Identity, Space, Place and Power: An ethnographic study of a

Community Garden

Ethan E. Lewis

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Declaration

I hereby declare that I, Ethan Lewis, have composed this thesis. It is entirely my own work, other than my supervisors' counsel and has not been submitted for any other degree or professional qualification.

30 March 2022
Abstract

This ethnographic inquiry examined the lived experiences of the Granton Community Gardeners. I explored how their social and nonhuman interactions influence the community garden volunteers by developing two sub-questions through my data analysis: 1) How are the community garden volunteers performing identity work in the garden? 2) How is power manifested and garden roles performed through the volunteers’ interactions in the garden?

During five months of fieldwork, I recorded observations and conversations with participants. I analysed the data using a conceptual framework incorporating Blumer’s ([1969] 1986) approach to symbolic interactionism (SI), supported by Cooley’s ([1964] 1983) ’looking-glass self’ and Mead’s ([1934] 2015) ’the generalized other’. I combined these theorists with Doreen Massey’s (2005) conceptualisation of space and place as relational and always becoming. This original conceptual approach contributes to community gardening literature by examining the impacts on people from the interaction inherent in a gardening project, as considered through the work of Massey and SI.

A modified Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis indicated two main themes: “Identity”, and “Power and Organisational Roles”. The data show that the participants are continually constructing and maintaining their identities. These identities are closely tied to the roles they have or are trying to play in the garden. These identities and organisational roles are related to the power, or perceived power individuals have inside and outside the garden. While all the
volunteers are reflected in these findings, the garden’s interactions were experienced differently across individuals.

This study contributes a novel application of symbolic interactionism and Massey’s (2005) concepts of space, place and power-geometries (Massey, 1999) as a conceptual framework to a growing body of literature about community gardens. My study revealed new insights into how volunteers construct or maintain identities and how space and place influence these identities. Garden organisers can use these discoveries to structure their garden spaces and activities to accommodate these volunteers’ diverse expressions of identity and organisational roles.

*Keywords:* community gardens, symbolic interactionism, power-geometry, Massey

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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Introduction to the study

I remember community gardens gaining popularity in my Upper Midwest region of the United States around 2008. The rise in community gardens seemed to go along with the increase in popularity of farmers' markets and Community Supported Agriculture. This trend continued as the National Gardening Association found in their 2013 report "Garden to Table: A 5-Year at Food Gardening in America" (2014) that "42 million households participated in food gardening in 2013" (p. 3). Of those 42 million households, 3 million participated in community gardens.

This growth in gardening and community gardens led me to wonder how their interactions within a garden impact people. Through an ethnographic study, I chose to investigate the volunteers' lived experiences in a community garden in Edinburgh, Scotland. As my understanding of the community and academic literature grew, I developed the following three questions to guide my inquiry. The evolution of these questions is covered in more detail during the Methodology chapter.

1. How do both their social and nonhuman interactions impact the community garden volunteers?
   a. How are the community garden volunteers performing identity work in the garden?
   b. How do power and the garden roles the volunteers perform impact their experiences in the garden?
I began my career in food systems in 2008, first volunteering, then interning and eventually working as the Local Food Access Coordinator with an immigrant and minority farmer training program. As such, I observed the interests in community gardening, local foods, and sustainable food systems grow and watched them face similar challenges. All of the food-related organisations I worked for were non-profit organisations, which means most of their funds came from grants (national, state or local) and private donations. When grant funds were involved, there was much paperwork on reporting your successes and accomplishments. These reporting forms rarely had space to provide anything other than numbers of people reached in public or trainees graduated, the weight of food produced and similar reporting measures. Those of us who were running the programs knew these numbers were significant. However, they left out at least half the story, perhaps the part with a more deeply felt and impactful outcome – the human story, the importance of farming and gardening to our daily lives.

My colleagues and I would always discuss potential ways to package these human stories and impacts for funding reports or government committee meetings. How do you package and report on a person gaining notoriety in their community or increasing self-confidence, or becoming a community leader through their farm and gardening work without degrading the meanings behind them? How do you best find these impacts and stories happening daily in participants lives? These issues and questions led me to want to find out the stories behind the community gardeners' experiences and the impacts these gardens have on their participants. The desire to investigate these phenomena in-depth lead me to enrol in a PhD program at the University of Edinburgh in 2016. I chose Scotland because of its rich history
Scotland's connection to gardening has a complex history. The first recorded British allotments (where each family or person has their plot) showed up in the early 19th century in rural areas (DeSilvey, 2003). The idea of allotments would later take root in more industrialised city areas with the rise of social reforms focused on urban areas (Crouch & Ward, 1988). The use of allotments and gardening, in general, remained relatively flat until World Wars I & II, where they were used as a source of national pride to support the war movement and the Depression Era as a solution to unemployment (DeSilvey, 2003). While allotments are different from community gardens (a jointly managed piece of land, as explained later in the literature review), DeSilvey (2002) found that many allotment holders equate their allotment to landownership. In my experience, this is the same with community gardens, as many gardens and allotments have unstable land tenure rights with their local authority. Land tenure is the "relationship that individuals and groups hold with respect to land and land-based resources" (USAID, n.d., para. 3). These relationships or land rights determine how the land is managed and its use (USAID, n.d.). With the continued use of land for community gardens or allotments unstable, it is difficult for the groups managing the land to contribute to their local community. An example from Edinburgh is the Craigentinny Telferton Allotments. These allotments have been worked by the community (used for growing crops and other plants) since 1923. The continued use of the land, owned by a development company, for allotments, was constantly challenged. The group spent considerable time and resources fighting for continued use, finding it difficult to continue offering community events and gardening spaces. Finally, in September
2015, they had their use of the area protected under planning laws (Craigentinny Telferton Allotments, 2019). With this new stability they have been able to support their community through excess produce donations for example.

Further still, in my research site at Granton Community Gardeners, the group's board of trustees regularly discuss continued use of the land and tenure with the local area councilmembers. This idea of land tenure in community gardens and allotments as associated with land ownership is connected to the 1892 Allotments Act in Scotland, which continued to provide an allotment as a fundamental right of citizenship (DeSilvey, 2002). This Act's side effect was that disagreements about allotments were often framed as the 'little guy versus the greedy landlord'. In Scotland, these arguments were often set against the Highland Clearances' backdrop and carry with them all the bitterness and sense of loss of those events. This historical context has given gardens a unique status and equates them with land ownership, especially in Scotland (DeSilvey, 2002).

After World War II, although there was an overall decline in gardening for self-sufficiency in the United Kingdom as supply chains became reliable and there were no longer food shortages, allotment gardens still held some popularity. Throughout the 20th century, gardening initiatives would wax and wane based upon their call to action in response to the political climate (DeSilvey, 2002). More recently, there has been a resurgence and increased interest in gardening again. This resurgence can be attributed to austerity and neoliberal policies that numerous citizens felt left them behind, as discussed later in the thesis (Crossan et al., 2016; Pudup, 2008; Thompson, 2015; Witheridge & Morris, 2016). Community gardens are gaining in popularity and are being used to revitalise neighbourhoods, as is the case with the
Granby neighbourhood of Liverpool (Thompson, 2015) and the Women's Environmental Network's work in Tower Hamlets (Metcalf et al., 2012). These and other projects help view food initiatives as possible sites for latent social change (Starr, 2010).

In some cases, community gardens are being used or offered up as part of the local food system in response to food security, peak oil and climate change (Sage, 2014). Sage believes that in times of peak oil, food security, and climate change, local civic spaces can serve as a gathering space of like-minded and motivated people. These groups have the potential to connect their local issues to the broader societal issues of food security, inclusion, climate change, peak oil and more.

The journey of performing this research has resembled a switch-back road. From the beginning, I wanted the participants' voices to be prominent and my research to reflect the community I was studying. As such, much of my research choices would shift to reflect the above aim better and adapt to my community's atmosphere. These changes are mentioned throughout the thesis and fully addressed in the Research Site Context and Methodology chapters. Using an ethnographic approach, I investigated the garden volunteers' experiences and the impacts of community gardening activities on them. The question, How do both their social and nonhuman interactions impact the community garden volunteers, would guide me during my fieldwork. I would further develop two subquestions during my data analysis, 1) How are the community garden volunteers performing identity work in the garden? 2) How do power and the garden roles the volunteers perform impact their experiences in the garden? The emergence of these questions is explained in the Methodology chapter's Data Analysis section. My chosen data collection methods of participant observation and 'interview' through
casual conversations were in consultation with my primary contact and other volunteers in the garden to respect the community's culture. The process of how this worked is explained in the Research Site Context chapter.

I chose to investigate my research questions with the Granton Community Gardeners in the Granton area of Edinburgh, Scotland. They were very welcoming to me as a volunteer and open to participating in the research. The volunteers in the gardens can be separated into two different unofficial groups. One group is corporate group volunteers. These volunteers all work for or belong to the same company or charity. The group comes to the garden for one-off events that the company arranges in combination with one of the Granton Community Gardeners board members or paid staff. Most of these groups only come once a year and help with larger tasks like digging up turf or spreading mulch in the gardens. The individuals who come with corporate groups do not become mainstay volunteers.

The other unofficial group of volunteers are the mainstay volunteers, as I label them. These volunteers regularly come to the garden. However, the regularity of their presence is determined by the individual. In addition, most of these volunteers live in the Granton area or used to live there. Finally, some volunteers are referred to the garden by friends or family and do not live in the area. I am part of this latter set of people. I was directed to the Granton Community Gardeners by my supervisor to volunteer, and it also turned out to be a great study location.

The garden volunteers with Granton Community Gardeners are ethnically diverse and primarily from working-class families, reflecting the demographics of the Granton area. This diversity means that the garden volunteers are a mix of people born and raised in the Granton
neighbourhoods or greater Scotland and immigrants from Europe, Africa, the Middle East, and Western Asia. Since the volunteers come from many different countries, their length of time living in Edinburgh varies; most have spent five or more years in Scotland. While most garden volunteers live in Granton, some live in other neighbourhoods and come to volunteer in the gardens. The reason for this, as mentioned above, is that these volunteers were encouraged by another person to volunteer here. The makeup of all the volunteers with Granton Community Gardeners offers many individuals, cultures, ages, and experiences that the community garden attempts to represent. My study had 17 participants that came from the previously mentioned diverse backgrounds.

