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Beyond Fruit: Examining Community in a Community Orchard

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Beyond Fruit: Examining Community in a Community Orchard

by

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of

Master of Urban Studies

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Abstract

The Fruits of Diversity Community Orchard, located in Portland, Oregon in an affordable housing neighborhood, is a site of alternative food provisioning in which a group of people, organized by two nonprofits, work together to manage fruit and nut producing plants. Through conversations with volunteers who participate regularly and participant observation, this study explores the questions: What does community mean in the context of a community orchard? In what ways does partnering with a nonprofit from outside the neighborhood influence community and the way the project is operationalized?

This thesis situates community orchards within the literature on alternative food networks (AFN) and highlights three key findings drawing on literature about community development and race in AFNs. First, neighbors and non-neighbors who participate in the project propose different definitions of community. Second, neighbor involvement is limited by a number of factors, including neighborhood divisions and organizational challenges. Notably, orchard participants do not reflect the racial and ethnic diversity of the neighborhood, putting this project at risk of creating a white space in a majority people of color neighborhood and reproducing inequality rather than fighting against it. Finally, this research complicates the notion of community in alternative food networks and demonstrates how collaborating with an organization from outside the neighborhood impacted the community through increasing non-neighbor participation and through their communications, aesthetics, decision making, and inattention to racial dynamics in the neighborhood and orchard.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

In north Portland, Oregon, tucked between a recently redeveloped affordable housing community and aging public housing apartments, sits a verdant grid of young trees. A bit further on, colorful native plants grow beneath a stand of mature trees loaded with ripening figs, Asian pears, apples, plums, pears, nectarines, and hazelnuts. A small group of people moves among the trees weeding thistle, hauling wheelbarrows full of mulch, pruning branches, and anticipating the summer harvest to come. A small sign announces that this is the Fruits of Diversity Community Orchard.

Portland projects an image of a city of foodies who care deeply about their food and where it is grown. A bounty of community gardens, farmers' markets, food oriented nonprofits, and community-based organizations help to reinforce the city's image as "the capital of the U.S. alternative food movement" (Coplen & Cuneo, 2015, p. 91). These alternative food networks (AFN) promote local, healthy, sustainable, and/or justly produced foods. AFNs are responses to the industrial agri-food system that attempt to re-localize food production and consumption, while also ascribing to ideas about sustainability and re-embedding markets within social relations (Hinrichs, 2000; Jarosz, 2008; McClintock, 2014). Many AFNs include community building among their goals, often without defining their community-oriented ideas.

This study explores one such project, the Fruits of Diversity Community Orchard (FOD), and the challenges that arise when an outside organization collaborates with a community-based urban agriculture project. A community orchard is an alternative method of food provisioning that allows a community to grow and share food without a

need for profit. To create a community orchard a group of people works together to design, plant, harvest, and maintain fruit and nut producing plants. FOD sits adjacent to two highly diverse affordable housing developments on land maintained by the housing authority of Portland, Oregon and aims to increase food access in the neighborhood. Beyond fruit, the orchard also hopes to grow a community of people to care for the orchard.

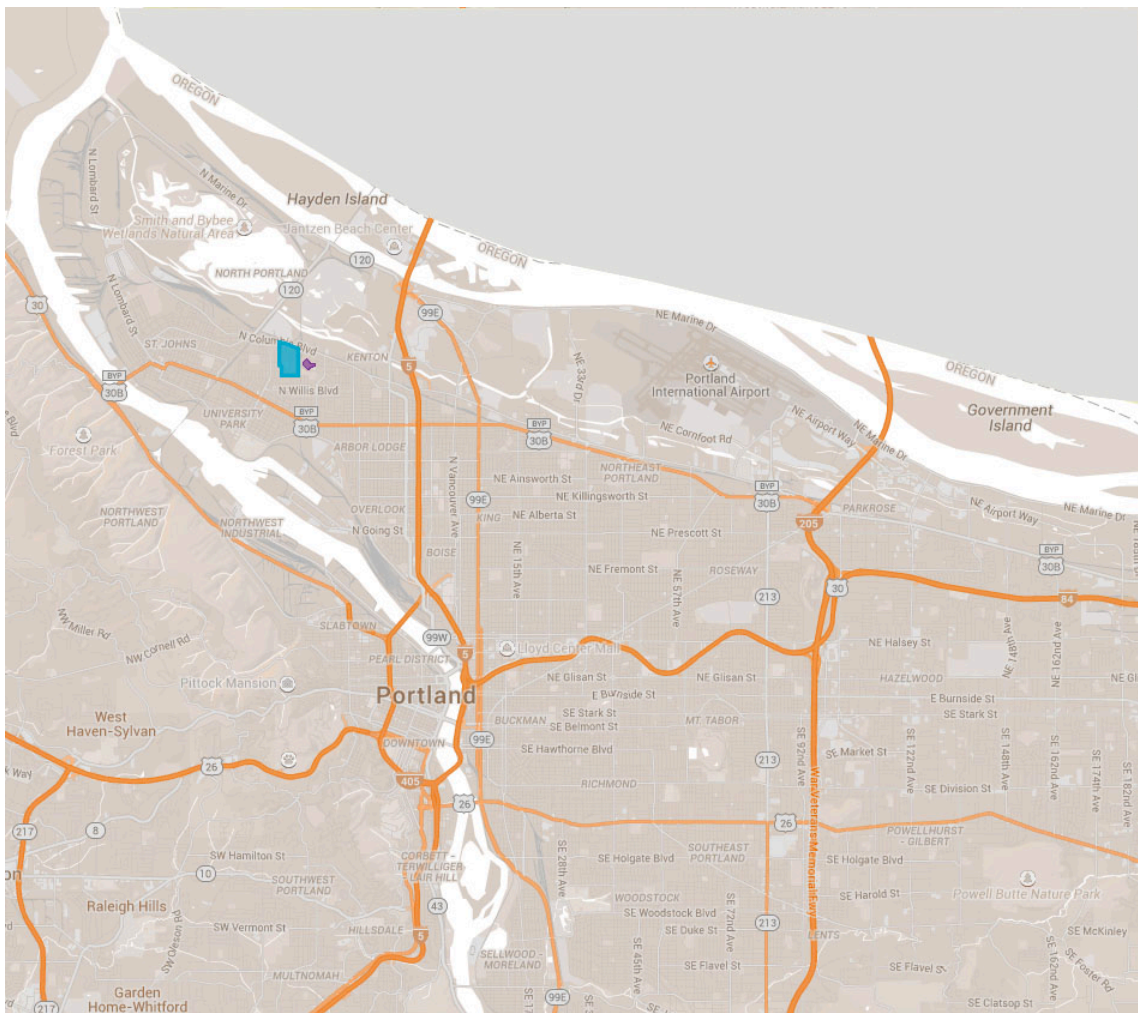


Figure 1. Map of Portland with study area highlighted.

The city of Portland, Oregon with the north Portland affordable housing developments of New Columbia (left, turquoise) and Tamarack Apartments (right, purple) highlighted.

Community gardeners from the neighborhood, motivated by a desire to provide more fresh fruit for their children, planted a small orchard in 2006. In 2012, neighbors invited a nonprofit organization to help expand the orchard, spurring increased interest and activity in the orchard. But as a result, participation in the orchard eventually shifted from mostly neighbors to mostly volunteers from outside the neighborhood. As an active participant in the process to design and maintain the expanded orchard, I observed this shift, noting that the idea of the orchard began to change from a neighbor-led project to provide fruit to neighbors, to one that relied on volunteers to raise fruit for distribution to low-income people. At the core of this change is the lack of understanding of who or what is the “community” of the community orchard.

Following similar work on differentiating the meanings of community in AFNs (Kato, 2014; Kurtz, 2001; Pudup, 2008) this study asks the questions: What does community mean in the context of a community orchard? In what ways does partnering with a nonprofit from outside the neighborhood influence community and the way the project is operationalized? Through participant observation and conversations with orchard participants I found that there are many ideas about what community means, showing that community is continually produced and negotiated through the issues that arise as neighbors work together and with people from outside the neighborhood. I also found that bringing in a nonprofit from outside of the neighborhood shifted participation from neighbors to mostly non-neighbors and impacted the community through their communications, aesthetics, decision making, and inattention to racial dynamics in the neighborhood and orchard.

This thesis first situates community orchards within the literature on alternative food networks (AFN) and the ways similar AFNs attempt to fill in the gaps left by the state's declining role in ensuring social welfare. Next the paper describes the study site and the organizations involved in the project. After a description of the methods employed in the study, the paper highlights three key findings drawing on literature about community development and race in AFNs. First, neighbors and non-neighbors who participate in the project define community in different ways. Specifically, most neighbors define community based on the geographic boundaries of the neighborhood. Most non-neighbors include geography in their definition of community but also add other dimensions to what they consider community. By emphasizing participation in the project or a shared passion in conjunction with geography, non-neighbors are able to include themselves in the community. Second, neighbor involvement is important to interviewees but has been limited by a number of factors, including neighborhood divisions and organizational challenges. Notably, orchard participants do not reflect the racial and ethnic diversity of the neighborhood, putting this project at risk of being "just another" urban agriculture project that is actually reproducing inequality rather than fighting against it. Finally, collaborating with an organization from outside the neighborhood resulted in both positive additions and challenges for the orchard. Among those challenges were: the establishment of a formal volunteer program; communication that does not always work for neighbors; and not including neighbors in decision making.

