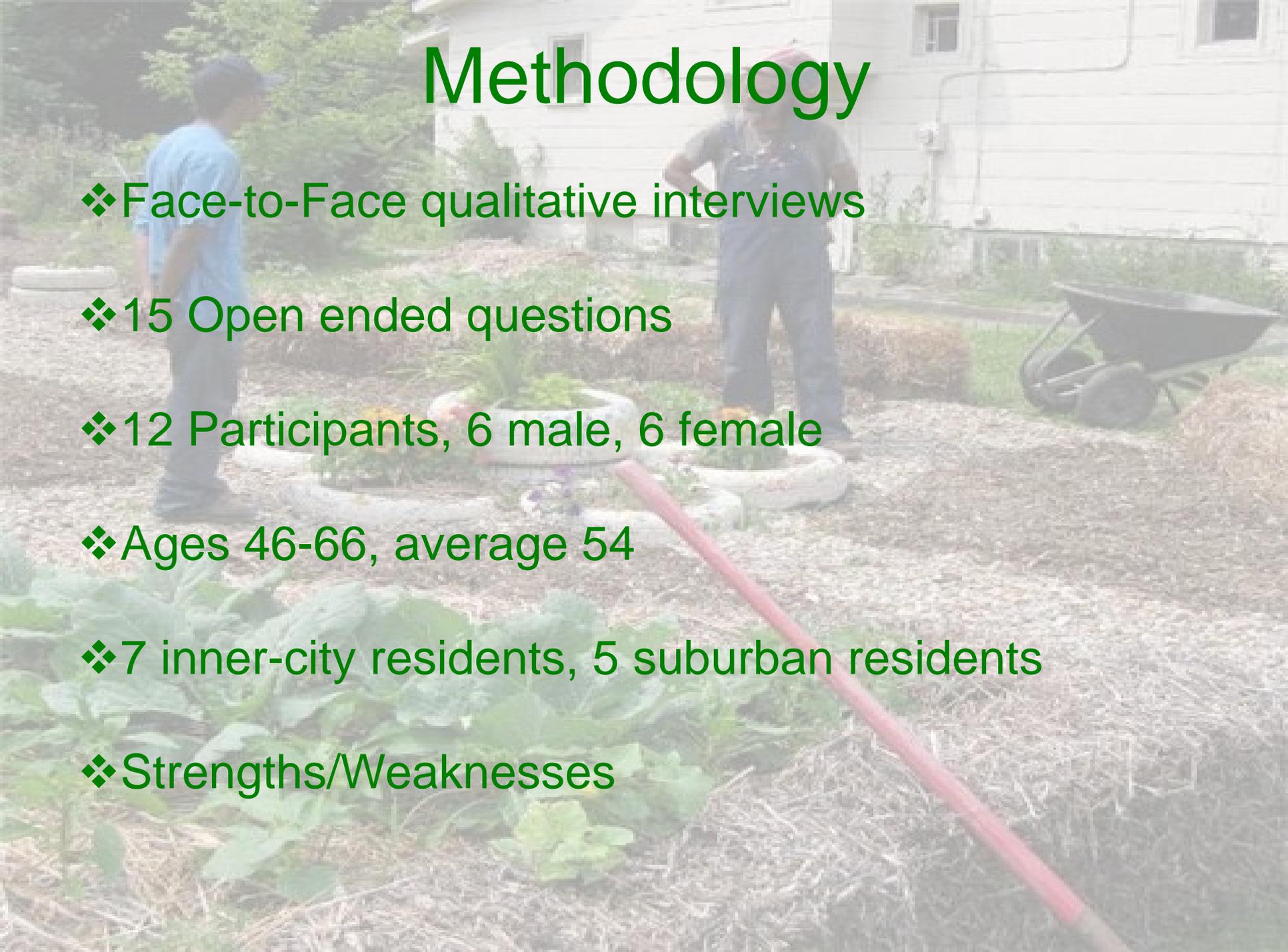
Theory

Community development theory

Tamas (2000)

- ❖ Systems & Subsystems
- ❖ Boundaries
- ❖ Open vs. Closed Systems
- ❖ Communities as Networks

Methodology



- ❖ Face-to-Face qualitative interviews
- ❖ 15 Open ended questions
- ❖ 12 Participants, 6 male, 6 female
- ❖ Ages 46-66, average 54
- ❖ 7 inner-city residents, 5 suburban residents
- ❖ Strengths/Weaknesses

Findings

Participant Experience in Jubilee Gardens

Table 1: Origins of Participant Experience

Origin	Frequency	Percentage
Invited by Friend	6	50%
Community Advertisement	3	25%
Invited by Family	1	8.3%
Attended Event at Garden	1	8.3%
Other	1	8.3%
Total (N=12)	12	100%

Participant Benefits of Gardening in a Community Atmosphere

“Well, I still garden at my home but I like the idea of helping people who don’t have their own gardens and don’t have much knowledge about it and as a gardener you always have extra food so I like being able to give it away and give it to people. So, and to promote green space. I like that idea. You know, so the land has some use and also to help, especially younger generations, just to get an idea about what gardening is.”

Development of Community Networks and Ties

“Through Jubilee Gardens I got involved with the Men’s Garden Club and through the Men’s Garden Club I have met a number of people as well. We are going to an event they are having tomorrow at Mill Creek Park. I am getting to meet more people. We don’t have a big social circle, just with work and not having money to go out and socialize very much, so this gives us a good socialization that we hadn’t had for a while because of our financial situation. So I have enjoyed it because I have gotten to meet a lot of people that I may not have met otherwise.”

Development of Community Networks and Ties

“My work in community gardening at Jubilee has led to participation with other organizations such as Lien Forward, which does land reclamation; GTECH, a similar organization in the Pittsburg area, and NEOFoodWeb.org, which is an organization working on many different food issues in northeastern Ohio. I have also become aware of a number of organizations that are leading the way, the best example being GrowingPower.org, Will Allen’s organization in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, which I was able to visit in October, 2009.”

Discussion

- ❖ Personal relationships have a strong influence over the activities in which people get involved in.
- ❖ As community connectedness increases, levels of involvement in community activities increase also
- ❖ Lasting effects on children

Discussion

- ❖ Most of the projects and programs participants got involved in were related to greening the community.
- ❖ Those that had lived longer in the Youngstown community and participated in the Jubilee Community for the longest period of time were the ones that were more involved in the community.
- ❖ This attitude may indicate that a majority of gardeners at Jubilee Gardens have a strong sense of commitment to the community, which may explain their initial involvement in community gardening.

A group of about seven people are working in a garden bed. The garden bed is filled with straw mulch and has several small plants growing in it. One person is bent over, working with the plants. Another person is standing nearby, and others are looking on. In the background, there is a white van parked on a grassy area, and a house with a porch. The scene is outdoors and appears to be a community garden or a school garden.

Thank You!

QUESTIONS?