I am curious to discover the stories in the Granton Community Gardeners’ community gardens in this study. This community garden was chosen because it has a diverse volunteer population (ethnically, age, gender), welcome newcomers, and is well established in the Granton community. These group qualities are essential in the context of my research questions and aims because being established in the community helps observe how they position themselves compared to other community groups. Their relation to other groups aids in examining how the group creates their identity through interactions with other community groups. Being more welcoming to newcomers allowed me to explore the group as a volunteer before my fieldwork and later more fully integrate into the group as a researcher-volunteer. In my community gardens experience, less-established groups tend to have a more transient volunteers base with fewer core volunteers. Since Granton Community Gardeners are more established, they were more likely to have a core group of volunteers who reliably came to the garden. Regularly attending garden volunteers allows me to observe the same volunteers'
interactions over time while still seeing how they interact with those who do not consistently attend the garden. The group's diverse volunteer population enabled me to watch how people interact with others who are not like them in gender, age, or ethnicity. All of these interactions would eventually lead me to find my two main emergent themes, “Identity” and “Power and Organisational Roles”, aiding in answering my research questions.

I am particularly interested in how social and nonhuman interactions impact garden volunteers in my research. The 'social' refers to in-person interactions in the garden and the discussions of interactions outside the garden. Nonhuman interactions refer to interactions that happen through nonhuman objects, such as a building (proximity to, inside or outside of it, or maintenance of it are some examples), culinary uses of the plants, and how space and environment impact the volunteer's interactions. I intend that this ethnographic research will render the multitude of interactions and intangible benefits more visible through discovering the untold stories within community gardens. I use an interpretivists and constructivist philosophical lens paired with a framework combining symbolic interactionism (SI) with Doreen Massey's conceptualisation of space (explained in Chapter 3). Through two literature reviews, I found a few articles describing how, on an individual scale, community garden activities, roles, and power impact our identities' construction and maintenance. It was further discovered that SI and Doreen Massey's work have been under-used in community garden research. My two literature reviews revealed that the current theories used to underpin community garden research are inadequate because it does not explain, on an individual and group level, how activities and power-relations in the garden help shape identities and experiences in the garden. My inquiry aims to fill this gap in the literature through these theorists' use as a
conceptual framework, providing a deeper understanding of the Granton Community Gardeners' lived experiences. This investigation's findings further offer practice implications, such as how volunteers maintain or construct their identities in the garden.

Additionally, volunteers' roles can be related to their identity and that these impacts are not expressed the same across volunteers. From a policy perspective, my findings indicate that the benefits mentioned above are how some individuals attempt to contribute to their communities. More of these opportunities could be open for other people to get involved by supporting the growth and continued existence of community gardens on a council level.

1.2 Background to the study

In the United Kingdom, the Federation of City Farms and Community Gardens (FCFCG) (2018) state their members "employ more than 1,500 staff, actively support and empower thousands of volunteers, and attract over three million visitors each year" (p. vi). European Federation of City Farms (2017) claims their members "reach millions of people of all ages and backgrounds and provide employment, voluntary work and work placements for thousands of people" (p. 10). These reports demonstrate that city farms, gardening activities, and community gardens have a far-reaching impact in the UK.

Gardening has historically played a crucial role in society, particularly with the unemployed and during times of conflict. The Scottish Allotment Scheme for the Unemployed was set up in 1931 to provide land for growing food for the families of unemployed or severely impoverished men and women. During World Wars I and II, the United Kingdom had nationally sponsored programs to increase community gardens and gardening activities in order to supplement food supply chains. By 1917, there were 1.4 million allotments in the UK (Acton,
2011; Phyl, n.d.). By the end of World War II in 1945, approximately 1.4 million gardens came from the "Dig for Victory" campaign in the UK (Acton, 2011; Phyl, n.d.). While allotment gardens, gardens where each individual or family has their plot to grow plants, have been around the United Kingdom since 1851 or earlier and played a vital role in society, community gardens are a more modern concept (DeSilvey, 2002). Community gardens are a relatively recent, and their exact definition is contested.

### 1.3 Defining Community Gardens

Scotland has a long history with gardening, and it is tightly connected to their history and society (DeSilvey, 2003). So, it is important to know what a community garden means in my research and the competing discourses surrounding how to define them. This section breaks down the two components of the term ‘community garden’ and discusses what they mean in my research.

#### 1.3.1 Defining Community

What is a community garden? To understand this, we need to consider the words separately: 'community' and 'garden'. Community is a contested term, and as Day (2006) suggests, researchers feel that it has been 'worked' so exhaustively that it no longer has a meaning. Perhaps due to this concept being overused, its definition varies between people, places, and different contexts. For example, it can mean a church community, student community, a specific neighbourhood or region of a city, a country or an international community online or offline. Despite this overuse issue, it is helpful to think about what 'community' community gardens refer to and what 'community' Granton Community Gardeners aims for. As such, I will continue to look at the contentious nature of the concept of
community. Plant (1974) described the word community as containing both fact and value. In other words, it has both evaluative and descriptive aspects to it.

Further consideration clarifies that the descriptive aspects of 'community' refer to a locality, identity of active interest, a feeling of belonging or cultural identity. The evaluative aspects of 'community' connect to the values that a 'community' evokes, such as when everything is perfect, and everyone gets along (Plant, 1974). In 1955 Richard Hillery published a review where he found close to 100 different definitions of 'community', with one commonality: people. Even with the commonality of people, Ife (2009) suggested that "Ultimately, 'community' is subjective" (p. 9) and all that comes with the term is more ambiguous and ubiquitous than one would think it is. Shaw (2008) summed this up nicely by saying that to find the meaning of community, you must look at how it functions in a particular context and how it connects value and meaning (fact and value).

Since 'community' is a contentious term, it helps to look at the term community's competing discourses. The word 'community' seems to have rarely been used negatively, mostly eliciting a positive feeling (Williams, 2014). Shaw (2008) also said that community often refers to "the good life, but [what the good life] is rarely made explicit" (p.27). Indeed, when many of us think of a community, we envision a time when there was no conflict, everyone got along and contributed to society. It can be a nostalgic idea. The word community is often put in front of another word to make it friendlier since it evokes warm and pleasant feelings, especially in public policy. At the same time, as Garth Allen (1987) pointed out, positive emotions such as solidarity and a sense of connection that community members can feel may also lead to a community retreating inward and protecting themselves, thus separating the
group from the rest of society. This separation then demonstrates that a community can also be exclusive and complements the work done by Bauman (2013) on how creating a 'community' can produce boundaries that cause that particular group to only look out for their own community. These discussions on boundaries are interesting as the boundaries that help define or emerge from the community can change based on each member’s perspective. For example, I was allowed to join in my study and was eventually considered part of the community. Despite not being from Edinburgh’s Granton/Pilton area, I could come into the garden as long as I worked and joined the garden community.

Further, I was already part of the community for the volunteers I knew from when I had volunteered at the gardens. However, those I met for the first time did not accept me into the community first. Thus, the community boundaries shifted depending on which member I was interacting with. These interactions and others were captured in my themes (I call them threads and explain this in the Methods chapter 5). The eventual shift to focus on interactions, human and nonhuman, using symbolic interactionism leads to an inductive approach in my research and the development of my conceptual structure that frames the Granton Community Gardeners through Massey’s (2005) concepts of space and place.

In conversations with people who live in Granton and those who do not live there, Granton is often labelled a 'rough' area. As one volunteer put it, "If you show anything higher than a tenner in the pub, everyone will be your 'best friend', or they’ll take it from you" (Oliver, personal communication, June 2017). On a socio-political level, MacGregor (2001) said that neighbourhoods or areas of cities labelled as problematic are said to lack a sense of community and that this leads to a localised mentality that the issues are only within that community and
not symptomatic of broader societal issues. She explained that politicians' social policies to fix these "local" issues are just the old ideas with a new name or ideas from the same kind of thinking as the old policies and are just as ineffective. Craig (1989) discussed a similar move in his paper examining the impacts British politics have and will continue to have on community workers' practice. He indicated that successive governments had slowly stripped away the social welfare programs by pushing local authorities and organisations to solve the local problems. This trend of reducing funding and support for social programmes can still be seen in the current political situation. This political trend is an underlying, sometimes unspoken, part of why Granton Community Gardeners continue to grow as they aim to support their local area with community events and food.

Another set of discourses involving the term community is the tension between 'community as policy' and 'community as politics'. These terms impact how a community is defined and how the above phrases impact the developing community. We know a community is defined by 'us' (inside the community) and by 'them' (outside the community) (M. Shaw, 2008). I agree with Brent's (1997) opinion that forming a community creates differences and boundaries. Though not covered explicitly in the Findings chapter of this dissertation, I saw this creation of differences and boundaries in my study of Granton Community Gardeners. I expressed this as the threads titled 'Us versus Them' and 'Inclusion' in my research. In the Findings chapter on Power and Organisational Roles on pages 165 - 166, this 'Us versus Them' mentality is expressed through power relations in who cooked and the lack of culturally relevant food knowledge sharing. The 'Us versus Them' thread also overlapped with the Identity thread when discussing how Granton Community Gardeners identify themselves in
relation to other community groups. These threads are explained more in the Findings – Identity chapter on page 127.

1.3.2 Defining 'Garden' in Community Gardens

While the term 'garden' may seem easy to define, there are three basic definitions according to the Cambridge Dictionary (2021). A garden in the United Kingdom can be a land plot typically next to a residence with grass where flowers or other plants are grown. A garden can also be a public space where trees, flowers or other plants are grown, such as Princes Street Gardens in Edinburgh (Cambridge Dictionary, 2021). In the United States, a garden is a land plot typically next to a residence where flowers or vegetables and sometimes both are grown (Cambridge Dictionary, 2021). For this reason, I find the term 'garden' is easier to define because while a garden might focus on food growing, it can also include the growing of other plants and still be considered a 'garden'. This study focuses on the interactions and not on what is grown since the garden participants determine it; therefore, the produce is not part of this definitional discussion. Despite the plant life not being the sole focus of my research, in terms of quantity harvested, diversity of vegetables grown or the number of square meters of growing space, the plants are part of the interactions studied. Therefore, the definition of 'garden' that best aligns with my research site is a piece of land where flowers and edible plants are raised.