Chapter 2

Alternative Food Networks and Community in the Neoliberal City

This study focuses on one type of alternative food network (AFN), an urban community orchard. In a community orchard, a community of people collectively maintains the orchard year-round and shares the harvest among, and often beyond, that community. A community orchard “is simply an orchard that is not being managed for private profit and is cared for by some community of people” (Ames, 2013, p. 2). Though it may seem simple, the removal of the profit motivation opens up community orchards to be so much more than merely sites of fruit and nut production. The authors of *The Common Ground Book of Orchards* write, “Because their prime purpose is not the production of fruit, we have the opportunity to think creatively about what these orchards can and should be like” (Keech, Clifford, Kendall, King, Turner, & Vines, 2000, p. 21). This thesis takes an in depth look at one community orchard and asks participants to describe the community of the community orchard and discuss what the community should be.

Community orchards distinguish themselves from other AFNs in their communal nature, accessibility, and longevity. While many AFNs focus on changing individual consumption patterns, community orchards offer a cooperative approach to creating long-term sources of free food in urban areas. For example, community garden projects are often based on an allotment system in which individuals rent a garden plot to grow and harvest their own produce for their own purposes (ACGA, n.d.). In a community orchard, the trees are communally maintained and harvested; no one has any claim to a particular

tree or its fruit (Ames, 2013; Blomley, 2004; Keech et al., 2000). While community gardens are often fenced off and only accessible by the gardeners, the community orchard is not fenced and people are able to enter the orchard and harvest the fruit at any time. Another unique feature of a community orchard is the long-term commitment it takes to plant fruit-producing trees given that young trees do not bear fruit for several years after planting and can thrive for decades (Ames, 2013). Community orchards are not interim land uses, such as community gardens allowed to operate on vacant urban lots until the potential rent is sufficiently high to redevelop the property (Colasanti, 2012; Eizenberg, 2012; Smith, 2008; Voicu & Been, 2008). Rather, community orchards are planted with the intention that the trees will provide fruit for generations.

The body of literature on urban agriculture and AFNs in the US is growing, but there is a dearth of peer-reviewed studies on community orchards. Studies on community gardens provide a point of comparison for community orchards despite the differences between the two types of urban agriculture. The public health literature on urban agriculture projects have theorized a myriad of benefits including increasing access to fresh food; building community; increasing political participation; creating open space; increasing physical activity; promoting environmental health; mitigating climate change; providing employment opportunities; increasing neighborhood safety; and providing job skills training (Alaimo, Packnett, Miles, & Kruger, 2008; Brown & Jameton, 2000; Cannuscio, Weiss, & Asch, 2010; Eizenberg, 2012; Saldivar-Tanaka & Krasny, 2004; Wakefield, Yeudall, Taron, Reynolds, & Skinner, 2007). Beyond health benefits, the literature also describes community gardens as building socially cohesive communities (Malakoff, 1995), being “cultural and social neighborhood centers” (Saldivar-Tanaka &

Krasny, 2004, p. 404), and increasing the social capital of participants (Nettle, 2014; Saldivar-Tanaka & Krasny, 2004). Community gardens can be spaces of organizing and activism, especially when a garden is threatened with eviction (Armstrong, 2000; Eizenberg, 2012; Malakoff, 1995; Saldivar-Tanaka & Krasny, 2004).

Many scholars have raised salient critiques of community gardens and other AFNs. Those critiques include the ideas that they create additional burdens for the least resourced families (Allen, 2010; Ghose & Pettygrove, 2014; Pudup, 2008); place the responsibility for social welfare on the market or nonprofits instead of the state (Alkon, 2014; Delind, 2006); seek solutions to food access through individual choice and consumption practices without questioning larger systemic problems (Guthman, 2008a; Pudup, 2008); are “depoliticizing real people and places” (DeLind, 2015, p. 5); and support the neoliberal roll back of social services (Ghose & Pettygrove, 2014; McClintock, 2014; Pudup, 2008). AFNs may also reproduce racial and class inequities within these alternative spaces (Ghose & Pettygrove, 2014).

A prominent critique of urban agriculture is that it supports neoliberalism - economic policies and political ideas that prioritize the free functioning of the market while promoting privatization and shrinking the social safety net. With the entrenchment of neoliberal ideology over the past three decades, national governments have become institutions whose primary responsibility is to facilitate the free market. The neoliberal city is burdened with increasing responsibility for the welfare of its residents without additional funding, while federal redistributive social programs undergo continual cuts (Hackworth, 2007). Capitalists and the

state have pushed off the assurance of social reproduction to individuals, charities, and nonprofits (Heynen, 2010; Katz, 2001; McClintock, 2014; Pudup, 2008). As federal funding of welfare programs declines, community-based organizations have stepped up to fill in the gaps. Placing the responsibility for social reproduction, specifically food provisioning, on community organizations acts as a subsidy for capitalist accumulation. In other words, supporting low-income people through subsidizing the cost of food means that lower wages will be sufficient to meet the needs of the workers (Basset, 1981; Harvey, 2006; Joseph, 2002; Katz, 2001; McClintock, 2014).

The community organizations attempting to fill the gap left by the roll back of social services are saddled with the challenge of solving local problems that result from national and global processes (Alkon & Mares, 2012; DeFilippis, Fisher, & Shragge, 2010). This neoliberal “turn to community” has elevated the importance of community while at the same time diluting the power and meaning of community (DeFilippis et al., 2010, p. 26). The global scale at which many economic decisions are made and a lack of funding limit the power of community organizations. To access capital and grow, community organizations form public-private partnerships with the state and depend on volunteer labor to provide services to the poor and marginalized (Hackworth, 2007; Hamel, Lustiger-Thaler, & Mayer, 2005; McClintock, 2014; Perkins, 2009, 2013; Wolch, 1990). These organizations then narrow their focus to service provision and promoting community development, rather than organizing people to confront the underlying

issues that create community problems (DeFilippis, Fisher, & Shragge, 2006; DeFilippis, 2008).

Not only has the power of community organizations been limited, but the meaning of community has become ambiguous to the point that from almost any perspective, community is considered an “unequivocal good, an indicator of a high quality life, a life of human understanding, caring, selflessness, belonging” (Joseph, 2002, p. vii). Gibson-Graham (2006) writes, “It is an interesting irony that in the current neoliberal political and economic climate, in which individualism is promoted as an unquestioned social good, all over the world the term community has increasingly come to the fore” (p. 84). Though AFNs, many of which are coordinated by community organizations, may include “community building” among their goals, the intended community of the project may go undefined or be defined as people within a particular location, without acknowledgement that multiple social networks and groups can overlap in one place without forming a community (Kato, 2014; Massey, 1994). Thinking critically about the social relations that produce community is important to understanding what community is and how nonprofit organizations impact community.

Communities are produced through the social relations within the community, but as DeFilippis (2008) points out, “communities are, to a significant degree, products of larger social relationships and linkages” (p. 231). One of these overarching social relationships is race, a social construct, like community, that is “produced through political and social processes” (Brahinsky, 2011, p. 145). Some food scholars address

race and whiteness in AFNs using Critical Race Theory¹ to discuss the predominance of white participants in AFNs and a tendency for organizations and people to see their projects as “colorblind.” Colorblindness is the “denial, distortion, and/or minimization of race and racism” used “to justify the racial status quo or to explain away racial inequalities in the United States” (Neville, Spanierman, & Doan, 2006, p. 276).

Some scholars explicitly draw the link between race and food projects, with multiple studies demonstrating the trend of majority white AFN participants in places with large populations of color (Alkon & McCullen, 2011; Guthman, 2008b; Hoover, 2013; Ramírez, 2015; Slocum, 2007). At issue here is the fact that many AFNs aim to increase food access and target low-income families and people of color, but then struggle to attract local residents or their target population to participate in the project (DeLind, 2015; Guthman, 2008b, 2011; Hoover, 2013; Kato, 2014; Kurtz, 2001; Ramírez, 2015; Sbicca, 2012). AFN project coordinators may blame low participation rates on the community member’s lack of knowledge about “good food” or on cultural differences rather than on structural inequalities that restrict access to food and other resources. These coordinators, often white staff of nonprofit organizations, fail to acknowledge the ways their own position, beliefs, and white privilege influence the project. The evangelical zeal with which “good food” proponents promote their ideas about what people should eat and the pervasive whiteness of AFNs regularly go unexamined, leading to the (unintentional) creation of white spaces and exclusion of

¹ Critical Race Theory pushes back against the assumptions that whiteness is normal and that racism is only individual aggressions against people of color (Milner, 2007; Parker & Lynn, 2002). Instead, CRT sees racism in the United States as a social construct that is an “endemic part of American life, deeply ingrained through historical consciousness and ideological choices about race” (Parker & Lynn, 2002, p. 9).

people of color (Alkon, 2012; Alkon & McCullen, 2011; Guthman, 2008b, 2011; Hoover, 2013; Lyson, 2014; Slocum, 2006, 2007). Even people of color-led AFNs struggle to involve residents if the staff are not from the neighborhood in which they operate (Sbicca, 2012). Class differences and a lack of understanding about residents lived experiences may create a disconnect between organizations and the communities they intend to serve or empower (Sbicca, 2012).

The literature on neoliberal cities, community organizations, and AFNS, coupled with my own questions about what neighbors and others think about the orchard, who should be participating, and who should be benefiting from the orchard led me to want to study the community orchard. What does community mean in the community orchard? In what ways does partnering with a nonprofit, one coming from a white neoliberal operating model, impact the community and the way the project operates at the study site?

Chapter 3 Study Site

The study site is the Fruits of Diversity Community Orchard, which is situated behind the Tamarack Apartments and adjacent to New Columbia in Portland, Oregon. The Tamarack Apartments is a 120 unit public housing complex owned and managed by Home Forward, Portland’s public housing authority (Home Forward, 2011). New Columbia is a dense 82-acre development of “854 housing units including public housing, affordable rentals, senior housing, and both market rate and affordable homes for sale” (Housing Authority of Portland, 2007, p. 1).

