Community Gardens in Miami, Florida: Toward Community Development[1]

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Abstract
Community gardens (CGs) have been well studied in several North American cities, but less is known about them in places with emerging CG movements. There are no existing studies on CGs in Miami and the total number of CGs in Miami is unknown, but in the past five years there has been rapid increase in interest on this topic from a variety of stakeholders and organizations. To add to the empirical knowledge of CGs, the author conducted case studies on the six highest profile projects. This exploratory research consisted of 12 semi-structured interviews and analysis of government records and published documents. This paper presents two case studies from the author's master's thesis that stress the diverse meanings of community and the multiple scales that are involved in establishing CGs. The findings indicate CGs are very diverse in both their locations across socio-economic areas as well as the spatial strategies of their organizers. Although CG advocates increasingly promote them as community development tools, recent critiques have argued that CGs offer some benefits but cannot redress large-scale inequalities. Perhaps these inadequacies in CG implementation are due in part to assumptions that localities are produced exclusively by the residents within them. This paper draws on geographical theory to argue that a relational approach to scale may lead to a more accurate practice and help establish CGs as permanent parts of cities. The paper concludes that CGs are highly complex and are not simple solutions for community development, and that more care is needed in their advocacy.

[1] This paper presents portions of the author's master's thesis (Drake 2010). Please do not quote or use any of the material without the author's permission.

Introduction

Since 2005 there has been a rise in community gardening in Miami. Increased environmental awareness, coupled with growing interest in organic and local foods are putting community gardens into public discourse in Miami as well as nationwide. The *Miami Herald* ran 11 articles on community gardens in 2009, whereas in the 25 years from 1983 to 2008 it only issued 13. This increase follows similar trends across the U.S., but these interests, and gardens, have been established since the 1990s in most cities. Thus, the emergence of community gardens in Miami is relatively late.

Much of what is known of community gardens comes from studies in cities in the American Northeast, Midwest, and some Canadian cities that have longer histories of these activities, and those on the West Coast with a richer history of social activism. In places such as Seattle, local government takes a leading role in providing and promoting community gardens (Lawson 2005). In other cities, like New York, there are citywide organizations that have assisted community groups in the creation of gardens for 30 years (Schmelzkopf 1995, 2002). In Toronto, collaborative networks aid grassroots urban agriculture movements (Wekerle 2004). Less is known in cities where community gardens represent entirely new urban spaces and where interests are emerging among a wide variety of stakeholders. It is in Miami that the fragmented and diverse urban landscape provides an interesting setting for this study.

This paper, drawing from the author's master's thesis, presents empirical evidence on the diversity of community gardening (Drake 2010). Multiple definitions of community have various effects and can serve to isolate gardens from their broader neighborhoods or result in conflict when the intended users of a garden perceive the organizers as outsiders. Additionally, scale is highly significant in the planning and implementation of community gardens. Support

and stakeholders are needed at many scales, and although grassroots interest may drive participation, alliances across scales have been shown to be necessary for garden longevity (Smith and Kurtz 2003).

Although geographers have developed a rich literature on alternative food networks they are just recently beginning critical research on community gardens. Given the lack of empirical studies on this topic in Miami, this research is exploratory and seeks to gain a better understanding of community gardens by examining them through a geographical lens. It problematizes community gardens through the notions of community and locality. Additionally, it specifically approaches community gardens as a topic of community development, given the multiple purposes of community gardens and their evocation as development tools (e.g., Salvidar-Tanaka and Krasny 2004). How is scale positioned in community garden discourse? What is its role in practice? How do actors define community? What are the different scales at which people, organizations, and governments interact in creating community gardens?

The remainder of this paper is organized into five sections. First, a literature review examines the multiple purposes of community gardens, the prevalence of a self-reliance discourse in community garden advocacy, and the contradiction and conflict that has arises from their status as temporary land uses. The second section summarizes the main points of the study design. Third, two case studies selected from the author's research exemplify the range of community garden organization and practice in Miami. The fourth section discusses some theoretical considerations on scale that are used to assess the case studies. Lastly, the paper concludes with thoughts about the diversity of community gardens in Miami, the significance of community and scale, and other conjectures on the implications for their permanence in cities.