At this point, it is helpful to acknowledge the difference between community gardens and allotment gardens again briefly. As mentioned earlier in this chapter, allotment gardens have been in the United Kingdom dating back to the 1800s, while community gardens have come about in the modern era. An allotment garden is a space divided into small plots of land
where individuals or families generally manage their own assigned space for non-commercial uses (Breuste & Artmann, 2015). I have chosen to study community gardens because, in this research, I am interested in understanding the benefits garden participants get from their social and nonhuman interactions. In my experience, allotment gardens provide fewer social interactions, which would not allow me to answer my research question. Community gardens are defined differently depending on the organisation or researcher.

The American Community Gardening Association defines a community garden as "any piece of land gardened by a group of people" (as cited in Rupel, 2014, p. 1). While Grow, a charity in Northern Ireland that promotes community gardening, says community gardens are "Any piece of land gardened by a group of people for the benefit of the group and the wider community" (Grow, 2011, para. 1). While other scholars and charities hold differing definitions of community gardens, I have drawn on Greenspace Scotland's (2013) articulation. They describe community gardens as "locally managed pieces of land that are developed in response to and reflect the needs of the communities in which they are based" (p. 6). This definition is the same one that Witheridge & Morris (2016) used in their research on community gardens. I felt this definition best suited the beginnings, management style, organisational goals, and community of Granton Community Gardeners for this research.

1.4 Community Development and Community Gardens

Community gardening is one of the activities considered for use in community development. Sometimes community gardens are established from a grassroots effort; other times, it is a top-down implementation from the state. On occasion, it is a combined effort from the garden's creation and maintenance (Armstrong, 2000; Drake & Lawson, 2015).
At its most simplified, community development is a process where ordinary people collectively work to improve their circumstances in life (Meade et al., 2016). However, as with the term community discussed earlier, community development's meaning can change depending on when and where in the world it is used. If the meaning of community development changes in part based on the locality, it is logical also to understand that community development is partly influenced by the ideology of social programs in a region. The changeability of community development's meaning creates tensions within this field. Local councils and the state often run community development initiatives in the United Kingdom; even when the organisations are in the voluntary sector, they will, in many cases, have a relationship with the state.

During the years where the United Kingdom's welfare state social support was more robust than during the current government, community development workers would receive input from the community to find their needs and help them find a solution (Shaw et al., 2016). However, community development workers are often asked to inform the community of their needs in the current political climate. This situation creates tension between the workers' desire to help and the perhaps unintentional reinforcement of the policies that created the community's issues. Thus, how community development is deployed can reinforce the current inequalities or shed light on those inequalities to be rectified (Minnite & Piven, 2016). This tension is demonstrated in community gardens, especially when they are started from a grassroots effort in response to a community need for food, shared space to gather or lack of services. For example, in Stevens Point, Wisconsin, there was a grassroots push for a community garden to be developed so that people could grow some of their vegetables.
However, the initially suggested plot locations were not near those who needed or wanted the garden space. So, some community groups worked with the city council to find urban land plots that could be used for gardens that were accessible to those who needed them most. Without the community groups involvement, the gardens would have perpetuated the tension between those who could easily travel to garden plots and those who could not since Stevens Point has minimal public transport.

1.5 Thesis Outline

The order of this thesis follows my decision making and growth as a researcher. This growth, increased knowledge of the Granton Community Gardeners, and increased awareness of the volunteers' stories led me to shift my research approach and focus. I would swing away from a researcher-centred approach and move towards a more participant-centred view in my study. I began my research wanting to use cultural ecosystem services to investigate the volunteers' intangible benefits from their work in the garden. After conversations with some of the garden members, I realised this framework did not fit the interests, needs, and the group's view of the garden space. I would then move to take a more inductive stance to let the gardeners' benefits emerge during data analysis. As a result of these decisions to change aspects of my research, I believe my thesis is best presented chronologically. Although this sequence is a winding path rather than a linear one, it remains true to my process and my ability to think through research decisions reflexively while maintaining rigour. Following this winding path offers a research project that reflects my participants and is more valuable to them for structuring their garden activities while contributing to the academic literature.
through a novel use of symbolic interactionism and Doreen Massey's work to view the garden interactions.

The current chapter is the Introduction and provides an overview of Scotland's complex historical context of community gardens and allotments. This historical context also demonstrated how allotments and community gardens are connected to Scotland's political history, typically through land tenure rights. The introductory chapter also laid out the contested nature of the term 'community' while settling on the definition of the community garden as "locally managed pieces of land that are developed in response to and reflect the needs of the communities in which they are based" (Greenspace Scotland, 2013, p. 6). My professional experiences and how they inspired me to pursue a PhD to explain the lived experiences and intangible benefits that I observed during my food systems related career more appropriately. The order the remaining chapters to be discussed is 1) Introduction 2) Literature Review 3) Conceptual Framework 4) Research Site Context 5) Methodology 6) Findings – Identity 7) Findings – Power and Organisational Roles 8) Conclusions.

Chapter 2 is my literature review and discusses the four broad main themes from my review: Ecosystem Services and Community Gardens, Public Policy and Social Change in Community Gardens, Community Gardens as a Site of Social Diversity, and Neoliberalism and Community Gardens. The criticisms of community gardens are also examined with some comparisons to my research site. At the end of this chapter, I devise my initial research questions. This stage of my research is also where I begin to understand the attitudes and people of Granton Community Gardeners and led me to perform a second literature review as
discussed in the chapter. The end of this chapter begins to lay the groundwork for more fully explained decisions in chapters 3, 4 and 5.

Chapter 3 details my conceptual framework. The second part of the literature review in chapter 2 revealed that both symbolic interactionism and Doreen Massey's work have been under-utilised in community garden literature. Thus, I crafted a bespoke conceptual framework to further investigate my threads from Chapter 5. Chapter 3 details the nuances in combining Blumer's ([1969] 1986) ideas on symbolic interactionism and supported by Cooley's ([1902] 1983) *looking-glass self* and Mead's ([1934] 2015) as needed to investigate identity construction and maintenance in the garden. These theorists were combined with Massey's (2005) concepts of space and place and her conception of power-geometries (1999). Massey's ideas (1999, 2005) were used to view the community garden's meaning as relational and open and how the volunteers' roles and their power in the garden impact them.

Chapter 4, Research Site Context, is a linking chapter. The content begins with how I would receive feedback on my framework, data collection, and the member checking process from Edward and other Granton Community Gardeners members. Next, I explain my deepening understanding of the garden volunteers' attitudes and reservations and the changes I decided to make in response to this emerging information. Lastly, this chapter outlines the history of the Granton area and the Granton Community Gardeners.

Chapter 5 discusses my research's methodological concerns and the changes I made in response to the feedback I received from my participants. It begins by mentioning the environmental thinkers who have impacted my worldview, leading to this research's conceptualisation and philosophical paradigm. This ethnographic study aimed to gather the
lived experiences and stories within Granton Community Gardeners to investigate how their social and nonhuman interactions impact the volunteers. After describing my data collection, I describe how I used a modified Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis to analyse my data to allow for the threads (themes) to emerge. This analysis led me to develop two sub-questions to deepen the understanding of the interactions in the garden. This chapter further covers how I approached reflexivity and trustworthiness and includes some research limitations.

After my data analysis and reflexively asking myself what the threads (themes) mean for my research, I established two additional research sub-questions. First, the data led me to revisit my literature review and perform the second part of my review, as discussed in Chapter 2. Here I explore the literature related to my two main threads: "Identity" and "Power and Organisational Roles". The second part of the literature review discussed cultural identity and community gardens, food and identity, gardening and symbolic interactionism and Doreen Massey and community gardens. It was found that the use of symbolic interactionism and Doreen Massey's (2005) concepts of space and place as a conceptual framework fill a gap in the literature.

Chapters 6 and 7 outline my findings of my two main threads: "Identity" and "Power and Organisational Roles". Chapter 6 covers how identity is shaped or maintained through interactions in the garden. A volunteer's attempts at identity construction were connected to their role in the garden and, at times, the power they had or were trying to achieve. Chapter 7 discusses how power-relations impact the volunteers' experiences and sometimes their roles in the garden. In this chapter, I argue that the interactions are complex, with each interaction having its history and trajectory influencing the meaning of the garden. The Granton
Community Gardeners' volunteers benefit from constructing or maintaining their identity through their roles while participating in the garden. These roles are determined by their interactions and the power-relations within those exchanges.

In Chapter 8, I summarise my research and my choices to shape the final thesis. Here I discuss the implications of my findings to both practice and policy. After the implications, I briefly discuss two possible future research avenues: community gardens as a third-place and ecological identity in community gardens. Finally, I end the chapter with my reflection on this research project.

1.6 Summary

In this chapter, I provided my professional background in food systems work and that I was inspired to pursue research in community gardens to help tell the lived experiences in community gardens. I hope to bring to light the stories, interactions, and impacts community gardens have on volunteers, which are often left out of reporting measures and council policies. My inquiry aims to tell these stories by filling a theoretical gap in the literature through SI and Doreen Massey as a conceptual framework, providing a deeper understanding of the Granton Community Gardeners' lived experiences. This chapter briefly introduced this research project's relational nature, which would lead to a shift in research questions and approach, which is covered in the Research Site Context and Methodology chapters. During this introduction, the contested nature of the term 'community' was discussed as I came to define community gardens as "locally managed pieces of land that are developed in response to and reflect the needs of the communities in which they are based" (Greenspace Scotland, 2013, p. 6). I then briefly discussed community development as it relates to community gardens. Lastly, I provided
an outline of my thesis and a justification for some structure choices. This chapter section provides an early hint and justification for the changes in the research question, data collection and research approach made in the stages between chapters 3 and 4. This outline offers a bit of a roadmap to follow the chronological order of this thesis. The next chapter, Literature Review, is where my research journey will demonstrate my original thinking before my research focus shifted and discusses the second literature review I performed in response to this shift.
Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 Chapter Overview

The previous chapter covered the outline of this thesis and its order and introduced the background to my study. I also covered this research's relational aspects and how those influenced the research process. The initial review aimed to uncover gaps in the literature that my initial research idea would fit. The second part of the literature review covers the literature I reviewed regarding symbolic interactionism and Doreen Massey concerning community gardens.