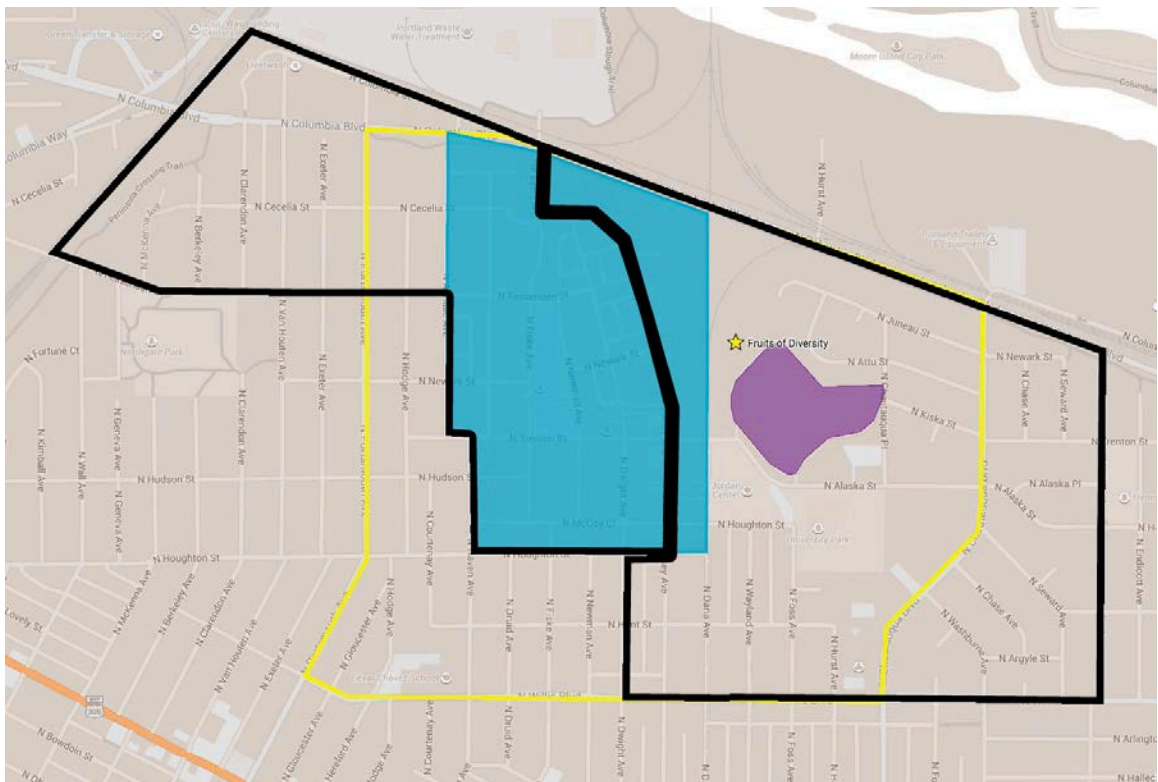


Figure 2. The study site

The study site: New Columbia (turquoise), Tamarack Apartments (purple), Seeds of Harmony Community Garden boundaries (yellow), and Block Group 1, Census Tract 40.01 (black, left) and Block Group 5, Census Tract 39.01 (black, right).

Displacement & Redevelopment in New Columbia

The Housing Authority of Portland opened New Columbia in 2006, on the site of a former public housing complex called Columbia Villa. The Columbia Villa housing development was built in 1943 to house shipyard workers during World War II. After the war, it became permanent low-income housing managed by the Housing Authority of Portland (HAP, now called Home Forward). The low-density neighborhood had a distinctly suburban feel, isolated from the rest of the Portsmouth neighborhood with its curvilinear streets and just a few entrances. Columbia Villa was originally an all white development and HAP did not allow African Americans to live in the neighborhood until 1973 (K. Gibson, personal communication, May 30, 2013). By 2000, Columbia Villa was the most diverse neighborhood in Oregon (Gibson, 2007b).

A long history of housing discrimination in Portland created segregated neighborhoods leading to concentrated poverty, income inequality, and crime (Gibson, 2007a, 2007b; Goodling, Green, & McClintock, 2015; Massey, 2004). Through community policing and intensive social services the neighborhood recovered from a period of violence, drugs, and gang activity in the 1980s and 1990s; however, Columbia Villa retained a stigma as a dangerous place to live (Gibson, 2007b). That stigma, coupled with racial prejudice, may have reinforced a lack of investment in this neighborhood, leading to further concentration of poverty and segregation (Sampson & Raudenbush, 2004). Federal divestment from public housing, aging infrastructure, increasing cost of maintenance, and plans to make the city more dense spurred HAP in 2001 to apply for \$35 million from Housing Opportunities for People Everywhere (HOPE VI) federal housing program to transform Columbia Villa into New Columbia, a

dense, mixed income development (Gibson, personal communication, May 30, 2013). The HOPE VI program emphasized public-private partnerships, allowing private developers to build and manage public housing and build market rate single-family homes in the neighborhood (Gibson, 2007b; Hackworth, 2007). Columbia Villa was demolished and rebuilt between 2003 and 2006, displacing 1,300 residents, of whom one third were Black (Gibson, 2007b).

The relocation of Columbia Villa's diverse residents is just one example of a long string of urban renewal projects that displaced African-Americans in Portland. Portland's African-American community has continually experienced displacement, exploitation, and discrimination through the processes of disinvestment and residential racial segregation (Gibson, 2007a; Goodling, et al., 2015). As former Metro Councilor Ed Washington said, "It always seems to be that the city, or the feds, or somebody have always felt that it was ok to break up our neighborhoods" (quoted in Arbuthnot & Wilhelm, 2009). The redevelopment of Columbia Villa changed the makeup of neighborhood residents as well as the buildings. Some residents did not return and many more new people moved in, coming from a wider variety of economic backgrounds.

Table 1. Timeline

1943	Columbia Villa built by Housing Authority of Portland (now called Home Forward) with 462 units to house WWII shipyard workers. Columbia Villa converted to public housing after the war (Housing Authority of Portland, 2007).
1968	Tamarack Apartments built by Housing Authority of Portland with 120 public housing units (Home Forward, 2011).
2001	Housing Authority of Portland awarded \$35 million grant through U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development Hope VI program to redevelop Columbia Villa (Housing Authority of Portland, 2007).
2003 – 2006	Redevelopment of Columbia Villa into New Columbia. New Columbia includes “854 housing units including public housing, affordable rentals, senior housing, and both market rate and affordable homes for sale” (Housing Authority of Portland, 2007, p. 1).
2006	Village Gardens starts Seeds of Harmony Community Garden (SOH) in New Columbia. Decisions are made by a committee of gardeners including the boundaries for participation in the garden and to plant fruit and nut trees behind the Tamarack Apartments.
2012	Seeds of Harmony garden committee invites Portland Fruit Tree Project to partner on expanding the orchard.
2013 – 2014	Study period. Orchard volunteers must have participated 3 or more times from Jan 2013 – Nov 2014 to be included in this study.
2013	Groundbreaking and planting of new orchard (February).
2013	Orchard named “Fruits of Diversity Community Orchard” by SOH gardeners & non-neighbors who had been participating in the orchard expansion project (June).
2014	Interviews for this study conducted Nov 2014 – Dec 2014.

Community Building through Village Gardens

In 2006, New Columbia management invited Village Gardens to facilitate a community garden project with the goal of building community and bridging some of the divisions between returning residents, new residents, and Tamarack Apartments residents. Village Gardens is a neighborhood-based organization focused on food access, health, equity, and promoting leadership from within. Prior to working in New Columbia,

Village Gardens worked in another North Portland public housing development, St. John's Woods. The Seeds of Harmony community garden (SOH) provides plots for over 70 families. The SOH garden committee, composed of gardeners from the neighborhood, coordinates SOH. The garden committee makes decisions by consensus and meetings are often translated in to multiple languages. The garden committee established the boundaries for participation in SOH that extend beyond the residents of New Columbia and Tamarack Apartments to include parts of the surrounding neighborhood (see Figure 2). These boundaries were intentionally set to help break down some of the fear and stigma that had developed between the surrounding neighborhoods and Columbia Villa.

Through garden committee discussions, residents brought up the need for fresh fruit resulting in the planting of several fruit trees in a grassy area behind the Tamarack Apartments building in 2006. In 2012, the garden committee decided to partner with the Portland Fruit Tree Project on the care of the existing trees and an expansion of the orchard. The Portland Fruit Tree Project's mission is to "increase equitable access to healthful food and strengthen communities by empowering neighbors to share in the harvest and care of city-grown produce" (Portland Fruit Tree Project, n.d.). In April 2013 volunteers from across the city planted 25 fruit trees and 60 edible shrubs in the orchard.

Chapter 4 Methods

The overall research plan is a qualitative case study that includes primary data collection in order to answer the research questions: What does community mean in the context of a community orchard? And in what ways did partnering with a nonprofit from outside the neighborhood influence community and the way the project is operationalized? Data collection methods included qualitative interviews and participant observation to generate a thick description of the community orchard and participant views of the orchard. I began participating in planning the orchard in January 2013 and have remained an active volunteer. In February, 2014 I became an Orchard Coordinator when the Portland Fruit Tree Project (PFTP) created the position. I also serve on the PFTP Board of Directors.