Literature Review

Community gardens have numerous purposes. Foremost, health advocates support them in improving nutrition and food security in poor neighborhoods (McCullum et al. 2005). Indeed, studies have shown that community gardeners across income groups are more likely to consume higher levels of fruits and vegetables than non-participants (Twiss et al. 2003; Wakefield et al. 2007; Alaimo et al. 2008). The American Planning Association recently supported gardening on tax-foreclosed properties as a way to improve the health of low-income city residents.[2] Additionally, households benefit from lower household food expenses by gardening (Wakefield et al. 2007).

In addition to food security, it has been argued that community gardens contribute to sustainability (Holland 2004; Schilling and Logan 2008). They provide green space and increase environmental awareness in cities. They are also seen as parts of local food systems, which are intended to lower transport distances of food and reduce the environmental impacts associated with conventional agro-industry (Lyson 2004; Pinderhughes 2004; Newman and Jennings 2008). The establishment of gardens also promotes environmental justice, particularly in low-income areas (Ferris et al. 2001, Irazábal and Punja 2009).

Community building is another benefit, with gardens providing spaces for social interaction in neglected urban areas that may not have desirable public spaces (Baker 2004; Salvidar-Tanaka and Krasny 2004; Lawson 2005). The networks established and strengthened through gardens are a way to build social capital among garden members (Glover 2004; Shinew et al. 2004). Furthermore, community gardens have been shown to increase property values in surrounding neighborhoods (Voicu and Been 2008). Participation in gardening increases

[2] American Planning Association. 2007. Policy Guide to Community and Regional Food Planning. http://www.planning.org/policy/guides/adopted/food.htm

awareness of what happens in one's community and increases the desire to participate in the decisions that affect the community (Armstrong 2000; Levkoe 2006).

Entrepreneurial gardening has gained attention since the 1990s as a way to create new economic opportunities in underserved communities and is seen as a poverty alleviation tool (Kaufman and Bailkey 2000; Ferris et al. 2001; Lawson 2005). Community gardeners sell produce through farmers' markets, community-supported agriculture, and directly to local restaurants. Intended participants are usually people with limited access to jobs (e.g., at-risk youth, disabled, homeless, and ex-convicts). Sales, however, are rarely enough to support an entire project. As a result, like in most non-profit organizations income is supplemented through grants and donations.

Although these projects appear to be useful tools for an array of community development initiatives, and indeed there are numerous benefits, it has recently been argued that the expected outcomes have been overestimated (Allen 1999; Lawson 2005; Pudup 2008). Rather than seeing community gardens for what is realistically possible—e.g., *some* food provision, *some* employment, and *some* environmental remediation—mainstream discourse posits community gardens as a panacea (Figure 1). The American Community Gardening Association promotes the notion of self-reliance—that communities can not only provide their own welfare but also redress food insecurity, unemployment, and other issues by themselves.[3] The idea of self-help has made community gardening attractive for community development organizations and local governments facing budget crises (Pudup 2008). With little critical reflection, then, community gardens are often implemented in ad-hoc ways. When these large goals fail to materialize, the realistic outcomes of community gardens are devalued (Lawson 2005).

[3] http://communitygarden.org/about-acga/

Figure 1. Flyer for future community garden in Miami, March 2010; notice the multiple expectations and purposes listed

With such expectations, it is paradoxical that community gardening has been consistently seen as a temporary practice. Since its inception in Detroit in the 1890s, community gardening has been implemented on vacant lots in response to economic and social crises as well as during wartime (Lawson 2005). More recently, planners envisioned community gardening as a suitable emergency—and temporary—option for the foreclosure crisis (Shigley and Cleaver 2008). After each crisis, the expectation is that urban land can be returned to "normal" uses (Rosol 2005; Moore 2006). A political-economic critique finds that community gardens are only acceptable to authorities when no other profitable land use is available (Schmelzkopf 2002). Indeed, this contradiction has led to conflicts in cities where gardens have served many people for many

years—most notably in New York and Los Angeles—when local governments and investors sought to (re)claim these spaces for property development (Staeheli et al. 2002; Irazábal and Punja 2009). Lawson (2005) attributes such short-term outlook to the reactionary impulse that results in its implementation as a stopgap measure. Thus, although there are real benefits, community garden advocacy largely does not consider the broader societal and urbanization processes that affect these spaces.