The following chapter has five sections, with section 2.2 covering the first literature review. After covering the steps, I went through during my review, I then discussed the four broad themes: Ecosystem Services and Community Gardens, Public Policy and Social Change in Community Gardens, Community Gardens as a Site of Social Diversity, and Neoliberalism and Community Gardens. Next, section 2.3 discusses the critiques of community gardens. Following that, section 2.4 covers the second review of the literature and has three subsections – Community Gardens and Identity, Community Gardens and symbolic interactionism, and Doreen Massey and community gardens. The final section, 2.5, is the chapter summary.

2.2 Initial Literature Review

To discover the breadth of past research in the United Kingdom about community gardens, the different academic fields performing community garden research, and the methodologies in related studies to find initial gaps in the literature, I conducted a systematic review of the literature. According to the EPPI-Centre (2019), “Systematic reviews aim to find as much as possible of the research relevant to the particular research questions, and use explicit
methods to identify what can be reliably said on the basis of these studies”. As mentioned in the above quote from the EPPI-Centre systematic reviews have a specific and rigorous process the researcher chooses to use to find the required literature. The following paragraphs explain the process used during my review.

The search criterion of “community garden*” was used to catch other iterations of the word ‘garden’, such as gardens and gardening. The online subject databases at the University of Edinburgh library were utilised to search for journal articles and academic books on the topic in specific social science databases. Table 1 shows the breakdown of the databases used and what journals contained relevant articles.

Table 1

*Databases searched with the number of articles found in each journal for community gardens in the UK*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Journal</th>
<th>Number of Articles used</th>
<th>Database Searched</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Perspectives in Public Health</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>ProQuest Social Sciences Premium Collection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health &amp; Place</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>ProQuest Social Sciences Premium Collection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Journal of Social and Political Psychology</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>ProQuest Social Sciences Premium Collection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ANTIPODE</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Web of Science</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local Environment</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Web of Science</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biological Agriculture &amp; Horticulture</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Web of Science</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local Environmental Sustainability</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Science Direct</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban Forestry &amp; Urban Greening</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Science Direct</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>British Journal of Occupational Therapy</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Scopus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Families, Relationships and Societies</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Scopus</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
To reduce the chances of the paper or book only mentioning community gardens rather than researching community gardens, I set the database search parameters to scan only the titles and the abstracts. Once the search had returned the database results, I would scan each of the titles and abstracts in the results list for ‘community gardens’, ‘community gardening’, or similar phrases keeping only those containing these terms. The physical scanning of the articles and books further reduced the number of relevant articles. The phrase ‘United Kingdom’ was used as an additional key phrase for the research location, thus eliminating research beyond the UK. I chose this parameter as I was interested in gathering the literature relevant to
community gardens in the UK. This parameter gave a broad picture of community garden research in the UK while looking for gaps in the literature.

Before starting a literature review, I had broadly looked through community garden literature. I found a few articles that used ecosystem services as a framework in quantitative studies of community gardens. With my academic and professional background in natural sciences, I was familiar with ecosystem services, particularly a subset called cultural ecosystem services. I thought cultural ecosystem services could be an excellent framework to investigate community gardens. I used the above process when performing a search for ecosystem services in community gardens. The search terms used were ‘community garden*’ AND ‘ecosystem services’. Table 2 lists the specific databases searched and journals with relevant articles.

Table 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Journal</th>
<th>Number of Articles used</th>
<th>Database Searched</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Urban Forestry</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Web of Science</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban Ecosystems</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>CAB - Ovid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Landscape and Urban Planning</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>ScienceDirect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Landscape Ecology</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Web of Science</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environmental Education Research</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Ovid via PsychINFO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AMBIO</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Springer Link</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food Security</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Springer Link</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ecosystems</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Springer Link</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Global Environmental Change</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Scopus</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
During this part of the review, I noted the research methodologies to identify knowledge gaps.

Table 3 shows these tabulated results.

**Table 3**

*Methodologies used in community garden and ecosystem services research*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Methodology</th>
<th>Number of Articles</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Case Study</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Empirical - Quantitative</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exploratory</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Empirical - case study</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literature Review with a Case Study</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-part study Case Study in Stockholm</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Case Study Analysis</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnographic Multi-case study</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exploratory with Case Study</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviews and field sampling for diversity and descriptive statistics</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literature Review</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
During the review, I found research in ten different disciplines covering various topics about community gardens in the UK. To better track the research scope and reveal knowledge gaps, I grouped the studies into nine groups based on common themes in the research papers. Table 4 indicates these groupings.

**Table 4**

*Grouping results of topics in community gardens in the UK*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic of Paper</th>
<th>Number of Papers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>public policy and community gardens or social change or neoliberal contested space</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>benefits of community gardens and sustainability</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gardening for wellbeing in later life stages</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>overview of community garden research</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>general health/wellbeing</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>diversity of and within community gardens</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>building community</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>human/plant interaction</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gardens (parks) as a peace symbol</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In the following sections, I will briefly discuss the four most prominent groups, as determined by the frequency with which they appeared in the literature: Ecosystem Services and Community Gardens, Public Policy and Social Change in Community Gardens, Community Gardens as a Site for Social Diversity, and Neoliberalism and Community Gardens. The review also tracked the methods used in community garden research to look for methodological gaps in current research. Table 5 present an analysis of the methodologies employed within each of the papers reviewed.

Table 5

Methods used in community gardens research in the UK

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Methodology</th>
<th>Number of Studies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Case Study</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnography/Case Study</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mixed Methods</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DIY Citizen framework</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>review summary of health</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnography</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Empirical study</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>exploratory</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>phenomenology (specifically included critical realist ontology and an interpretivist epistemology)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participatory Action Research</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As themes emerged through the data analysis two years later, a second more specific review was required to identify the body of literature for the two main themes – “identity” and “power and organisational roles”. The process of this second literature review and the research papers it uncovered is discussed in section 2.4 of this chapter.

While my study evolved over the two years following this initial literature review, it was still beneficial to my study. This review provided a broad overview of the previous research, methods used, and community garden research disciplines. These works further offered the initial links to non-academic work, such as public policy, which would become one of my research contributions. The following is a breakdown of the four main themes found during the initial literature review.

2.2.1 Principal Themes from the Initial Literature Review

2.2.1.1 Ecosystem Services and Community Gardens. According to the MA (United Nations, 2005), “ecosystem services are the benefits people obtain from ecosystems” (p. 53). Ecosystem services (ES) emerged as a concept developed by biologists and ecologists trying to frame beneficial aspects of ecosystems to gain interest in biodiversity and conservation from the average person (Lele et al., 2013). This new emphasis caused a shift from the idea of ecosystem functions (ecosystem processes) towards services. Using the term service primarily demonstrates that biodiversity directly affects the ecosystem functions that provide human well-being (Gómez-Baggethun et al., 2010b). For example, when the biodiversity (both flora and fauna) is degraded in a wetland, the wetland eventually stops performing water purification functions. Wetlands often function to purify water run-off before it gets into the groundwater system. Without this purification, the groundwater supply is more easily contaminated.
According to Gómez-Baggethun et al. (2010), rapid industrialisation and technology growth pushed these ecosystem services towards monetisation, with the term ecosystem services (ES) first showing up in the early 1980s. The authors explained that ES was mainstreamed by academics who were searching for funding. Funders asked these academics to monetise ES, slowly embedding ES into policy and becoming the basis for many of the current carbon trade and energy tax schemes, such as the Emissions Trading Scheme in the UK. The Millennium Ecosystem Assessment solidified ES in policy to bring to the forefront the importance of ES and the ecological functions underlying these ecosystem services (Gómez-Baggethun et al., 2010b). The emergence of the popularity of ES overlaps with the emergence of neoliberal policies, discussed in a later theme of this rapid review, in both the United States and the United Kingdom.

The Millennium Ecosystem Assessment (MA) was initiated in 2001 to assess humans' impact from the degradation of ecosystems and attempt to enhance these systems' conservation and sustainability (Millennium Ecosystem Assessment, 2005). Again, ecosystem services are the things people gain from ecosystems (United Nations, 2005). Ecosystem services include provisioning services; regulating services; cultural services; and supporting services that maintain the conditions for life on Earth” (p. 49). An example of how these services work is in Hale et al.'s (2011) research, where they found that gardeners connect to their community gardens on many levels, including emotional levels. An emotional connection to space, place or object can create a level of importance in a person’s life for a location or moment in time and encapsulate cultural ecosystem services. Cultural ecosystem services are the non-material benefits from an ecosystem, such as recreation, education, inspiration, religious or spiritual
meanings (Millennium Ecosystem Assessment, 2005). In studies where the participants ordered community gardens' ecosystem services in terms of their importance and contributions, cultural ecosystem services were highly ranked (Camps-Calvet et al., 2016; Welp et al., 2016). Thus, one can say that having access to these cultural ecosystem services can enhance the lives of those who experience them. A loss or reduction in these services would degrade our experience as human beings. If one feels their life is degraded in one way or another, it can be challenging to connect with others, making building a community difficult. This previous idea is supported by Barthel et al.'s (2010) research on social-ecological memory, encapsulating cultural ecosystem services as a form of education and knowledge transfer. They found that social-ecological memory (memory of groups engaged in ecosystem management) was crucial in building relationships and self-identity. These relationships and self-identity happen by sharing knowledge on ecological processes and management. Partly embedded in the garden itself is social-ecological memory; thus, losing the garden would be a loss of this memory and these components of relationship building. Barthel et al. (2010) concluded that social-ecological memory is vital in combatting ecosystem services' loss. It is important to note as the MA (2005) state that “approximately 60% of the ecosystem services evaluated in this assessment (including 70% of regulating and cultural services) are being degraded or used unsustainably” (MA slide 43). Thus, community gardens could play an essential role in maintaining ecosystem services and contributing to the enhancement of human lives. My research originally proposed adding to the importance of cultural ecosystem services through the exploration of the unshared stories of the social and non-human interactions of the garden volunteers. But as
discussed, the Research Site Context chapter, this approach would change since it would not be relevant to my participants.