Table 2. Interviewees by Role:

Role	Number	Names
PFTP Staff	3	Katy, Michael, Gareth
VG Staff	2	Wasongolo*, Jason
Coordinators and Neighbors	5	Doug, Michelle, Debbie, Roy, Wasongolo*
Stewards (non-neighbor)	4	Colleen, Kristin, Laurie, Eric
Coordinator, non-neighbor	1	Scott
TOTAL INTERVIEWS	14	

*Wasongolo is both VG staff and a neighbor

Table 3. Interviewees by Residence:

Residence	Number	Names
Neighbors	5	Doug, Michelle, Debbie, Roy, Wasongolo
Non-neighbors	9	Colleen, Kristin, Laurie, Eric, Scott, Michael**, Gareth**, Katy**, Jason**
TOTAL INTERVIEWS	14	

**4 non-neighbors are organization staff

Sample and Participants

I conducted fourteen semi-structured interviews with people who have been repeatedly involved in the orchard. I also spoke with a City of Portland staff person who supports community orchards and the Tamarack Apartments manager. For the purpose of this study, I defined “repeatedly involved” in the orchard either as attending three or more events or living near the orchard. Based on attendance records from PFTP and my own observations, I compiled a list of thirty potential interviewees, including people in long-term volunteer positions (Orchard Stewards or Orchard Coordinators), people who live in the Tamarack Apartments with an expressed interest in the orchard, Village Gardens and PFTP staff involved in the project, and volunteers who attended three or more events from January, 2013 through November, 2014.

Community is often determined spatially or by a common interest (Leventhal, Brooks-Gunn, & Kamerman, 2008; Nettle, 2014). I therefore evaluated interviewees based on their connection to the neighborhood and participation. In this paper, the term “neighborhood” refers to New Columbia and the Tamarack Apartments and “neighbor” refers to residents of these affordable housing communities. I sorted the list of potential interviewees into four categories based on role and residence (see Tables 2 and 3):

1. **Neighbors:** Orchard Coordinators (volunteers who have been involved in the orchard since the project began) who are residents of New Columbia and Tamarack Apartments (neighbors) and neighbors who participated in the orchard prior to PFTP’s involvement
2. **Orchard Stewards:** volunteers who committed to working in the orchard together every month during 2014 (majority non-neighbors)
3. **Staff:** Current or former staff from Village Gardens and Portland Fruit Tree Project who have been involved in the orchard
4. Orchard Coordinators who are not neighbors
5. Other volunteers

I estimated that a sample size of ten to fifteen respondents who had repeatedly participated in the community orchard, out of the pool of 30, to be enough to reach data saturation (Saumure & Given, 2008). To achieve a balance of opinions from neighborhood residents, organization staff, and repeat volunteers, I invited a purposive sample of five neighbors, four stewards, five staff (one who is also a neighbor), and one orchard coordinator who is not a neighbor to participate in an interview (Payls, 2008).

Neighbors were the group that was most difficult to reach and get to commit to interviews. Three neighbors did not respond and a fourth said she was too busy to participate, so additional neighbors were invited to reach a total of five neighbor interviews. The eight non-neighbors initially invited to participate all completed interviews.

Data Collection

Data collection methods included interviews with participants, active participation in orchard activities, and descriptive field notes. I regularly attended monthly work parties and meetings. I volunteered to water the orchard several times and led a harvesting event. I also walked to the orchard multiple times to observe the orchard and chat with neighbors and maintenance staff. These observations helped me to draft the interview guide and also aided my understanding and analysis of the interviews. Participation in the orchard facilitated access to interviewees and PFTP records. I had previously met all of the people invited to an interview and was familiar to the Village Gardens staff.

I contacted potential interviewees by phone, email, or word of mouth through a Village Gardens staff person followed by a phone call. Interviews took place in a New Columbia building or a café convenient for the interviewee, and in one case, at the respondent's home. Interviews were digitally recorded and respondents filled out a brief post-interview survey to gather demographic and supporting information. The length of interviews ranged from 36 minutes to 90 minutes, with an average of 65 minutes. Interviewees were informed of their rights as research participants and signed a consent form agreeing to participate and allowing the use of their name in this paper.

Data Analysis

After each interview, I wrote memos about themes and key ideas that emerged (Lofland & Lofland, 1995; Weiss, 1995). After completing all the interviews, I began transcribing the interviews, again writing memos. These memos informed the coding process, helping to develop nine main codes (e.g. definition of community, distribution, contradictions & struggles) with numerous sub-codes (e.g. barriers to community, distribution models, mistrust of others). I uploaded all transcripts and codes into Dedoose, an online cloud-based platform, for organizing and coding data. Coding the transcripts helped to identify themes and make sense of both the participant's words and my interpretation of those ideas (DeWalt & DeWalt, 2002).

After reading through and coding three transcripts, additional themes emerged. I incorporated these themes into the definition of existing codes or created new codes. For example, many participants noted that getting neighbors to participate in the orchard was an ongoing struggle. A new sub-code "neighbor participation" was added under the code

“contradictions and struggles.” I wrote memos as I read, coded, reread, and re-coded the transcripts to ensure I captured all emerging themes.

The goal of this qualitative analysis was to distill meaning from the interactions I had with community orchard participants and to develop a narrative about community in the context of the community orchard based on the words of participants. Given the small sample, this study is specific to the study site and the orchard participants and may not represent all community orchards; instead, it offers an in-depth look at one community-based urban agriculture project in the context of an affordable housing neighborhood.

Chapter 5

Results and Discussion

Defining Community

This study set out to examine the meaning of community in a community orchard but participants struggled with the term community, calling it “a problem word” or saying that it “feels very... loosey-goosey.” Nettle (2014) calls community “aspirational,” descriptive, and “a slippery term, combining moral and social values, spatial relationships, and collective identities and solidarities” (p. 115). Community is too messy for some; for example, Pudup (2008) proposes using “organized garden project” instead of “community garden” because “the question of what or if a community is (or can be) the basis for a community garden is as murky as the compost heap” (p. 1231). Other words have been suggested for community orchard type projects that exclude community, including “public orchard,” “organized garden project” (Pudup, 2008), and “urban food forestry” (Clark & Nicholas, 2013). These terms avoid the complexity of community in an attempt to simplify what actually happens on the ground in urban agriculture projects.

Nettle (2014) adds that community gardeners themselves use the term “community” in a variety of ways to describe their work. Similarly, the participants I talked to regularly invoked the word community, in geographic, aspirational, and often contradictory ways. In a long meeting in June 2013, orchard participants decided to name the orchard the Fruits of Diversity Community Orchard, consciously electing to keep community in the name in order to align themselves with other community orchards and

emphasize community. This orchard, as will be discussed below, is full of challenges and overlapping communities.

Community is a “contradictory and contested concept” (DeFilippis et al., 2010, p. 12) and is commonly used in a few different ways, including as a place, a space, or a social network or group with a shared purpose or affinity (Leventhal et al., 2008; Massey, 1994; Nettle, 2014). Place, as a geographical locale, is often conflated with community. Communities do not always occupy the same place and many communities may overlap in one place (Massey, 1994). Participants in this study used the word community to indicate a place at a variety of scales, from the Tamarack Apartments to the city of Portland, and the social networks of people that move through those places.

Notions of place and affinity were clear in respondents’ descriptions of the community of the community orchard. Thirteen of fourteen interview participants said that where people live in relation to the orchard is important in identifying who is part of the community, but there was not agreement on much else, including the distance to orchard and whether other factors help to identify the community. The specific boundaries that people consider part of the community varied: one person said the boundary should only include the neighborhood; seven people’s responses mirrored the Seeds of Harmony boundaries or on an undefined “walking distance;” two people broadened the focus to include other north Portland neighborhoods; and three people were more general, saying “neighbors” or people who live nearby are the community, without attaching a specific distance.

In addition to geographic distance to the orchard, interviewees defined the community as people who are involved or participate, people who share a passion, and people living

on a low income. Just one person, a neighbor, said that where people are from has nothing to do with the community. Roy said, “To me, community isn’t just a neighborhood, it’s the people involved.” Roy points out that the community is also used to describe the relationships between people that are constructed and reinforced through being in the same space or by having a “shared passion” for the orchard, as Scott, a non-neighbor Orchard Coordinator, described it (Leventhal et al., 2008; Pudup, 2008). This definition of community accepts a more complex type of community, one that encompasses all the social networks and identities that overlap in the community orchard (Massey, 1994).

Complicating community further is the notion of a “sense of place,” which can differ greatly depending on the individuals’ position and identity (Massey, 1994). For example, someone who lives right next to the orchard may experience the place differently than an orchard steward who drives there once a month. Their motivations to participate in the orchard are likely influenced by their sense of place. The neighbor who can see the orchard from their window might be motivated to keep weeds down in the orchard in order to maintain an orderly appearance or discourage illicit activities near their home. While the steward might see the orchard completely differently, for example, as a beautiful natural place to get away for a few hours and spend some time weeding to “give back to the community.” Colleen describes sense of place in terms of intimacy, saying the orchard “might be more intimate for some people because they live next to it but then it might be more intimate for some other people because it’s something they’ve been doing work around or had a passion around for a long time.”

Defining a community involves saying who is in the community and who is outside of the community. Exclusion “can lead to the construction of sameness, rather than to a recognition of what is common” (Staeheli, 2008, p. 9). It can also encourage the development of a sense of community. Interviewees made comments indicating that being a neighbor makes one an insider to the community of the orchard, even if they do not participate, because the orchard is intended to be a community resource for the neighborhood.

As inherent insiders to the community, neighbors defined the community differently than non-neighbors. Four of the five neighbors interviewed agreed that people living within the Seeds of Harmony boundaries form the basis of the community, not any other factor. For example, Debbie defined the community as “everybody” and when asked to clarify who is “everybody,” she stated, “New Columbia and the Tamaracks. And some of the homeowners back there.” Debbie’s description matches the Seeds of Harmony garden boundaries. Michelle, using the term “immediate community” to mean the neighborhood, said, “How far should we go? Who should harvest it? I really feel like the immediate community should do it. Because we’re trying to be self-sustainable here. That’s why we have the gardens.”