These cycles of emergence and failure highlight two further points of geographical significance regarding the importance of scale-crossing networks (cf. Wekerle 2004). First, Smith and Kurtz (2003) argue that community garden actors in New York successfully secured their land by taking the struggle outside the locality. By creating what Cox (1998) calls *spaces of engagement*, garden actors built alliances across scales that mobilized support levels that were strong enough to resist the city government's attempts to sell the gardens. Second, Lawson (2005) points out the need to balance grassroots leadership and interest-based leadership during the processes of community garden establishment; neighborhood interest is needed for participation but education, training, and funding are often acquired through organizations that operate at larger scales. Therefore, we can begin to see how community gardens exhibit some fundamental geographical characteristics—they have something to do with localities' relations with the outside world. Although grassroots interest is required, community gardens are not viable in isolation. Perhaps a deeper examination may lead to a better understanding of how they can be a permanent part of the urban landscape in the U.S.

Study Design

This paper presents two of six exploratory case studies that the author conducted between August 2009 and February 2010 on the highest profile community gardens in Miami (Figure 2; Tables 1 and 2; Yin 1989). The total number of community gardens in Miami is unknown; in this study, garden existence and locations were obtained by searching Miami-based newspapers and other media outlets such as the Internet and government records. Research participants also provided documentation and facilitated snowball sampling. The increasing numbers of school gardens were not included, as they are usually located on school premises and function in relation to school curriculum. Thus, the focus remained on garden projects that operate on land not owned by the gardening organization.

Semi-structured interviews of 12 people, ranging between 30 minutes and two hours, provided the majority of the data to build the case studies (Rubin and Rubin 1995; Hesse-Biber and Leavy 2006). These data were supplemented with socio-economic data from the 2000 U.S. Census, Miami-Dade County property records, and published documents on community gardens.

The following two case studies signify the extremes of how community gardens are organized in Miami (Table 2). South Beach Victory Garden, which was organized by gardeners and there are no connections or networks across scales; and Harvest of Love in Liberty City, which was developed from the national scale and where extensive networks have bypassed and ignored the garden's neighborhood.