2.2.1.2 Public Policy and Social Change in Community Gardens. Within the second theme of public policy and social change in community gardens, the specific subthemes ranged from Do It Yourself (DIY) Citizenship to public policy to environmental justice and prefigurative social change of neoliberal spaces. I grouped these topics as they all deal with power structures and how government regulations influence and impact community gardens.

Wiltshire & Azuma (2000) contended that community gardens offer a more effective solution than other development options for urban developers because their benefits are more immediate and more widely felt. For example, community gardens can provide people with food growing and provide an aesthetic benefit for those passing by the garden. Despite this assertion, in my experience, community gardens struggle with funding and land tenure security. Land tenure is the process of who can use a piece of land and how it is managed (USAID, n.d.). This tenure issue means that if a community garden does not own its land, then the leases or agreements for that garden are not stable. Some gardens alleviate funding issues by forming partnerships with local authorities or councils, as is done in Roseville, MN, where their allotments are located in city parks and offered at a low cost. However, Buckingham (2003) explained that it is not partnerships that make a thriving community garden; instead, the local people and communities’ efforts allow the gardens to continue. Furthermore, Buckingham (2003) concluded that a DIY culture in community gardens could challenge the current food system by facilitating food growing by promoting better redevelopment of urban spaces.
Crossan et al. (2016) discussed how Glasgow’s community gardens are spaces for contesting neoliberal policies through DIY citizenship by creating more democratic and inclusive spaces. When talking about community garden organisations and public policy in Edinburgh, Witheridge & Morris (2016) highlighted the benefits that community gardens can have on an individual or community and how they can help the city fulfil many of its policy goals. They also suggested that it would be beneficial to separate community gardens from other forms of green spaces within planning and policy agendas. This shift in policy would, in turn, make planning specifically for community gardens easier as their benefits to communities differ from those of other green spaces.

Metcalf et al. (2012) discussed funding and land tenure while researching women's role in creating alternative food systems that empower immigrant women and reinvigorate London communities. Guerlain & Campbell (2016) further discussed the idea of social change when they investigated if community gardens can serve as places for prefigurative social change by enacting in the gardens the changes they want to see in society. They concluded that the community gardens in their study create spaces where low-income people, immigrants and other disadvantaged individuals can envision another way of being and work towards that goal and/or social change. These articles demonstrate the desire for alternative food and political systems and the role community gardens can play in effecting such changes. The examples include successful partnerships with local councils as well as independent garden successes.

Community gardens and home gardens are also found to be places of local resilience to societal and environmental changes (Chan et al., 2015; McPhearson et al., 2014). For example, in Post-Hurricane Sandy New York City, community gardens were used as staging grounds for
disaster relief efforts. They served this purpose better than other open and green spaces. This ability to serve as productive staging grounds was attributed to the collective efficacy and close-knit communities these gardens produced, which eased communication channels between civil aid groups and individuals seeking information on aide availability or lost loved ones (Chan et al., 2015). The above example demonstrates how important a community garden can be in a community. However, it does not answer my original guiding questions: What are the stories being told in the Granton Community Gardeners? How do these stories assist in developing a community in the Granton area? These questions would change a bit in their focus as I went through the research process. First, as I understood the Granton Community Gardeners better and what their needs are, I would refocus on the garden's relational aspects. Then, through my data analysis, the volunteers' primary impacts would emerge, leading me to develop two additional research questions. These changes are explained throughout the Research Site Context, chapters 4 and the Methodology, chapter 5.

2.2.1.3 Community Gardens as a Site of Social Diversity. The papers in this third theme concentrate on investigating how community gardens embraced and promoted the surrounding communities' diversity. In her case study research on multi-cultural inclusion of community gardens versus ‘typical’ parks in London, Rishbeth (2004) found how a garden was run, organised through participant observations, interviews, and questionnaires. The standard to which its grounds were managed was more important than the cultural-specific structures or multi-cultural designs in the gardens studied. Also, the authors found no difference between ethnic groups when considering their garden as a symbol of a multi-cultural society. These findings indicate that including items that are symbolic of a specific culture or cultures, such as
plants, sculptures, and design style, did not encourage greater use or appreciation for the garden. Instead, a more significant garden use factor was the user’s perception of garden upkeep. The user wanted it to appear the garden was cared for and important to the community by upkeep. Also discussed was the relationship between community gardens and community development. A study by Pearson & Firth (2012) determined that successful community gardens are built through supporting social capital development, the relationships between people that allow them to function as a society, creating community. This community creation can be done through community gardens nurturing bridging (membership of networking organisations), bonding (the meeting of different types of people) and linking (having contact with other organisations) social capital.

Community gardens are diverse not only in their participants but also in their physical structure and management. Daily operational management ranges from not having an official manager, as is the case with Granton Community Growers, to having paid staff manage the operations, as with the community gardens in Roseville, MN. These differences can help gardens differentiate themselves from each other and define their purpose. Each garden's unique elements and benefits may also help contribute to developing its community. They are the types of benefits this research tells through the intersecting stories in Granton Community Gardeners. These stories are essential to understanding how the volunteers are impacted by their time in the garden. The Findings, chapters 6 and 7, details these stories.

2.2.1.4 Neoliberalism and Community Gardens. It is challenging to discuss community gardens without considering neoliberalism. This theme was either a focus of the research or tied to one of the previous themes through context setting. Neoliberalism is an ideological
project based on the idea that the state should not interfere with people’s liberty and that markets are more democratic than political processes. Further, neoliberalism states that the realm of economic industries (for example, manufacturing) should be relaxed and competition (domestically and internationally) encouraged (Beames & Brown, 2016). This ideology helps promote the creation of new self-identities or subjectivities that better fit the dominant political and social structures. The state’s job is to maintain, or create, an institutional framework that produces the political climate and structures for these things to happen (Harvey, 2005). This ideology in practice has led to reducing state support for social services. In areas like Granton, the reduction in social services support has given rise to the mentality that the community must care for themselves and creatively solve their problems. For example, the lack of council provided land for growing vegetables led two individuals to create their own garden space on a corner lot in Granton. This story is continued in the Research Site Context, chapter 4.

One of neoliberalism's hallmarks is adaptability to different political systems (Harvey, 2005). Therefore, it allows neoliberal policies to be implemented in various political arenas without being identified as problematic. Margaret Thatcher brought this ideological project to the UK during her leadership. Under her leadership, she implemented policies and the groundwork for less state intervention, reduced social services, international market competition, and reduced public spaces. These policies left NGOs, private contracted companies, and communities to provide support services without state assistance.

Bringing neoliberal practices to light through grassroots efforts in community gardens is done either in rebellion against these policies, providing services to their community members,
or as a control mechanism through top-down community development in gardens (D. Shaw et al., 2016). An example of the community responding to its needs due to a loss of public services is in St. Paul, MN, where the Frogtown neighbourhood established Frogtown Farms and Park. The residents' average distance to travel for the supermarket was one mile. Frogtown Farms and Park includes allotments for neighbourhood residents to alleviate this limited access to food. Neoliberalism has also reduced public outdoor spaces where citizens can socialise in a non-consumer-oriented space. These would be (potential) public outdoor spaces are set aside for future development or have strict development criteria and rules for use. As discussed above, the neoliberal practices that reduce the number of public outdoor spaces have only intensified land tenure issues in community gardens. This earmarking of public outdoor spaces puts more pressure on community gardens to offer these open social spaces. This tension between a desire for alternatives to the current political and economic system or following the status quo sets up community gardens as a contested space. They have the potential to be used for either of these above purposes.

2.3 Critiques of Community Gardens

While most of the above literature paints community gardens as all positive, where only good things happen in gardens, some research critiques community gardens' purpose and what kinds of benefits they have. Pudup (2008) discussed what sort of citizen-subjects community gardens produce. Her first step in this critique is to question the term ‘community garden’ for the same reasons mentioned in the Introduction chapter under Defining Community Gardens on page 7. Some circles of researchers and practitioners do not want a set definition of community gardens because “it is not very useful to offer a precise definition of community
gardens as this would impose arbitrary limits on creative communal responses to local needs” (Ferris et al., 2001, p. 560). Pudup's (2008) issue lies in the problematic word ‘community’ and all the potential meanings that this word implies. The word ‘community’ causes is when assessing gardens goals, outcomes and intentions. Pudup instead proposed the term ‘organised garden project’ as a better way to identify organised groups of people cultivating land not typically used for cultivation. Unfortunately, the term ‘organised garden project’ did not seem to take hold in the literature. In my stance, this is because it lacks emotions (feelings) people have reported in the literature, as discussed throughout this chapter.

Further, Pudup’s ‘organised garden project’ term lacks the not very well researched but implied deeper emotions people potentially feel while gardening. Despite my disagreement with Pudup on what to call community gardens, she makes good points regarding what kind of citizens community gardens produce. While the neoliberal project has stripped away much of the social support systems and public funds, community gardens have grown in number. As discussed earlier in this chapter, numerous community gardens claim to push alternative food pathways (locally produced, environmentally friendly and more) and empower the disenfranchised (typically the poor and people of colour). Pudup's (2008) critique of these community garden claims was that many of these projects end up supporting neoliberal tendencies of leaving people to solve their local problems without state support. Firth et al. (2011) also discussed the critique of who community gardens benefit and which ‘community’ they support. They found that who initiated the garden’s creation – internally or brought in by an external group or council – significantly impacts which ‘community’ receives a garden's benefits. This idea is essential to keep in mind as the community garden studied in this research
was started from within the Granton area by residents living there in response to a lack of
space to grow their food and flowers.