Notably, eight of the nine non-neighbors I spoke with said that while geography is part of defining the community, other factors should be considered as well. Scott put it this way, “The community, it could be associated with the physical place, a distance from a certain location. But, it also can just mean like-minded people that share an interest or a passion, and fruit being that passion, I guess.” By highlighting the shared interest aspect of community, the non-neighbors are making themselves insiders to the community.

The non-neighbors I interviewed make space for themselves in the community by expanding the definition of community beyond the geographic boundary of the neighborhood. Since they feel like they are part of the community but do not live in the neighborhood, they define the community in a way that includes them. In addition to coming together around a shared passion, some non-neighbors stated that through working in the orchard they become part of the community. Kristin stated, “I guess the community would be the people that come to the orchard, to take care of it and benefit from it.” Laurie described how her sense of ownership grew through doing work in the orchard. At first she thought people might question her for being in the orchard outside of work parties and felt that “this isn’t my space.” After watering the orchard on her own and taking a friend to visit the orchard, that feeling changed. She said, “showing the orchard to other people really built that sense of real pride and ownership for me, because I was able to tell someone else, this is our orchard.”

Further discussion is necessary in order to come to a definition of the community of the community orchard, an important step towards understanding who should be participating in the project and eating the fruit. An open dialogue about who should be participating and making decisions will become even more important as the trees mature and begin to bear fruit in large quantities. Orchard participants have not discussed who should be eating the fruit and how it should be harvested and distributed. Interviewees discussed many ideas about fruit harvesting and distribution, ideas that are directly impacted by their views about community and who the orchard is meant to serve. For example, all five neighbors shared similar ideas about having a group of volunteers and neighbors harvest the orchard and then pass out the fruit somewhere in the neighborhood.

Two neighbors discussed experiences with emergency food providers who have held similar free food pass outs. They emphasized a need to have an organized and equitable way to distribute the fruit to neighbors.

When asked about harvesting and sharing the fruit, some participants expressed a contradictory sentiment saying that they want the entire community to participate and feel ownership of the orchard while at the same time feeling concerned that others will be “greedy” or “steal” fruit from the community orchard. This idea about stealing fruit is interesting because many participants said the fruit is for everyone almost in the same breath that they worried that people would steal it. One neighbor shared a story about confronting someone she did not recognize who was harvesting some apples because she thought they were taking too many. She went on to say,

You know, it’s, ehh, what is community? You can make it a negative thing. It’s like, who’s that person? And why are they taking all those apples? You know, fine if you live in the area. But it’s the greed, too. There’s people that take advantage of community, gardens and/or orchards. But yeah, it’s for everybody.”

Interviewees shared a variety of comfort levels with people grazing in the orchard and harvesting on their own. At one end of the spectrum, one person said, “If it’s a community orchard then it’s public property. A person who comes in and picks all the plums, fruit, for whatever reason they need them, they’re part of your community. Maybe they’re going to make a pie, I don’t know.” At the other end, some people said that taking anything more than a piece of fruit or two to eat in the orchard is stealing from the community. Most participants fell somewhere in the middle, saying that it is fine to graze a little but the fruit should be harvested and distributed as a group activity.

Interviewees stressed wanting to have a fair and equitable way to distribute the fruit with the community. Doug explained this idea saying; “There’s kind of a tension there” between “having the fruit tree orchard available for everybody” and guaranteeing that “the people who put all the work in to it are not deprived of the fruits of their labor.” There is also an undercurrent of wanting to have control over the space of the orchard and to retain a sense of ownership while still sharing the fruit with others. Again, it is important to understand who the community is in order to ensure that orchard participants feel comfortable with the way the fruit is distributed. Defining the community and who should benefit from the orchard will help clarify some of these issues around harvesting and distribution.

Neighborhood Divisions

Pudup (2008) reminds us, “‘community’ in a community garden can mean a group of urban residents sharing neighborhood proximity but no other affiliation. Yet everyday life frequently reminds us neighbors are not always friends, much less a ‘community’” (p. 1232). Even though most neighbors defined community as the neighborhood, that does not mean it is a cohesive and harmonious community. Within the neighborhood there is tension between residents of Tamarack Apartments and New Columbia. Tamarack residents feel like they did not benefit from the redevelopment of New Columbia and that most resources go to New Columbia residents. Debbie noted that people tend to think that the orchard is for residents of New Columbia and that “irritates me because we’re a community, or we’re supposed to be a community and I feel that we aren’t anymore.” Prior to the planting the original fruit trees, the space was “blank,” “just

grass and nothing,” and “empty.” Tamarack residents organized the original planting of the orchard and it is a point of pride to have the orchard behind the Tamarack Apartment building. Talking about the planting of the original trees, Debbie said,

“All of us from the garden and different people from the different community come out and we worked so hard to get it. We were so proud of that...We all just, everybody was so excited and the fact that the kids and some of the seniors could be able to come out and get fruit. We finally got something, you know, out of the New Columbia being built. Finally the Tamaracks got something. I know it’s for the whole community, but it made us feel part of it.”

But this pride can sometimes be interpreted as possessiveness. One respondent from New Columbia said, “There’s still residents from Tamaracks sometimes coming over there, ‘What are you doing in our orchard?’ Well, sorry about your luck, but legally this land belongs to the railroad and it’s leased by Village Gardens, and then the orchard is being run by two nonprofits, so it’s not your orchard.” These neighborhood tensions show that the community contains multiple social networks that overlap at the site of the orchard.

In addition to the inter-neighborhood tensions, neighbors continue to feel stigmatized by people from the surrounding North Portland neighborhoods. Nearly ten years after the redevelopment of New Columbia, the neighborhood still carries some of the stigma of a dangerous housing project, despite the modernization of the buildings and efforts of groups like Village Gardens. Jason, a former Village Gardens staff member, said,

Looking especially at Tamaracks and New Columbia folks, who are coming maybe from lower socio-economic status, the surrounding neighborhood of New Columbia has a very harsh view of New Columbia and of the old Columbia Villa. And it's still, unfortunately, still viewed as kind of the same, the buildings have changed but the neighborhood hasn't changed kind of thing.

Michelle, who lives in the Tamarack Apartments, also commented on this stigma and complicated it further, adding that some Tamarack and New Columbia residents also have a negative view of where they live. She explains, "You know, this area had a bad reputation... It's a lot from outside, but there's some people within the community, 'Oh, this is the old Villa.'"

Laurie, who recently moved to the neighborhood just outside New Columbia, has heard negative comments about New Columbia from her neighbors. When I asked why her neighbors have a negative view of New Columbia she said,

I think it's racism, it's classism. It's, you know, a sense that there's violence and I think a lot of it is racism. And that's all kind of mixed up together. I think what's really behind a lot of that is fear, because there's a lack of experience and understanding of sort of crossing that barrier and having a genuine experience of human connection that helps dissolve those fears... I think one of the ways that could really help is if more of the people from the neighborhood are working alongside folks who maybe are not, who live on the other, who live across that line, across the border. It's really that working alongside someone that can just go so far in building that human connection. And I've seen it happen a few times at the orchard, it's just been those times, it's like, oh man, that's so great.

Other participants also hope that the orchard can ease some of these neighborhood tensions by being a space to bring people together. Jason said that in the orchard, “We’re coming together and it’s a free space where we can not have our boundaries or our barriers up so much.” He also pointed out that because the orchard is maintained collectively and is open to the public, it is a good place for gardeners to collaborate and work with people from outside community. Roy, a New Columbia resident, sees the orchard as a place where neighbors from New Columbia and the Tamarack Apartments can connect to each other and with people from outside the neighborhood.

The garden kind of started to bring people from both sides together and now the orchard gives them something else to see, plus people from other neighborhoods are coming in. And so it’s just, it opens up the possibilities for the people that are there. They see other people from different neighborhoods and maybe they hear about what they do and it shows them that there’s more than just working at a Subway or a gas station or something like that.

Neighbor Participation

Neighbor participation is essential to fulfilling that vision of being a place that brings people together, but both neighbor and non-neighbor participants noted a lack of neighbor participation in the orchard. Volunteers from outside the neighborhood regularly made up the majority of participants at monthly work parties. Complicating this further, in a neighborhood with a majority people of color population, most volunteers are white. Doug, a neighbor said, “What I’ve noticed in the times that I’ve participated in the work days over there that most people that come are from other parts, they’re not

from the neighborhood... I can practically count on one hand the number of people that are from the community here, and so that's not very many." Laurie, a non-neighbor, wants to "see more community participation in the work parties, and a shared ownership and responsibility for the orchard." Gareth, the PFTP AmeriCorps volunteer, noted that, "For the most part when I've talked to stewards or people who have been involved in the orchard, the Number One thing everybody says is they want to see more participation from the immediate community, the neighborhood." In the above statements, "neighborhood" and "community" indicate people from New Columbia and the Tamarack Apartments, the people who nearly all participants identified as being part of the community.

Participants pointed out a variety of reasons that neighbors might not be getting involved, including the divisions within the neighborhood, confusion about who should be participating, barriers related to time and income, limited communication, and a lack of community building activities. Several participants said neighbors might be more interested in participating in the orchard when there is fruit available to take home to their families. Participants also mentioned different ideas about who should be doing the work, who should have decision-making power, and wanting more opportunities to meet to discuss the orchard.

While most interviewees expressed a desire to have more neighbors participating and a desire to have neighbors feel "ownership" of the orchard, no one wanted to exclude non-neighbor volunteers. Three neighbors commented that it's easy to spot people from outside the neighborhood but were quick to say that the non-neighbor volunteers are appreciated. Though non-neighbors make space for themselves in the community and

make up a majority of orchard volunteers, no one cited that as a reason that neighbors might not be participating. On the contrary, one neighbor said,

Getting to know other people outside the neighborhood is, I think, great. They have their own perspective on things and sometimes outsiders can provide a lot of insight that people that are living right close to the orchard don't have. But I'd like to see more of a balance.