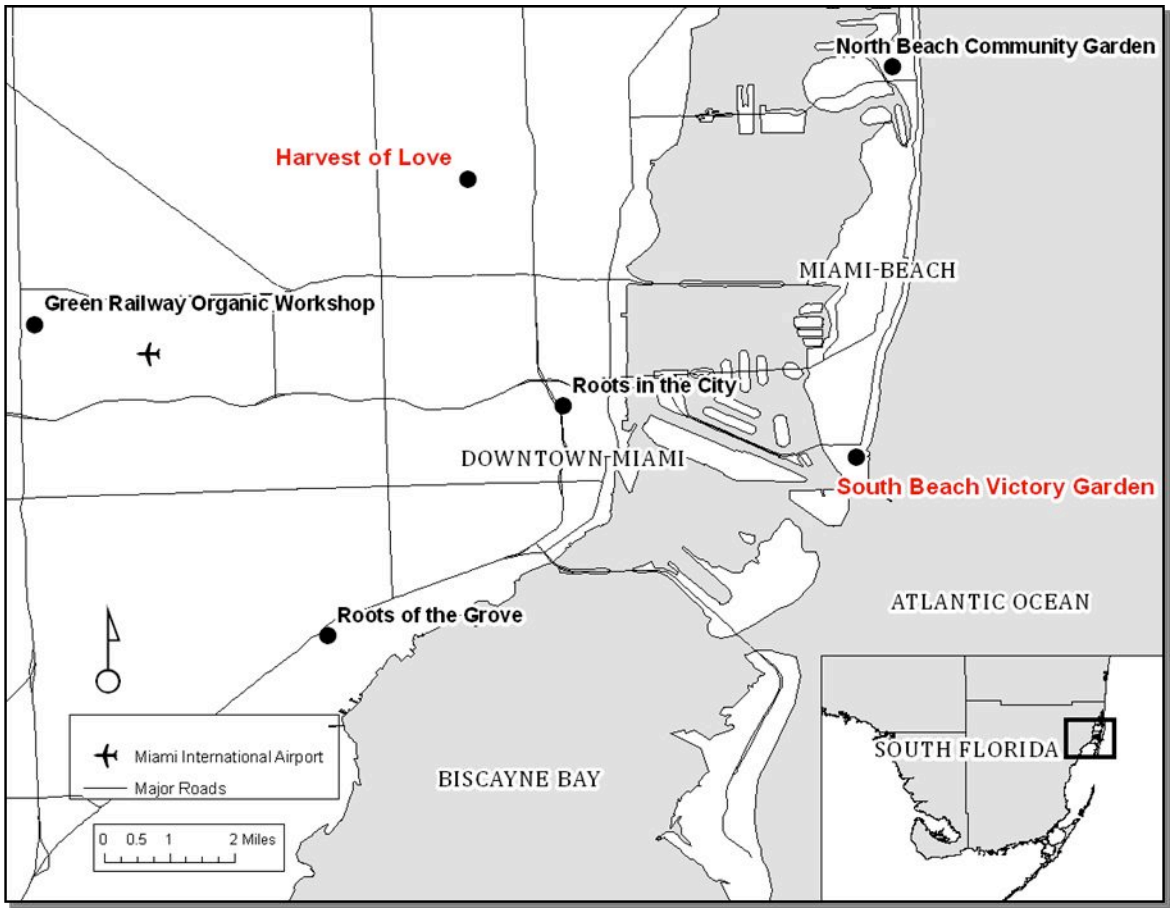

Figure 2. Locations of six community gardens in Miami; gardens highlighted in red are presented in this paper (Cartography by Author)

Category	**South Beach Garden**	North Beach Garden	Roots in the City	GROW	Roots of the Grove	**Harvest of Love**	Miami-Dade County
Total Population	**5,528**	8,874	2,797	6,341	6,132	**4,024**	2,253,362
Median age (Years)	**42**	40	30	36	34	**19**	36
Race/ethnicity							
White (%)	**86**	84	7	82	63	**2**	70
Non-Hispanic White (%)	**38**	29	2	9	38	**1**	21
Black (%)	**5**	4	89	12	30	**97**	20
Hispanic any race (%)	**56**	66	9	81	30	**3**	57
High School Graduates (%)	**69**	70	42	56	83	**61**	68
Rental Housing (%)	**72**	75	93	70	62	**82**	42
New Residents (%)	**34**	33	9	24	25	**4**	17
Unemployment Rate (%)	**4.7**	5.8	14.2	3.4	4.9	**9.9**	5.0
Median household income (1999 Dollars)	**20,864**	20,485	11,006	31,056	38,958	**8,853**	35,966
Persons receiving public assistance income (%)	7	5	14	6	4	**26**	6
Persons living below poverty level (%)	**30**	25	58	20	17	**65**	18

Source: U.S. Census 2000, Census Tracts where each garden is located.

Notes: New residents category is the percentage of persons who lived outside Miami-Dade County in 1995.

Table 1. Selected Social, Residential, and Economic Characteristics of Garden Neighborhoods compared with Miami-Dade County

	South Beach Garden	North Beach Garden	Roots in the City	GROW	Roots in the Grove	**Harvest of Love**
Year established	**2005**	2008	2007	2009	2009	**2009**
Stated Purpose	**Food**	Food	Jobs	Education	Food/ Community	**Food/ Community**
Land	**Public, secured**	Public, secured	Public, unsecured	Private	Private	**Public, secured**
Open or Gated?	**Gated**	Gated	Open	Gated	Gated	**Open**
Plots	**Individual**	Individual	Organization-managed	Corporate-managed	Mixed	**Communal**
Intended users	**South Beach residents**	North Beach residents	Unemployed Overtown residents	Children from across Miami	West Grove residents	**Liberty City residents**
Stakeholders/Organizers	**South Beach residents**	North Beach residents	Neighborhood-based nonprofit	Private company	Miami-based nonprofit	**National sponsors**
# of Participants	**55**	80	10	Varies	0-4	**0-4**

Table 2. Comparison of Community Gardens in Miami (Source: Drake forthcoming)

South Beach Victory Garden

The South Beach Victory Garden (SBVG) opened in February 2005 (Figure 3). Its purpose is straightforward—to provide garden space for people who do not have yards but want to grow food. SBVG is located in the South Pointe neighborhood at the southern tip of South Beach in the City of Miami Beach. The lot is owned by the city and operates under the Parks and Recreation department, but it is managed by a committee of gardeners elected annually. It has 40 individual plots, a communal herb garden, and a demonstration plot. All plots are in use and the total number of participants is between 50 and 60 because multiple family members are often involved. Members plant a variety of foods such as tomatoes, eggplants, and many greens.