Firth et al. (2011) also showed that a growing number of community gardens claim to
create a more localised food system within their city area. This claim is easy to see by simply
reading through most community gardens’ web pages, describing their aims and goals. Two
Edinburgh examples are Granton Community Gardeners and Leith Community Crops in Pots.
Granton Community Gardeners does not explicitly state that they aim to create a new food
system. However, their webpage does say they aim to help anyone who wants to grow and
“think creatively about how to make sure everyone in our area is fed well” (Granton
Community Gardeners, n.d.).

On the other hand, Leith Community Crops in Pots state that food sovereignty is at the
heart of what they do (Leith Community Crops in Pots, 2019). It should be noted that there are
critiques of the ‘local food is good’ case. One such paper by Born & Purcell (2006) called into
question the assumptions now inherent in the term ‘local’. Some of these assumptions include
better social justice, more nutritious foods, and more environmentally friendly. From their
urban planning perspective, the reason for this challenge is that not every garden or grower
within a local system fulfils these goals and not every local food system will have the resources
to meet them either.

Another critique of community gardens is the assumption that they automatically will
correct the imbalance of power, access to fresh foods, exclusion from growing space, and
equality. However, Allen (2010) pointed out that while local food systems provide the potential
to turn the tide on inequality, power imbalances and social exclusion, “they do not
automatically move us in the direction of greater social justice” (p. 306). Instances of these three topics were embedded within the data of my research. For example, power-relations were investigated concerning the construction or maintenance of identity and the roles volunteers would play in the garden. In my data, the issues of inequality and power imbalance came through most clearly when volunteers interacted with plants and food. These interactions led to a discussion on the inadvertent cultural appropriation of food and are examined in the Findings chapter 7, beginning on page 168. Since I would shift my research focus as a response to the community needs, these themes only emerged during data analysis. They are reviewed in the Secondary Literature Review when discussing the current research on identity and community gardens.

One of the key items that emerged from this literature review is that the research has been primarily human interactions, ignoring other potential nonhuman interactions and revealing a gap in knowledge about how the nonhuman influences community garden volunteers’ experiences. This initial literature review demonstrated that the studies on the ecosystem services in community gardens and urban green spaces are broad in their scope. However, none of the literature reviewed focused on a specific subset of the ecosystem services’ umbrella concept, such as cultural ecosystem services. Research focusing on a particular subset of ecosystem services would enable a deeper exploration of interactions that lead to these benefits. It has also not been shown if or how the intangible (what cultural ecosystem services are) benefits of community gardening activities may contribute to the volunteers’ experiences in the garden. Therefore, a gap in the literature exists, requiring a deeper understanding of the non-physical benefits and the interactions with the nonhuman in
community gardens. The literature review also revealed few studies conducted in the UK (compared to the rest of the world) and even less in Edinburgh, Scotland. After this initial review, I aimed to explore the following gaps in knowledge, including the nonhuman interactions in the garden, by using cultural ecosystem services as a framework to focus on the garden's intangible benefits through my research.

This first review of the literature demonstrated that community gardens' research is wide-ranging and covers multiple disciplines that cross both social and natural sciences. Much of the research focuses on larger group benefits, such as the garden volunteers and the surrounding community, across specific age groups such as the elderly or similar size samples. Much less research takes an in-depth look at the individual’s experience and how they experience their time in community gardens. After this initial literature review, I decided to use cultural ecosystem services terminology and framework to investigate the stories that were not being told about the benefits the garden volunteers were getting through their interactions. Further, I would explore how those stories connected them to the garden and developed the community. Three research questions were developed from this literature review: 1) What cultural ecosystem services does the garden provide? 2) How are the garden volunteers impacted by the garden's cultural ecosystem services? 3) How do these cultural ecosystem services lead to or inhibit developing a sense of community within Granton Community Growers?

As I gained a deeper understanding of the community, its attitudes to authority, and their interests in my research, these guiding questions would be modified. These new insights into Granton Community Gardeners would also cause my approach and framework to change
before my fieldwork. I would drop cultural ecosystem services as a framework and take a more inductive approach to my data collection. As a result of this change, I would also adjust my research question to the following guiding question: How are the volunteers impacted by both their social and nonhuman interactions? This change was in response to my discussions with Edward, a co-founder of Granton Community Gardeners and my gatekeeper to the garden, and information from other volunteers. The details of these discussions and changes are in chapter 4, Research Site Context. Throughout these early stages of the research, I would revisit the literature looking for updated research concerning shifts in my enquiry. I performed one literature review in this sense, but I would label it in two parts. The next section, called “Second Literature Review”, continues my initial literature review. Nevertheless, I labelled them separately as this was a point where I realized the adjustments mentioned above in question happened. This change prompted a change in what literature would need to be reviewed, giving rise to the second part of my review.

2.4 Second Literature Review

As discussed in more detail during the Methodology chapter, two main threads became evident after performing my data analysis: “Identity” and “Power and Organisational Roles”. This finding led me to two questions: How do the individual volunteers express their identities in the garden; and how do the volunteer’s roles and the power structures impact their experiences? I began to explore theories and conceptual frameworks to guide my thinking to answer these questions. I also needed to answer these questions regarding the relational aspects of the garden interactions presented in the data. By reading the literature, reviewing the emergent stories in my data, and discussing my thoughts with my supervision team, I
decided that symbolic interactionism or Doreen Massey’s work on space and place fit my data and research questions.

Before getting into my secondary literature review, I will explain the process that led me to produce ‘part two of my review and arrive at my conceptual framework later in my research process. As discussed in Chapter 1: Introduction and Chapter 2: section 2.2, the initial literature review, community garden research crosses multiple disciplines. It has been found that participation in community gardens provides different types of tangible and intangible benefits. While I found other studies that examined community gardens through an ecosystem services lens, they did not seem to take a cultural ecosystem services (more intangible benefits) approach. That initial literature review led me to develop a research question that asked: “What cultural ecosystem services do the community garden volunteers benefit from?”. As described in the Methodology chapter, I shifted my research approach to respond to the community. In response to the Granton Community Gardeners' feedback, I adjusted how I gained consent, collected, and analysed the data. Due to these shifts, my research was led by the guiding question: How do both their social and nonhuman interactions impact the community garden volunteers? This revised research question and approach still address a gap in the initial literature review while reflecting the emerging data. Few articles focus on intangible benefits, and fewer still address how the nonhuman actors may impact garden volunteers.

As will be discussed in the Findings chapter, the change in my approach to focusing on the community garden members allowed the findings threads to emerge directly from the data. This emergent approach led to having unexpected topics within the findings, as described in the
Methodology chapter. I went back to the literature to investigate where my findings sat within the current community garden literature and to explore if Doreen Massey’s work and the theme of identity, as viewed through a symbolic interactionism lens, have been used in community gardens research. I used the exact process as the initial review to perform the second review. First, I used the Boolean search terms “community garden*” AND “identity”. Where the ‘*’ truncation was not available for use, I entered the specific terms “community garden” OR “community gardens” OR “community gardeners” AND “identity” into the search engine. After this database search, I completed a second search using the terms “community garden” OR “community gardens” OR “community gardeners” AND “symbolic interaction*”. Once I had gathered the articles and books from this search, I manually scanned the titles, abstracts, and book chapter titles for the key search terms to determine if the article or book was related to my research inquiry. This process was repeated with the search terms “Massey” OR “Doreen Massey” AND “community garden*”. Again, if the ‘*’ truncation were not available, I would type the terms into the search engine. After collecting the papers and books, I scanned the titles, abstracts, and chapter titles for the keywords above to decide their relevance to my research.

The following section is the secondary literature review conducted after the data analysis. The section is divided into three sub-sections – 2.4.1 Community Gardens and Identity, 2.4.2 Community and symbolic interactionism, and 2.4.3 Doreen Massey and Community Gardens.
2.4.1 Community Gardens and Identity

Identity has many meanings depending on which discipline you work in or research within. This research uses an understanding of identity from symbolic interactionism (SI), as SI is part of this research's theoretical framework. In a broad sense, SI understands identity to be contextual, fluid and located within everyday interactions (N. King, 2003). Further, King (2003) has proposed a working definition of identity as “a person’s relatively enduring sense of who they are” (p. 623). While this definition is similar to how the current research on identity and community gardens has developed, this perception of identity differs in what kind of identity is being researched. Within my research, I have taken an original perspective by exploring individual identity, as most of the current community gardening research investigates identity in relation to a group or a person’s cultural identity.
2.4.1.1 Cultural Identity and Community Gardening. Pudup (2008) has discussed how community gardens can cultivate citizen-subjects in line with neoliberal policies. In line with that thought process, other researchers have found that it can be difficult in community gardens to shape one’s identity. In her chapter on identities in the garden Ouellette (2012) described how gardens might not have consistent enough structures to shape identities for the long term. Thus, any identity constructed there may not transfer beyond the garden.

Nevertheless, she recognised that the modern understanding of identity often consists of multiple “selves” and that some of her participants did incorporate their gardening selves into their identities. The idea of having multiple selves is in line with Cooley’s belief that our identities, self-idea as he calls it, should be transitiuonal (Franks & Gecas, 1992). In other words, our identities are not tied to a situation but multiple situations providing multiple identities. Even though Ouellette (2012) found that only some of her participants performed identity work while in the garden, she concluded that there was a need for more research into what people are doing, saying and feeling in gardens to understand modern identity negotiations better. This research aims to partially fill this gap by observing what people are doing and saying within a community garden.

While the above studies shed light on how community gardens might provide inconsistent structures for identity formation, other studies have pointed out how valuable these garden spaces can be to cultural identity. In their research on tracing immigrant identities, Mares (2012) found that the foodways, the eating habits and food practices of immigrants are vital to maintaining a sense of self in new places. She used Esteva's (1994) interpretation of the word comida because of its implications with connecting food to
relationships, place and social life. Gaytán’s (2011) work used tequila's cultural significance in Mexicans versus Mexican Americans to discuss how foods and the words we use for consuming them play an essential role in cultural identity. In short, how we describe eating food and why, whether it is for merely filling the belly and biological nutritional needs or to connect with family and friends, can connect or disconnect us from our cultural backgrounds. The words we use to describe food, particularly in the rules for consumption, have a deep-rooted power structure. Mares (2012) explained that practices like ‘eating local’ or ‘eat what your grandmother would identify’ have very different meanings across different cultures. These various meanings are particularly true for immigrants or refugees in countries of primarily white ethnic backgrounds as immigrants have “different traditions and material realities that are bound up in transnational flows and space” (Mares, 2012, p. 351). This notion of cultural identity is also bound up in community gardens, as L’Annunziata (2010) research revealed. Her study in California found that the Hmong community garden was an essential source of cultural, spiritual and physical nourishment for families and personal identity, extending the individual’s benefits. As one of the participants said, it is “a little bit of home” (p. 122).