In addition to wanting neighbors to feel ownership of the orchard, interviewees shared a general sense that having more neighbors involved would be better for the orchard itself. If caretakers are not present frequently, needed maintenance may be overlooked and the fruit might not get harvested at the appropriate time. Doug said, "It's gotta be more than just people from outside the community of New Columbia-Tamaracks. The only way you're going to have this blossom into something really big is to have more involvement and participation from the community itself here."

A key issue with wanting more neighbor participation is that the orchard volunteers are not at all representative of the racial and ethnic diversity of the neighborhood (see Table 4). According to Home Forward records, about 51% of neighborhood residents are Black, 42% are White, 3% are Multiracial, and 21% are Hispanic (Home Forward Central Database, accessed by Shelley Marchesi, February 17, 2015). More people of color reside in the neighborhood than the surrounding area, in which 30.5% of residents are Black, 54% are White, 8.5% are Multiracial, and 26.7% are Hispanic (U.S. Census Bureau, 2015). While nine out of fourteen interviewees identified themselves as low income, just one is a person of color. From my participation in work parties, it appeared that the majority of volunteers are white as well.

Table 4. Neighborhood and Study Demographics

	Census blocks ² Total Pop.	Census blocks Percent of Pop.	Neighborhood ³ Total Pop.	Neighborhood Percent of Pop.	Study Sample ⁴ Total Pop.	Study Sample Percent of Pop.	Interview Participants ⁵ Total Pop.	Interview Participants Percent of Pop.
American Indian	0	0%	18	2.0%	0	0%	0	0%
Asian	14	0.2%	12	1.3%	0	0%	0	0%
Black or African American	1789	30.5%	456	50.7%	2	6.7%	1	7.1%
Caucasian or White	3170	54.0%	377	41.9%	27	90.0%	11	78.6%
Hawaiian	13	0.2%	3	0.3%	0	0%	0	0%
Multi-racial	499	8.5%	27	3.0%	0	0%	0	0%
Other	386	6.6%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
No Answer or Unknown	0	0	7	0.8%	1	3.3%	0	0%
Declined to Answer	0	0	0	0%	0	0%	2	14.3%
TOTAL	5871	100.0%	900	100.0%	30	100.0%	14	100.0%

² Two block groups cover most of the neighborhood: Block Group 5, Census Tract 39.01 and Block Group 1, Census Tract 40.01, Multnomah County, Oregon. (U.S. Census Bureau, 2015).

³ This data from Home Forward reflects 100% of Tamarack Apartments residents and 85% of New Columbia residents, those who live in public housing or receive Section 8 assistance. Home Forward does not collect comparable data for the remaining 15% of residents, who live in affordable housing but do not receive Section 8 or public housing, or for the homeowners in the neighborhood (Home Forward Central Database, accessed by Shelley Marchesi, February 17, 2015).

⁴ The race and ethnicity of the study sample as assigned by the author.

⁵ Interview participants were asked to identify their own race and ethnicity in a post-interview survey.

	Census blocks Total Pop.	Census blocks Percent of Pop.	Neighborhood Total Pop.	Neighborhood Percent of Pop.	Study Sample Total Pop.	Study Sample Percent of Pop.	Interview Participants Total Pop.	Interview Participants Percent of Pop.
Non-Hispanic	4306	73.3%	711	79.0%	28	93.3%	11	78.6%
Hispanic	1565	26.7%	189	21.0%	1	3.3%	1	7.1%
Unknown	0	0%	0	0%	1	3.3%	0	0%
Declined to Answer	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	2	14.3%
TOTAL	5871	100.0%	900	100.0%	30	100.0%	14	100.0%

Through participant observation and analyzing the data it became clear that there is a stark racial disparity between those who participate in the orchard and those who live in the neighborhood. The study sample, which included all people who had participated three or more times from January 2013 to November 2014, was 90% white while the neighborhood is only 42% white (see Table 4). This indicates that FOD is failing to retain people of color participants and is attracting mostly white participants, both from the neighborhood and from outside of the neighborhood.

Race is important in this discussion of community in the community orchard because it is one of the “larger social relationships and linkages” that produce community and thus must be addressed in a discussion of what community means (DeFilippis, 2008, p. 231). It is also a critical conversation given the long history of residential concentration and displacement of African Americans in Portland (Gibson, 2007a, 2007b). But the racial makeup of the community and the impacts of race on the community were not central questions in designing this study.⁶ While half of the interviewees brought up racial, ethnic, or language diversity as a positive and distinctive quality of the neighborhood without any prompting, only two participants explicitly discussed race. Those comments focused on the racial dimensions of the stigma applied to the

⁶ In designing this study, I did not plan to ask respondents about race, other than asking them to self-identify their race and ethnicity on a post-interview survey (see Appendix B). I did not ask respondents directly about race during the interviews because I did not want to bias participant’s discussion of community by directing them to evaluate the community based on race or any other characteristic of community. I did expect people to talk about the diversity of the neighborhood and the whiteness of the project, but the whiteness went unacknowledged by study participants, perhaps because they ascribe to a colorblind ideology or perhaps because they did not want to appear racist. In this thesis, I discuss the racial disparity between the neighborhood residents and the orchard participants in order to call attention to the ways race can impact AFNs, even when project leaders and participants do not acknowledge its presence. In this project, by not addressing race, PFTP and participants may be creating a whitened community within a people of color neighborhood.

neighborhood, as in the quote from Laurie above about her neighbors. That interviewees did not discuss race is not surprising, as I am white and all but one of the interviewees is white, and talk about race is often avoided in discussions between white people for fear of seeming racist (Best, 2003; Bonilla-Silva, 2002).

An unacknowledged racial disparity in participation is not unique to FOD. Many alternative food projects operate in people of color neighborhoods, yet the participants are majority white (Hoover, 2013). Those same projects may frame their works as “bringing good food to others” without community participation in defining what “good food” might mean (Guthman, 2008b; Slocum, 2007). Moreover, many AFNs favor “colorblindness” over open dialogue about racism and other systemic inequalities (Guthman, 2008; Ramírez, 2015). These and other practices can create barriers for participation or disinterest by people of color and lead to the creation of white spaces in people of color neighborhoods (Hoover, 2013; Slocum, 2007).

The whiteness of FOD volunteers may be affecting the makeup of the community of the community orchard by erecting a barrier to neighbor participation. Interviewees, who are mostly white, said that neighborhood residents, who are majority people of color, are part of the community of the orchard and should be eating fruit from the orchard. Interview respondents did not utilize the rhetoric of “bringing good food to others,” but the way they define community, the racial disparity in participation, and the fact that many volunteers come from other neighborhoods has the potential to create the same result – mostly white volunteers growing “good food” for others (Guthman, 2008b; Slocum, 2007).

FOD is different from many of the AFNs who aim to “bring good food to others” because it started as a community led project rather than a project imposed on the neighborhood by an outside organization. Neighbors determined that they wanted to grow fruit trees and planted the original orchard. Six years later, they invited PFTP to help expand the orchard. Relying on PFTP, a white nonprofit, to organize the project and recruit volunteers risks reproducing racial and class inequities seen within other AFNs unless attention is paid to promoting neighbor participation (Ghose & Pettygrove, 2014; Ramírez, 2015).

Collaboration and Challenges with Portland Fruit Tree Project

In seeking to answer to the research question - In what ways did partnering with a nonprofit from outside the neighborhood influence community and the way the project is operationalized? - this study found that bringing in PFTP shifted participation to mostly white non-neighbors, who brought in their own ideas about who is the community of the community orchard. When PFTP was invited in to expand the orchard, the organization brought with it a different orchard management style, new people, and new ideas about how the community orchard should work. The collaboration resulted in positive changes such as more frequent tree care and healthier trees, as well as some changes that have presented challenges for neighbors. These challenges include a shift in communication styles that limited neighbor participation, introducing orchard features that made participation more difficult for those with limited mobility, formalizing volunteer positions, and a different management style that made decisions based on PFTP's goals,

budget, and capacity rather than relying on the time-intensive Village Gardens process of consensus-based Seeds of Harmony community garden committee meetings.

The actions and decisions made by PFTP about the orchard should be understood within the context of its own organizational capacity and larger economic forces. PFTP is one of many nonprofit organizations that are working to fill the gaps created by the roll back of the social safety net (Katz, 2001; McClintock, 2014). Fresh locally grown produce is often not available or not affordable in urban areas; on average US residents eat just 42.5% of the recommended amount of fruit (Rosenfeld, 2010), and low-income households have fewer dollars to spend on food (Hagey, Rice, & Flournoy, 2012). At the same time that PFTP is working to increase access to produce, an urgent need exacerbated by declining welfare provisions, limited funds restrict the organization's capacity. Like many nonprofits in a variety of fields and locations, the organization competes for small local grants for the community orchard program with other organizations in Portland working on increasing food access and healthy ecosystems (McClintock, 2014).

Communication

PFTP's style of communication influences the community by hindering neighbor participation and encouraging participation by people with easy access to the internet. An Americorps member hired by PFTP coordinates the orchard and sends out communications about upcoming events and orchard needs. PFTP's small staff of two did not have the capacity to start the community orchards program so they applied for an AmeriCorps position to coordinate the four community orchards in Portland. The coordinator position is a year-long volunteer position that begins in September and ends

in July, with a gap during the height of summer – a time when the orchard requires weekly watering, fruit ripeness monitoring, and harvesting. The shift from the orchard being run by the garden committee, a group of neighbors, to being primarily facilitated by the PFTP AmeriCorps member has resulted in difficulties communicating with neighbors. Roy noted that most communication is by email, but because he does not have internet access at home, he often does not see the email until after the event. Debbie, who is an older adult that does not use email, described a feeling of being left out, “Just not being told about things. You know, like when you guys come out to the orchard, I only know it ‘cause I see you guys out there.”