Figure 3. South Beach Victory Garden (Photo by Author, 10/25/09)

The immediate neighborhood's population is older and well educated, with a relatively large percentage of non-Hispanic Whites (Table 1). Although the median household income is

lower than the county median at $20,864, the unemployment rate is below average at 4.7%.[4] Furthermore, 30% of residents live below the poverty level but only 7% actually receive public assistance income. All in all, this garden's neighborhood is not the wealthiest by Miami standards but its residents are not living in abject poverty.

Residents of the surrounding neighborhood initiated SBVG. The current site was established after concerned residents attempted to save an older garden located nearby. The previous garden had become deteriorated and unused, but after learning that the city intended to convert it to a parking lot, ten residents cleaned up the site, and in late 2001 petitioned the city's historic preservation board to protect the garden. In January 2002 the city moved to relocate the garden to the current site a half block away, which at the time was a parking lot.[5] Since the city owned both lots, the process was fairly simple once the gardeners approved it. The move and renovation of the site took three years to complete, however.

The new site had again become neglected and deteriorated when Tony Giulino, the current manager, obtained a plot in 2008. Much of the neglect was due to the difficulties of gardening that discouraged participants. When plants, "get diseases and die you think [the garden is] not such a great idea" (Giulino, personal interview). He and several other active gardeners got together at the annual elections intending to improve participation. Giulino became chairman and the committee began the process of subdividing the plots. Subdivision was meant to achieve two goals—reduce the workload for individual plots, thereby making it easier to keep up with maintenance; and increase the number of gardeners. The city provided wood for new plot construction as well as a laborer and saw to carry out the renovation. Plots were subdivided into smaller 50 square foot plots, a third of the original size. "Bad" gardeners—those

[4] Social and economic data are from the 2000 U.S. Census and may be significantly different in 2010.
[5] City of Miami Beach Commission records R9B(1) 11/28/2001; C6C 1/6/2002

who don't weed and leave dead or diseased plants in their plots—have been expelled. Indeed, such actions are seen as necessary to improve utilization of garden space and prevent the spread of diseases to other plots. However, some long-term plot holders were very upset by the reorganization. "People were really mad, physically angry, when we decided to subdivide the plots to get more involvement," remarks Giulino. The majority of the gardeners had approved the move, though, and they were able to convince the City of Miami Beach to once again provide funding.

Although it has a high participation level, SBVG is highly localized in its relations and participation is individualistic. It has been successful in gaining municipal support, and the Parks and Recreation department has provided spaces for two other gardens elsewhere in the city.[6] Nonetheless, SBVG does not associate with other community gardeners in Miami Beach, Greater Miami, or nationally. Indeed, Giulino does not engage in any outreach efforts, promote the garden, or seek out participants. City government has issued press releases to the *Miami Herald*, resulting in increased numbers of people on the garden's waitlist. Ironically, then, the city government has been the most active advocate for the garden. The local interest is strong enough, though, that Giulino does not need to worry about extended networking efforts. Therefore, the South Beach Victory Garden has been very successful in terms of local residents' garden participation and food production. Its lack of connections beyond the participants leaves it vulnerable, however, and raises questions of whether it will have long-term significance given the importance of networks in community garden movements.

[6] M.M., City of Miami Beach Parks and Recreation staff member.

Harvest of Love Garden

The Harvest of Love garden (HL) was a community garden from April 2009 to March 2010 in Liberty City, an African-American community northwest of downtown Miami (Figure 4). Whereas SBVG is largely recreational, HL's organizers decided that local residents would use the garden to provide their own healthy food as well as for donating produce to three local food banks.[7] The garden was located at the Liberty Square, a county-owned public housing development. HL was started in March 2009 through a corporately sponsored community garden program, described below.