Similarly, Abramovic et al. (2019) found in their small study in Australia that Burmese immigrants used their time in a community garden to help their recovery from the traumatic experiences of immigration and build their identities in their new country. This concept is vital to my research as the focus of my research, Granton Community Gardens, has immigrants from around the world participating in the garden and the related community events. In that case, interactions are happening between some UK-born and non-UK born volunteers involving cultural uses of foods; this issue is explored further in the findings, Chapter 7. In addition, there
is research that demonstrates how these spaces can also contribute to individuals maintaining their cultural identities and connecting with their cultural origins.

2.4.1.2 Food and Identity. Another area examined within this literature review was the importance of food to a person’s identity, both individually and culturally. While the above paragraphs discuss cultural identity research concerning food and space words, the following section examines food and cultural identity research. Xu (2008) considered food to be the most important medium to help signify and legitimise who we are and how we are different. In their Florida study, Hite et al. (2017) found that community gardens can encourage place-making while promoting food heritages. I saw similar activities during my research, though they were not overt practices. In his chapter Edible écriture, Terry Eagleton (1998) further emphasised food’s importance to our identities. He stated, “If there is one sure thing about food, it is that it is never just food—it is endlessly interpretable—materialised emotion” (p. 204). This interpretation means that the foods we eat and, by extension, how we prepare these foods are an expression of who we are – our identities or at least a part of our identity.

The cultural appropriation of foods relates to the importance of food and our identities. It is not easy to discuss one without the other. The cultural appropriation of food is, in its basic form, when one culture claims the food or food preparation from another culture (Solid Ground, 2019). For example, when the United States claims pizza as their food or the United Kingdom declares curry as a national dish. While this seems straightforward, there are potential grey areas, such as when a non-Mexican chef makes a Mexican inspired dish and becomes famous for that style. Even if they clarify that the original dish inspired the food, is that food appropriation? Alternatively, when a dish “evolves” by immigrants adapting it to suit their new
home country. It is no longer an authentic dish, so the new home country is now appropriated. In Simone Cinotto’s (2013) book, *The Italian American Table: Food, Family, and Community in New York City*, he explores how Italian immigrants adapted their cuisine based on the new abundance of some products and the now scarcity of others. Cinotto also discusses how restaurants in the Italian quarters of New York City aided in these adaptations when catering to other ethnic groups who were more accustomed to meats and starches paired together in their meals. In the article “Made in America: Four Dishes, Inspired by Other Lands, That Became American Icons” by Carman & Tan (2019), gumbo, the New Orleans, Louisiana staple, has its murky history explored.

While gumbo most likely originated from West African slaves, it has drawn influences from the merging of French, Cajun and the Choctaw food cultures. Although these adaptations are celebrated by some chefs, such as Paul Prudhomme, this blending of food cultures can also lead to a loss of the importance of African slaves impact on the food culture in the US (Carman & Tan, 2019). While my research does not examine food cultures and appropriation in-depth, it is essential to shedding light on the connection between cultural appropriation of foods and the power structures inherent in these actions. As Professor Ray said in a recent article by Cheung (2019) in the BBC, “There is a tendency to ‘ghettoise’ Chinese, Mexican, and Indian American [and other non-white] chefs into cooking ‘their own food’, whereas white chefs tend to find it easier to cross boundaries” (para. 46). Some of the reasons for this ease of crossing boundaries include the perception that Asian, Indian, and other ‘ethnic’ foods are unhealthy and unclean. In contrast, foods prepared by white chefs are considered healthier, even if the foods are
‘ethnic’ (Cheung, 2019). The importance of food preparation appears several times in this research, mainly related to cultural differences and the location of power within the garden.

As explained in the Findings chapter 6, one of the main themes during this research is identity. Many of the participants are either maintaining or constructing their identities through their work volunteering in the garden. This literature review demonstrates this research’s original contribution to developing knowledge of identity work in community gardens at the individual level.

### 2.4.2 Community Gardens and Symbolic Interactionism

Symbolic interactionism (SI) will be described in detail in the following chapter, Conceptual Framework. For this section of the secondary literature review, I focus specifically on the role of SI within community gardens literature. I understand SI as a school of thought that believes our identity (the idea of ourselves) is mediated through our interactions. These interactions happen in social settings and are interpreted by the individual(s) participating in the interaction (Blumer, 1986).

This literature review found two studies that employed SI in community gardens' space and context. One such study was a thesis by MacNair (2002), where he discussed what SI does not provide about studying subcultures, of which one is community gardens. He further discussed SI’s influence on Bourdieu’s thoughts on subcultures. MacNair ultimately did not use SI as part of his theoretical framework. Kitchen (2017) used SI paired with The Community Capitals Framework in his Honours Thesis to study community gardens' perceived impacts through their organized structures and funding. This quantitative study collected data through online surveys given only to garden leaders. Symbolic interactionism was an underpinning
concept for why garden leaders may have similar perceptions of their community gardens’ potential benefits. What his study did not do was take SI further to examine the daily lives of the participants to investigate the perceived impacts of community gardens at an individual level. In both studies SI was not employed to examine individual identity work within the community garden context. In addition, these studies did not examine the individual’s role, beyond their leadership position to consider, for example, the role that the garden plays into their individual identity, irrespective of their leadership status. In response to this limited use of SI within community gardening literature, my study primarily draws on Blumer’s perspective on SI. Supported by Charles Horton Cooley’s looking-glass self and George Herbert Mead’s generalized other, I investigated how volunteers in the community garden actively maintain or construct their identities at an individual level. These concepts are further explained in terms of my understanding, and their research framing and implementation within the following chapter – Conceptual Framework.

2.4.3 Doreen Massey and Community Gardens

During this second literature review, I considered Doreen Massey’s work relative to community garden research, finding one study (Pitt, 2013) that embedded her work within its theoretical framework; most others referenced her work in a broad sense. In this section of the chapter, I will cover these articles and examine their use of Massey’s work to reveal where my research contributes to this limited body of knowledge and extend our understanding of power geometries related to SI within the community gardening spaces.

Several studies referenced Massey’s ideas concerning their study’s approach (Drake, 2014; Pitt, 2013; van Holstein, 2017) but did not use Massey’s work on its own in their
theoretical frameworks. Drake (2014) particularly mentioned Massey's (1994, 2005) ideas on space as relationally formed and not fixed but used performativity theory to analyse his data and interpret his findings. His study examined how garden leaders organised and managed their gardens, influenced participation. There are similarities between my research and Drake’s, as we both consider the impact of the garden organisation on volunteers. However, I took an individual perspective and included people's roles in the garden and how that affects the volunteers’ experiences. Pitt (2013) also explored the relationship between place and people experienced in community gardens. However, she differed from Drake (2014) and me by not drawing upon specific theorists’ ideas to examine community gardens' relational approaches. Instead, she used a broad spectrum of thinkers, including Massey, through which to view her data. Pitt (2013) concluded that community gardens are not wholly unpredictable and can be guided to meet specific ends through a relational approach to garden management. van Holstein (2017) also used a relational line of inquiry in her study of how suburban Australian community gardens practices develop in relation to Council policies, other domestic gardens, nonhuman actors, and neighbourhood infrastructures. Like the previous studies she drew on Massey to help develop relational approaches to research within the discipline of geography. However, she did not use a specific theory or theories of Massey’s.

The only study I found that used Doreen Massey as part of the research’s framework was Cumbers et al.’s (2018) paper on reclaiming ‘place’ in cities through the work done in community gardens. In their study, Cumbers et al. (2018) sought to use Massey’s (2005) active sense of place as an outward-looking, ever-shifting constellation of the meeting of diverse individuals to help redefine the work being done in community gardens. The authors found that
using Massey's (2005) progressive sense of place and community garden work can contribute positively by reclaiming derelict spaces for shared community use. Massey’s sense of place can also offer new and alternative ways of urban work to move towards a more collective, environmentally friendly, and sustainable urban economy. They also found that having an outward-facing and open space can help empower people, particularly asylum seekers, refugees and individuals with disabilities. This idea is an important contribution to the study of community gardens. Still, it leaves a gap to explore further in-depth volunteers’ identities and the power relations and roles taken in community gardens. My research differs from the aforementioned literature by Drake, 2014; Kitchen, 2017; MacNair, 2002; Pitt, 2013; and van Holstein, 2017 in that I investigated specifically how volunteers express their identities in the garden and how their roles impact their experiences. Thus, I aim to fill the previous gap just mentioned.

2.5 Summary

I have demonstrated that community garden research is done in many natural and social sciences disciplines through this literature review. Much of the current literature discusses the impacts of community gardens on a group rather than the individual. The second part of this chapter established that identity had been researched in community gardens related to garden participants' cultural identity and food cultures. These studies showed how food and identity are closely connected, which is seen, to an extent, in my research. Identity in terms of SI was not found to be used in the community garden literature; this paucity offers an opening for my study. Using symbolic interactionism to examine how the volunteers maintain or construct their garden identities contributes a novel conceptual approach to community
This literature review also revealed that Doreen Massey’s work was referenced in community garden literature as a contributing thinker to relational geography and research approaches. However, only one study grounded her work within their theoretical framework (Cumbers et al., 2018). Cumbers et al.’s method is valid, yet it differs from my proposed use of Massey.