PFTP relies primarily on email to attract event participants and asks people to sign up for events through their website. This system is used because it is the most efficient and cost effective for the organization with the least amount of staff time required, however, it has had little success in informing neighbors about FOD work parties, since many people access internet infrequently at the community center or do not use email. Gareth, the current AmeriCorps member, understands this challenge and has tried a variety of tactics to inform neighbors about events. He seems to be having more success getting neighbors out to events in 2015. However, relying on the AmeriCorps volunteer to do outreach for events is problematic, as they do not live or work daily in the neighborhood and do not have the frequent face-to-face interactions that present opportunities to meet neighbors and remind them about events.

Orchard form and aesthetics

The form of the orchard also changed when PFTP began collaborating on the orchard and some of these changes created challenges for neighbors. Along with planting

new trees, volunteers planted an understory of edible shrubs and native plants between the older trees. Many of these plants produce edible berries and most produce flowers that attract pollinators to the orchard. The understory plants made it difficult to mow in the orchard area, so it was “sheet mulched” by placing cardboard and wood chips over the grass, around the trees and new plants. The original plan for the orchard included a gravel path but a lack of funding has held up its implementation. These two actions – sheet mulching and adding understory plants – are a source of annoyance and frustration for people who live in Tamaracks Apartments and the maintenance staff. Debbie said,

They put that cardboard down and then they put the wood chips or whatever the crap that is. But it makes it harder for me with a cane. A couple ladies have walkers and they can't get up in there because you trip over the stupid cardboard. So it's kind of put a hindrance on some of the older people to be able to walk through there.

By making it more difficult for people with limited mobility to enter the orchard, PFTP impacted the ability of some long time orchard participants to visit the space and feel part of the community of the community orchard. This is an example of how a decision made by PFTP directly influences the makeup of the orchard community.

In addition to the sheet mulching, adding the understory plants changed the way the orchard looks. While being appreciative of the flowers and berries, Michelle expressed her frustration with the appearance of the orchard,

I understand the concept of putting flowers in between but ...what FOD did to the old orchard by putting the plants there kind of disrupted the whole orchard theme. I mean it just made it difficult to walk through. It made it more difficult to weed

it. ...And then it's the point of where the weeds are growing through the dang stuff and ... you can't just take a mower and go through it... it needs to be taken care of more frequently. Like keeping the weeds down because for a minute there it was like, eewww. It looked really ugly.

Michelle's statement makes it clear that neighbors do not feel like they were consulted about the sheet mulching and understory plants. Her words also point out the difference, between PFTP's permaculture orientation – which is more efficient for the organization as it decreases the need to water and mow – and the neighbor's desire to have an undisrupted pastoral orchard. People who have limited ability to escape the city and experience rural settings may feel this desire more keenly. Another neighbor I have spoken with a few times while visiting FOD said that the orchard is “half bad, half good.” While he likes walking through with his dog, he wants it to look better. The understory plants also make it difficult for the Home Forward maintenance staff to mow. I asked a maintenance staff person who mows the orchard about her thoughts. She said, “It's a mess” and that she often cannot tell what is a weed and what was intentionally planted. She also expressed appreciation for the orchard, “it's nice for people to be able to come get fruit. I've tried some of it.”

Formalizing volunteer positions

PFTP introduced formalized volunteer positions which shifted participation from neighbors to non-neighbors. After planting the new trees, PFTP started monthly work parties to gather volunteers together to work in the orchard. For FOD's second year, PFTP introduced an “Orchard Steward” program despite lukewarm reception of the idea by orchard participants. The Orchard Steward position is a year-long volunteer position

in which people agree to attend all monthly work parties, water the orchard at least once in the summer, and help to lead a work party. The position was open to anyone and advertised widely by PFTP. People who had volunteered in the orchard were invited to apply by email and flyers were distributed to neighbors. None of the volunteers who were regular orchard participants up to that point wanted to become an orchard steward. Nine people applied and all were invited to become stewards. All stewards were white, with one person identifying as white and Hispanic. One steward was from the neighborhood, another lived in the Portsmouth neighborhood very close to New Columbia, and all other stewards were from other neighborhoods, one of whom came from outside of the city.

Some stewards interviewed for this study feel great ownership and dedication to the orchard - traveling long distances for work parties, bringing their family and friends to see it, and talking about it with their neighbors. Their motivations for participating at FOD varied, but many valued the opportunity to learn about fruit tree care, to increase food access, and to help grow an orchard that will provide fruit for decades.

The introduction of the Orchard Steward program changed the composition of regular work party volunteers to mostly non-neighbors who did not feel connected to the neighborhood. The stewards I interviewed knew very little about the neighborhood, its history, Village Gardens, or the development of the orchard. The stewards were welcomed by neighbors for their enthusiasm for the orchard and willingness to volunteer but were also quickly identified as outsiders by neighbors. Only one of the stewards I spoke with felt they had made strong connections with neighbors, though several felt connected to the orchard itself.

Colleen said that she feels deeply connected to the orchard space, but her relationship with orchard participants is not very deep yet.

I almost feel that its more important that people feel strongly connected to the orchard. Through that there's a lot of shared connection that would naturally occur. I think the people that are more connected to the orchard are gonna come out over time and build those strong connections with one another.

She illustrates once again the difference between neighbors saying the community of the orchard is the neighborhood and non-neighbors saying the community includes people who participate as well. Instead of building connections with people through frequent interaction in the neighborhood, Colleen is saying that the way to build community is for people to first connect to the orchard space and then by working in that space they will build connections to each other. This idea may work for non-neighbors who do not know the other participants or the orchard space, but many neighbor participants are familiar with each other and have existing social networks that they bring in to the orchard. They may not feel the need to create a connection to the orchard because they are already connected to the place and their neighbors through their daily existence.

One non-neighbor said he feels more affinity with the volunteers who come to the orchard and less of a connection with the people that live in the neighborhood. He said, "I think the people that the PFTP are attracting that have those mutual interests...might be a little bit more of a stronger connection in terms of certain likeminded things." He is describing building community with PFTP volunteers who he connects with because they are more similar to him than the neighbors. If non-neighbors feel a greater sense of community with other non-neighbors than with neighbors and continue to build that

community, there is the potential that a community may form among the non-neighbors that will exclude people who live in the neighborhood. Coupled with the fact that the non-neighbors who regularly participate are white, this could reinforce the whiteness of the orchard space.

PFTP's introduction of formal volunteer positions influenced the production of the community of the community orchard by creating a separate social network of non-neighbor stewards. During the interviews, it became clear that most of the stewards feel connected to the orchard itself but less connected to the neighbors who participate in the orchard. For neighbors, their familiarity with each other and the tensions in the neighborhood confirm the presence of an already existing community. The orchard is bringing together multiple, overlapping communities including neighborhood social networks and a nascent community of PFTP stewards.

Decision Making

Partnering with PFTP changed the way decisions are made about the orchard, shifting decision-making power from consensus based SOH garden committee meetings to PFTP. For the first year that PFTP and Village Gardens worked together, neighbors and participants from both organizations met together nine times outside of work parties to make decisions about the orchard. In 2014, however, there was just one meeting, with no neighbor participation, and all decision making about the orchard seemed to shift to PFTP. This change in the way the orchard is operationalized impacted the community by limiting non-work opportunities for interaction. Roy lamented the lack of meetings and opportunities for socializing, saying that he felt more connected to the community when there were frequent meetings.

I still feel connected to it, but not like – almost like I’m an outside part of it. A branch instead of part of the main tree. We don’t get together and do a lot. Like I’m more into not just the work part of it but I like having the social events there too, where people come together. And just hanging out. I don’t see a lot of that. I’m not sure if it happens and I just don’t get notified...

Jason, a former staff person with Village Gardens, expressed concern that PFTP has “become the driving force” instead of the Seeds of Harmony gardener committee leading the project.

One typical example of this shift in decision making and communication was the decision by PFTP to put up signage in the orchard that invites people to taste the fruit, but to not take too much. The AmeriCorps member sent out a Google document via email to thirteen people (Orchard Stewards and some Orchard Coordinators) with draft language and asked for feedback. As explained above, not all orchard participants have regular access to the internet so a process that relies on email will inherently exclude those voices. Katy, PFTP Executive Director, commented on the process, saying the signage language was “shared with people for their buy-in but wasn’t presented as a robust community conversation. It was more like, ‘This is what we’re thinking. How do you guys feel about it?’ Essentially. And people were generally on board. We haven’t had any objections.” This style of management, where PFTP’s decisions are presented for input, seems to be contradictory to PFTP’s goal of supporting an empowered “core team of volunteers that take on management of the orchard.” There is a clear tension between PFTP wanting to give responsibility for the orchards to the community but not putting systems in place to allow for significant community input in decision making.

Partnering with a nonprofit from outside the neighborhood has resulted in decisions and expectations that do not make sense to some neighbors. As outlined above, PFTP has made decisions about communications, orchard form, and formal volunteer positions that impacted the community. Some of these decisions highlight the dominant culture model, e.g. white, nonprofit culture, which PFTP operates within. Here I provide two more examples to illustrate the clash in values between neighbors who participate in the orchard and PFTP. First, a neighbor commented on the planting of quince, a fruit that has to be processed before it is eaten,

So this is a mixed income, people that aren't, we've got gardeners but we're not experts in the fruit....And quince is only made for jams and stuff. I mean, I don't even have time to make my own dinner... If you've got homemakers in a certain area of the city, go put the quince there. They can, they have more time to work with that.