Figure 4. Harvest of Love opening day; 40 raised beds were constructed (Photo by Garden Writers' Association, 4/1/09)

Liberty City is one of the poorest areas of Miami. The median household income is only $8,853, and a staggering 65% of the neighborhood's residents live below the poverty level.

[7] http://www.gardenwriters.org/html/par/pdfs/gwa_miami_release.pdf

Unemployment is close to 10%, and one in four people receive public assistance income.[8] HL is in a predominately Black (97%) area and the majority of people are (relatively) long-term residents. The area's median age is only 19, indicative of the higher proportions of children and teenagers compared to the other garden neighborhoods.

HL was not a locally inspired project. This garden was produced through a broad collaboration of corporate, nonprofit, and government stakeholders, most being far removed from the daily lives of Liberty City's residents. The Scott's Miracle-Gro Company—a leading producer of fertilizers, pesticides, and herbicides—created the GroGood campaign and entered a partnership with the national organization Keep American Beautiful (KAB) in 2009 to fund the creation of five community gardens across the U.S.[9] The Garden Writer's Association (GWA) provided additional sponsorship of this garden campaign through its *Plant a Row for the Hungry* program.[10] Columbus, Ohio-based Franklin Park Conservatory (FPC) provided horticultural expertise and trained volunteers during garden construction.

Keep Miami Beautiful (KMB), the local affiliate of KAB, received a grant to establish one of the program's gardens. KMB has been the liaison between the national campaign structure, local government, and the Liberty City community. The site at Liberty Square was selected because its status as county-owned land allowed quick approval. After the site had been selected and approved, a list of potential garden names was prepared and given to the Liberty Square Residents Council. It was at this point that the name "Harvest of Love" was chosen. Thus, local participation in this garden involved the nonprofit sector, municipal and county governments, with little neighborhood input.

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[8] All census data are from the 2000 census; unemployment was likely to be higher in 2009-2010.
[9] Chicago, Dallas, Los Angeles, Miami and Washington, D.C. were the cities chosen.
[10] GWA is a nationwide nonprofit organization that is comprised of over 1,800 lawn and garden communication professionals. *Plant a Row for the Hungry* was started in 1995 and is a public service program where GWA members encourage their audiences to plant an extra row of produce in their gardens for donation to food banks.

In March 2009 the garden was constructed and a dedication ceremony occurred on April 1. The highly publicized event was chaired by then-Mayor Manny Diaz and included representatives from Scott's Miracle-Gro Company, GWA, and FPC who flew in from around the country. City commissioner Michelle Spence-Jones and county commissioner Dorrin Rolle also attended, and media coverage was provided by the *Miami Herald*. During the ceremony, Mayor Diaz led attendees in reciting the GroGood pledge, written by Scott's Miracle-Gro Company, to "eat home grown foods...[and] donate my extra harvest to a local food bank."[11] Forty 4'x25' raised beds were built with cinderblock retaining walls. The gardens were planted with herbs, purple cabbage, collards, and watermelons. After the ceremony, the national sponsors left and the garden was turned over to Liberty Square residents. After that point, the large-scale support that had created the garden was not to be seen again.

KMB director Juanita Shanks then became the de facto garden manager. The residents harvested some food in May, and garden maintenance continued in a summer youth program. However, participation in the garden tapered off: "the original hard workers have moved away, and people have lost ambition," (Shanks, personal interview). The Liberty Square Residents Council, to whom the garden was given, did not form a committee to run the garden or take charge as was expected by the organizers. The failure to involve the intended users in the planning process is a major factor in the garden's tenuous connection to the community: "I was at the ceremony, and a resident told me 'they didn't ask me about starting a garden.'"[12] Furthermore, the presence of the garden displaced previous activities, and children began playing in the street because there was no room to play in the yard. Cinderblocks from the beds were broken, and the beds became filled with weeds over the course of the summer and fall. "It has

[11] http://www.scotts.com/smg/brand/grogood/takePledge.jsp;
[12] J.S., organizer of a community garden in Coconut Grove.

been called a graveyard...people don't associate it with happiness."[13] The idea that poor residents would happily redress food insecurity issues did not turn out as expected.