The neighbor is essentially saying that PFTP does not understand the needs of this low-income community and has planted trees that are only useful for people with time to spare. Second, one PFTP staff member noted, "there's been a lot of people not showing up at the right time" demonstrating that participants are not meeting the expectations of the organization. PFTP has a prescribed format for most events they hold, starting in a circle with introductions and ending by asking participants to fill out a survey. At FOD, people tend to show up later than the starting time, leave early, or continue to working well beyond the ending time. In some ways, this is indicative of the kind of community ownership that PFTP wants to see in the orchard; people do not feel the need to follow PFTP's format because they feel like the orchard is their space. However, when people

leave early they are unable to fill out PFTP's participant survey, something that could negatively impact funding and reporting. The concern that people show up on time and stay through the end to fill out a survey demonstrates that there is little understanding on PFTP's part about the barriers the organization may be creating while at the same time expecting people to adhere to PFTP's orchard management style despite unacknowledged class, race, and cultural differences (Ramírez, 2015). These expectations coupled with a lack of decision-making power may be preventing a more cohesive community of neighbors and non-neighbors from forming in the orchard.

PFTP does want neighbors to participate in the orchard and has the goal of shifting responsibility from PFTP to the neighbors. They want neighbors to feel "ownership" over the orchard both for the sustainability of the project and to ensure that the low-income population that the project is meant to serve is benefiting from the orchard. One way to help neighbors take responsibility for the orchard is to give them back the power to make decisions about the orchard. Interviewees expressed the desire to have more decision-making opportunities through meeting about the orchard.

Involving neighbors in making decisions and promoting neighbor representation is important because the orchard is a space of engagement in the neighborhood, a space where a politically and economically marginalized community can exert some change in their neighborhood and in their lives (Ghose & Pettygrove, 2014; Harvey, 2008; Merrifield, 2006; Mitchell, 2003). Wasongolo, a neighbor and Village Gardens staff member, illustrated the importance of engaging in the space of the community orchard saying the orchard is,

...the place people can meet. If it's [a fruit tree] in your backyard, you pick it and you put on table, you eat it. But as community, you will be there, you will meet somebody, who maybe you will share with. Not only sharing the fruit but also sharing ideas. Sharing the culture. Sharing knowledge. Sharing the life.

Chapter 6

Conclusion

Community is important to people, it where we find connection with others. The orchard can be a place of connection and a place where community is negotiated. Despite the issues outlined in this paper, orchard participants are enthusiastic about the orchard and hopeful for the future of the project. Many interviewees talked about the potential of the orchard saying the orchard is “open,” “a hopeful space,” “miraculous,” and “just feels like possibility.”

As the trees mature and begin bearing large quantities of fruit, more questions will arise around who should be participating and benefiting from the orchard. This study attempted to define the community of the community orchard because community is invoked regularly as both foundational and a goal of the project. Though non-neighbors understand community differently than neighbors and define community in ways that include themselves, most participants hold neighbors up as the core of the community. Coming to a conclusion about who composes the community would clarify who is included, who is represented, who makes decisions, and who shares in the harvest. Community, however, is difficult to define and this study did not succeed in creating a tidy definition. Quite the opposite, this research complicates the notion of community in alternative food networks and points to the ways that community can be influenced by a nonprofit organization’s communication, aesthetics, decision making, and colorblindness.

At the Fruits of Diversity Community Orchard, there is not just one community, but multiple social networks that overlap in the orchard that may or may not be formed in

to communities. There are groups of neighbors and non-neighbors, of Tamarack Apartments residents and New Columbia residents, of newer orchard stewards and longer term volunteers, and of people who want to grow quince trees and those that do not. As these groups work together in the orchard space, they continue to reify their separate groups and also cross those barriers to “hav[e] a genuine experience of human connection.”

Community is fluid, which opens up space for ongoing change and collaboration. But there is also a danger in fluidity, in that certain communities can easily be displaced or deterred when others join in. This may be the case at FOD. As the Portland Fruit Tree Project brings in groups of mostly white non-neighbors and they form connections to the space and to each other, neighbors, especially neighbors of color may be less interested in showing up to volunteer. As participants pointed out, neighbor participation is both lagging and vital to the sustainability of the project. PFTP and FOD participants need to discuss the racial disparity in participation and examine the reasons that there is low retention of people of color participants in a neighborhood that has a high concentration of people of color. Beyond confronting the whiteness of the project, PFTP also needs to open up ways for participants to have a voice in decision making and share responsibility for the orchard.

PFTP made some changes recently that may prove beneficial for the orchard, including turning the AmeriCorps community orchard coordinator position in to a year-round part-time staff position, holding a meeting for orchard participants in February 2015, and working closely with the Village Gardens staff to reach out to neighbors. More

neighbors have come to recent work parties and a neighbor-proposed grape arbor was recently planted. This study may help FOD continue to make positive changes.

This research adds to the scholarly discourse about community building and race in alternative food networks by focusing on one unique and largely unstudied type of AFN, a community orchard. There are still no peer-reviewed studies on community orchards, so future research on any aspect of community orchards would be welcome. In general, an examination of how community orchards harvest and distribute fruit in equitable ways would be useful to the many young orchards planted recently across the United States. Further inquiries into how race and the intersectionality of race and class impact the community of the Fruits of Diversity Community Orchard could help the orchard be successful in cultivating a diverse community to care for the orchard.

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Appendix A: Community Orchard Research Interview Guide

Date:
Participant Code:

A. Introduction & Consent Form [5 minutes]

Thanks for meeting me today. As I mentioned in my email, this research is for my masters thesis in urban studies at PSU. Before we begin, I need you to read the consent form and sign it.

Allow time for participant to read consent form and ask questions. Proceed after form is signed.

Begin audio recording.

B. Interview [30 – 35 minutes]

I have some questions for you, but I'd also like hear your thoughts about the orchard in general. I want to hear about how you experience the orchard in your own words, please don't hesitate to tell me anything you want to about the orchard, even if we've discussed something before or it may seem obvious because I participate in the orchard too.

1. What is your favorite part of the orchard?
Your favorite thing to do in the orchard?
2. What is your role in the orchard?
What do you do when you come here?
Why do you participate?
3. Tell me about how the orchard works.
Who does the maintenance, harvesting, planting, planning, etc ?
 - a. Would you change anything about the way it works? Or
 - b. Are there any challenges about the way the orchard works?

Transition: I know you participate in _____ **or** Do you participate in other community projects? Ones that grow food?

4. Do you think FOD different from [Seeds of Harmony, Community Garden, UFC, other program that grows food]? What differences do you see?
5. What communities do you belong to?

6. What does the 'community' part of community orchard mean to you? Who or what is the community?
 - a. geography? Neighborhood, city, etc
 - b. participation?

7. Has the orchard provided opportunities to engage with that community? To meet new people?
 - a. Do you feel like you're part of that community?
 - b. How strong are your connections to the community?

8. Who should participate in maintaining and planning the orchard?

9. Who should harvest the fruit grown in the orchard?
Who should eat the fruit?
How should the fruit be distributed?

10. What do your neighbors who aren't involved in VG think about the orchard?

11. Did you visit the orchard before it was planted? If so, what was the space like? What did you do there? What has changed now that the orchard is there?

12. Do you visit the orchard at other times besides work parties?
If yes, What do you do? Have you observed other people coming to the orchard outside of work parties? What do they do?
If no, why don't you visit the orchard outside of work parties?

13. What is the most important thing that you get from participating in the orchard? What is the most important thing the orchard does for your community?

Give Closing survey

Appendix B: Community Orchard Research Participant Survey

1. Where do you live? Select one

- Tamarack Apartments
- New Columbia
- Portsmouth Neighborhood
- Kenton Neighborhood
- St Johns Neighborhood
- Other _____

2. Approximately how far away from the orchard do you live?

- I can see it from my house
- Less than 1 mile
- 1 – 3 miles
- 4 – 6 miles
- 7 – 10 miles
- More than 10 miles

3. How often do you come to the orchard?

- More than once a week
- Once a week
- More than once a month
- Once a month
- Every other month
- A few times per year
- Other _____

4. Does anyone else in your household participate at the Fruits of Diversity Orchard?

- Yes
- No
- Not Sure

5. Do you participate in other VILLAGE GARDENS programs or events?

- Yes
- No
- Not Sure

6. Do you participate in other PORTLAND FRUIT TREE PROJECT programs or events?

- Yes No Not Sure

7. Did you harvest or eat any of the fruit from the orchard this year?

- Yes
 No
 Not Sure

8. How often do you eat fruit?

- 2 or more times per day
 Once a day
 Multiple times a week
 Once a week
 Less than once a week
 Other _____

9. Where do you most often get groceries?

Select all that apply

- Village Market
 Fred Meyer
 Safeway
 Green Zebra
 New Seasons
 Winco
 Costco
 Corner Market/Convenience Store
 Emergency food provider (such as Good Samaritan Center,
St Andrew's, a food pantry, etc)
 Farmers Market or direct from grower
 Other _____

10. Which of the following best describes your race? Select all that apply

- African-American or Black Latino or Hispanic
 African descent Native American or Native Alaskan
 Asian/Pacific Islander Multiracial
 Caucasian or White
 Prefer not to answer
 Other _____

11. Are you employed? Select one

- Yes, full time
 Yes, part time
 Yes, temporary or occasional work
 No, but looking for work
 No, and not looking for work, retired, or on disability
 Prefer not to answer

12. I live on a low income. See the chart below for low income guidelines.

- Yes
 No
 Not sure
 Prefer not to answer

2014 Low Income Eligibility Guidelines

# of persons in family	Annual Estimate	Monthly	Weekly Estimate
1	\$21,600	\$1,800	\$416
2	\$29,112	\$2,426	\$560
3	\$36,612	\$3,051	\$705
4	\$44,123	\$3,677	\$855
5	\$51,634	\$4,877	\$1,126
6	\$59,145	\$5,497	\$1,270
7	\$66,656	\$6,116	\$1,412
8	\$74,167	\$6,736	\$1,556
8+		\$626 per added family member	