HL did not develop in isolation but through broad networks across scales. These connections facilitated funding, education, and training and easily gained the approval of the City of Miami and Miami-Dade County government. Without grassroots interest, however, it was overtaken by what has been called a normative value within community garden advocacy of teaching "a particular worldview, environmental ethic, or organic diet" (Lawson 2005, 291). It also reflects the critique that governments have co-opted community gardening as a way to offload risk and responsibilities to neighborhoods and individuals (Lawson 2005; Pudup 2008). Although HL had a great start, it ceased to function within a year (Figure 5).[14]

Figure 5. Harvest of Love; only the sign remains one year later (Photo by author, 4/22/10)

[13] N.R., KMB volunteer and active community garden advocate.
[14] After the author's research concluded, it was announced that HL and two other community gardens in Miami would be starting a federally funded "employment training and job placement program for unemployed residents." The current status of this program is unknown. http://www.examiner.com/x-23222-Fort-Lauderdale-Green-Culture-Examiner~y2010m3d11-Legacy-Green-Empowerment-Grant-training-to-begin-March-15

Discussion

The preceding case studies indicate that community gardening does not provide an easy solution toward community development. First, the crux of the problem is that "community" can have multiple, and sometimes competing, definitions. The South Beach garden is highly localized and personal, and the community is limited to the gardeners. There is little identity with this project outside of those people who participate in it. Community can also be citywide, as in Harvest of Love, where volunteers and stakeholders came together from across Miami as the local input in a national program. There was conflict and resentment, however, when the intended users saw the organizers as outsiders. The multiple meanings of community have been discussed previously (Kurtz 2001), but this study is different because garden organizers function at and across multiple scales. Although scale-crossing networks have been shown to be important, thus putting into question the long-term viability of South Beach Victory Garden, they can also be used in a paternalistic or offloading fashion as with Harvest of Love. In both cases, "community" was evoked in somewhat misleading ways.

Second, if community development through self-reliance has proved elusive, perhaps this is partly due to the assumption that localities are produced exclusively by their residents. This discourse assumes that isolation from external influences and reliance on internal initiative can improve livelihoods; in other words, success is possible through internal development of community-based assets and social capital (e.g., Putnam 2000; Tranel and Handlin 2006). Such thinking extols local agency in shaping development.

Agency certainly plays a role, but these views are problematic in the belief that localities can be separated from extra-local, that the local scale inherently causes environmental and social justice, and that autonomy is achieved through isolation (DeFilippis 2004; Purcell 2006). Such

assumptions have been co-opted and reproduced by the state in order to offload responsibilities to localities (Peck and Tickell 2002). Furthermore, the emphasis on localization and self-reliance may not change the sources of inequities and may even reinforce uneven development (Wolch 1990). Therefore, self-reliance discourse can be counterproductive to community development efforts (DeFilippis 2004).

In contrast, geographical theory on scale is process-based and relational (e.g., Mamadouh et al. 2004; McMaster and Sheppard 2004). Scales do not exist independently but in relation to other scales. Furthermore, localities are created through the relations between those people and structures fixed to a place and the world outside their daily experiences (DeFilippis 2004). In other words, development comes through the ability of local actors to control how they are connected to the rest of the world, on whose terms, and for whose benefit. It has been argued that such control may occur through collectively owned work, housing, and banking (DeFilippis 2004). This theoretical framework provides the opportunity to see community gardens as collectively produced public space. In such a way, community gardening can be a part of a more democratic urbanization process and perhaps move from being a stopgap measure to a permanent part of the urban landscape.

A relational approach has significance for this study and for community gardening. The most localized garden has the most grassroots, place-based support but does not have the support of broader networks. At the other end of the spectrum are the stakeholders existing at the largest scales—national corporations and nonprofit organizations—that have the least interest in significantly engaging with localities and operate without neighborhood input. There is a necessary balance, then, between small-scale interest and large-scale connectivity. Actions and actors across multiple scales appear to be involved in garden longevity. More attention is needed

to these variables within community garden advocacy. By doing so, community garden organizers may recognize the possibilities *and* limitations as well as the broader urbanization processes that impact localities.

Conclusions

Community gardens are highly diverse phenomena not just in their form and function but also in their establishment across multiple scales. As shown in this study, they are located across socio-economic areas from middle class neighborhoods to public housing developments. They also involve various expectations; gardens can be for personal enjoyment or can be expected to feed entire communities. Additionally, there are problems in implementation and longevity. This is largely due to the fact that there are different, and sometime conflicting, definitions of community, which are linked with how people identify with gardens. For this reason, Pudup's (2008) argument to rename community gardens as *organized garden projects* could remove the sometimes misleading and often value-laden *community* and prompt more critical reflection.

Furthermore, community gardens are organized from a number of scales and the operation of scale is crucial to their longevity and significance. At one end of the spectrum, people start gardens in their own neighborhoods. At the other end, nationally based interests have implemented gardens in cities throughout the U.S. Although grassroots interest is needed to sustain participation, support is needed on many scales to establish gardens and build their significance for broader publics. Alliances across scales provide increased awareness and reach outside of the immediate neighborhood. Such relations are subject to constant struggle, however, and can be used paternalistically rather than in partnership with neighborhood groups. Thus, community gardens need various degrees of support locally *and* extralocally, and these relations

are actively produced by different stakeholders. Like the complex problems they are intended to address, community gardens are themselves complex phenomena and more care is needed in their planning and operation.

Perhaps we may expand this argument beyond cautionary advice. A relational approach should not just inform the limitations of community gardening but also open up opportunities for a more permanent practice. Individually, community gardens may not be able to solve food insecurity or environmental injustice. On a large scale, though, they have the potential to facilitate a more democratic urbanization process, one that engages more with residents' concerns. Networks of community gardeners across scales, along with the understanding of how their localities are actively produced, could represent new formations of community garden discourse and practice.

Still, there are other physical and social complications that extend beyond issues of scale. Gardening techniques and knowledge imported from Northern cities have proved unsuccessful in Miami's unique climate and soils—indeed, Harvest of Love was established at the end of South Florida's growing season! Additionally, whereas middle-class Whites are interested in local food and environmental responsibility, poor Blacks may be more concerned with employment and thus resent garden organizers who advocate food security (Burnett 2009). Just because Liberty City residents were told to grow their own food does not mean that they should need to, or even want to, when even middle class gardeners do not depend solely on gardens for their diet.[15] Yet another issue in Miami is that Latinos are much less involved than in other American cities where immigrants are often both organizers and participants. Although the City of Miami did create a community garden at a public housing development in a Latino neighborhood in 2009, it

[15] Nevertheless, low-income families can, and have, become dependent on community gardens (Lawson 2007)

is not known if residents initiated the project.[16] This contrast is probably not due to the lack of interest in gardening—Ramsay (2006) documented private gardens in Little Havana—but rather the strength of the Cuban-American discourse that vehemently opposes anything that could be somehow related to socialism (Portes and Stepick 1993). Although community gardens do take real estate out of the property market (temporarily), it is unlikely that most community gardeners are socialists. Instead, the fact that Havana, Cuba has developed a well-known and successful urban agriculture system may be more to blame (Pinderhughes 2004).

Even with certain idiosyncrasies, the case studies from Miami are likely to be indicative of other cities' burgeoning community garden movements. Cities such as New York and Toronto have longer histories of community gardening; there, local governments are only recently beginning to provide permanent support for these gardens. In New York, this level of permanence is directly due to the years of conflict and struggle on the part of community gardeners (Mees and Stone 2010). It is more likely that most cities, like Miami, have disparate and inchoate community garden movements that are unaware of the conflicts over urban space that have occurred in other cities (or if aware, they have not experienced such conflict). Furthermore, local government support is likely to be tenuous and short term, or may even isolate disadvantaged neighborhoods through the uncritical hand-over of community gardens. The South Beach garden, though, does illustrate how the local state has responded to residents' demands. Nonetheless, the late and disconnected nature of community gardening in Miami is unlikely to have broader impacts given its current organizational dynamics. In the future, a better understanding of the diverse and complex nature of community gardens will present opportunities to envision them as permanent features of the urban landscape.

[16] http://www.miamigov.com/cms/comm/1724_6437.asp

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