I draw on her conceptualisation of space and place to view the community garden’s meaning as relational and open. I also work with her conceptualisation of power-geometries to examine the volunteers' roles and power in the garden. Thus, using symbolic interactionism and Doreen Massey’s ideas in these ways offer a novel approach and an original contribution to contemporary community garden literature. In the Conceptual Framework chapter, I will explain how I use these concepts to explore and answer my research question: How do both their social and nonhuman interactions impact the community garden volunteers? The next chapter, Conceptual Framework, covers how I combined symbolic interactionism and Doreen Massey’s concepts into a novel research framework. The Conceptual Framework chapter is then followed by the Research Site Context, which covers more detail on the shift in my research and changing my research questions, along with a history of the Granton Community Gardeners.
Chapter 3: Conceptual Framework

3.1 Chapter Overview

When I set out to do this research, I wanted to keep the participants' voices active throughout the process, analysis, and presentation of the findings. As discussed in the Methodology chapter, I went into my ethnographic fieldwork led by my guiding question: How are the volunteers impacted by both their social and nonhuman interactions? As such, I took note of everything I saw and heard while in the garden, including weather and any other nonhuman objects that were part of an interaction. After completing my data analysis and grouping my data into threads, I needed to find a theory that would explain my data more deeply and answer my research question while maintaining the participants' perspectives. Through the previous chapter (Literature Review), I demonstrate how I found two theories that help to more deeply interpret this research's findings and the impact of garden volunteers' interactions on them. This chapter will cover the theories I chose to answer my research question: How do both their social and nonhuman interactions impact the community garden volunteers? To answer my research question, I have woven together the concept of space and place as always becoming using Doreen Massey's work alongside the work of Blumer on symbolic interactionism. Together, they permit a more meaningful examination of the stories and potential benefits of a community garden in the Granton area of Edinburgh. The chapter contains three sections: 1) Doreen Massey's (2005) conceptualisation of space and place contains three sections explaining her ideas on space and place and their use in community gardens, 2) Massey's concept of power-geometries (1999) and its use in community gardens, and 3) symbolic interactionism which contains three sections discussing Blumer's symbolic
interactionism ([1969] 1986), then Cooley’s *looking-glass self* ([1902] 1983), and finally Mead’s *generalized other* ([1934] 2015). Figure 1 below shows a graphical representation of my conceptual framework for this research.

**Figure 1**

*Conceptual Framework*

As explained in the Methodology chapter, this investigation is situated within ethnographic studies. Further, this study took a grounded approach to remain faithful to both the research participants and the data collected in order to capture both ideographic and
nomothetic information. Again, the Methodology (Chapter 5) covers this in more depth. The Data Analysis section of the Methodology chapter identified the seven threads found during this study. This thesis focuses on two key underpinning threads: "Identity" and "Power and Organisational Roles". The Methodology chapter discusses why these threads are the most prevalent and most connected to the other threads. The bespoke theoretical framework was constructed to specifically investigate the two threads examined in this thesis more deeply: "Identity" and "Power and Organisational Roles".

Doreen Massey's ideas on space and place provide the broader theoretical framework for understanding the garden's meaning, the interactions, and the history (trajectories, as explained later) of those interactions, as a means to better understand power structures in the garden. However, these concepts do not cover how individuals go about 'identity work' through these interactions. Blumer's symbolic interactionism (SI), supported by Cooley and Mead, was used to analyse the research thread of Identity that emerged during the study. His theories, however, do not directly cover power in relationships and interactions on an individual scale. Massey's and the SI ideas are explained in more detail in their respective sections of this chapter.

Further, as highlighted in the second part of the Literature Review chapter, Massey's conceptualisation of space has been used in only one other study on community gardens. Symbolic interactionism has not been used in any studies on community gardens. This study's novel, the combined framework, will contribute to the growing body of knowledge on community gardens.
This Conceptual Framework chapter contains three components: (1) the use of Doreen Massey's conceptualisation of space and place concerning community gardens, (2) Doreen Massey's view on power-laden relations and how they influence interactions in community gardens, and (3) the use of Symbolic Interactionism in identity construction and maintenance in the context of community gardens. The next section will explain Massey's conception of space and its relation to the study.

3.2 Conceptualisation of space and place

This research used Massey's (2005) reconceptualisation of space and place, which challenges commonly held views of space and, therefore, time and place with it. Massey offers an alternative approach that opens space, time and place to the possibility of coexisting plurality and multiplicity. This approach means that people use multiple paths to meet up in a location and that ‘place’ is made up of the meeting of those paths at a given moment. Before going into how this research used her concepts in the context of a community garden, it is best to cover how she proposes space and briefly how we should view time and place.

3.2.1 Defining Space

Before discussing how both space and place related to this study, it would be helpful to briefly explain a keyword from both the conception of space and place; Massey uses the term 'trajectory' while describing space and place. It is best to think of 'trajectory' as similar to 'story', but their meanings are slightly different in her eyes. As Massey (2005) says,

By 'trajectory' and 'story', I mean simply to emphasise the process of change in a phenomenon. The terms are thus temporal in their stress, though, I would argue their necessary spatiality (the positioning in relation to other trajectories or stories, for
instance) is inseparable from and intrinsic to their character. The phenomenon in question may be a living thing, a scientific attitude, a collectivity, a social convention, a geological formation. (p. 12)

I think of these trajectories as our stories-so-far with an open future. They contain a history of where we have been, the interactions that have taken place, and their own potentially different future. In my research, I use trajectories and stories-so-far interchangeably.

In Massey's (2005) conceptualisation of space, she argues for and aims to create a thinking of the spatial so that it changes the way we think of, and thus opens up, the political sphere. How we view space impacts and is connected to the political sphere, which includes how policies are made, political discourses, and political thinking. Space, as proposed by Massey, has three propositions:

First, that we recognise space as the product of interrelations; as constituted through interactions, from the immensity of the global to the intimately tiny.... Second, that we understand space as the sphere of the possibility of the existence of multiplicity in the sense of contemporaneous plurality; as the sphere in which distinct trajectories coexist; as the sphere therefore of coexisting heterogeneity.... Third, that we recognise space as always under construction. (p. 9)

While Massey intended her concepts to help frame the political, I have found these propositions work well when investigating a community garden – especially one with a diverse volunteer base like Granton Community Gardeners. First, the garden affords a range of interactions between people and nonhumans, which in turn serve to create the space (the garden) and its meaning. Second, many garden volunteers come from diverse backgrounds,
countries and cultures. This view means that multiple trajectories (life paths) meet up and coexist in the same place. Third, as volunteers work various amounts of time and on different days, the community gardening space is continuously under construction. Space is thus a fluid, ongoing creation of the entanglement of interrelations where multiple trajectories coexist.

3.2.2 Defining Place

Massey (2005) describes a place as an event in her book For Space. ‘Place’ is an event of a simple coming together or "throwntogetherness" (p. 140) of different trajectories; this includes the nonhuman. Thinking of place as trajectories thrown together means that place cannot be predetermined. Further, Massey (2005) writes that "there can be no assumption of pre-given coherence, or community or collective identity" (p. 141). This notion resonates with life at the community garden as an ‘event’ that features a meeting-up of people with different ‘stories-so-far’. This assumption challenges the idea that the garden as a place has any sort of predetermined community or coherence. As we saw in the Literature Review chapter, the term ‘community’ is difficult to define. There is no agreed-upon definition of community, and, as such, communities shift based upon who is part of the group. This idea of a place not being predetermined strongly aligns with my understanding of community. I then considered the garden as a location, both in terms of space and place.

Place typically has an already set coherence we must navigate, yet "the throwntogetherness of place demands negotiation" (Massey, 2005, p. 141). This shift in perspective towards a temporary meeting-up fundamentally changes how we view our interactions. Following Massey (1994), I consider that our interactions are a multiplicity, involving more than two trajectories and those human and nonhuman lives we are a part of.
Thus, our interactions are more than they appear on the surface; ‘place’ is an event or phenomenon of a ‘throwntogetherness’ of different trajectories, where we must mediate our way through our interactions.

Doreen Massey's (2005) reconceptualisation of space as relational, along with the entanglement of multiple trajectories, histories, and always open and becoming, was employed to consider the garden volunteers' interactions with other people and the nonhuman (plants and physical space, in this study). Her concepts match my approach to this research and my worldview that social life is relational and that the meaning of spaces and places are not fixed. Further, as mentioned in the "Defining Space" section above, space is viewed as a product of interrelations on both the macro (large scale) and micro (small) scales. This understanding of space helps to view this garden in broader political contexts and discourses, such as how austerity measures have left communities to fill in gaps opened by the loss of social services. Finally, Massey argues that temporality (time) is open and not linear. This view of time suggests that space is open as well. Taken together, this means that there is no set storyline (trajectory) for people, cultures, or places. When considering the meaning of space and place, one must consider the political context -- whether investigating micro or macro phenomena. This understanding is necessary because the micro can be a place of (re)production of macrostructures, as explained below in the "Power" section of this chapter. As Massey notes, the US and the UK are places where globalisation is constructed by "the local production of the neoliberal capitalist global" (p. 101).
3.2.3 Space and Place in the Community Garden

In her book, *For Space*, Massey (2005) suggests that some early thinkers on space and time were inadequate in their discussions surrounding political discourses. For example, both Bergson ([1911] 2011) and Laclau (1990) paid little attention to space, especially in terms of its relation to time and temporality. She builds on others' earlier writings, such as Gupta & Ferguson (1992), who suggest we rethink how community forms through interconnected space and a shared 'historical process' rather than through a shared history. In other words, everyone has a past he or she has gone through, but that history is not the same for each person and is therefore not shared. Massey (2005) goes on to explain that in these times of neoliberal ideas and globalisation, we conceive space as divided and not different. This conception of space means that other locations (e.g., Brazil compared to the UK) occupy points on the same temporal storyline rather than on their own temporal storylines. Seen through a temporal lens, Brazil is only "behind" the UK, with Brazil's future set to follow in the UK's exact footsteps if they keep advancing on the same storyline. The idea that there is only one future and one trajectory deny the history of those places that are considered "behind". It also denies that multiple trajectories and the possibilities for multiple futures can exist. What Massey instead proposes is that time and space are relational to each other and are overlapping. Space is a product of interactions, with ‘place’ being an event of ‘threwntogetherness’ of multiple meetups (Massey, 2005). Massey's (1993) chapter, *Power-Geometry and a Progressive Sense of Place*, defines place as a process. This idea of space as active is supported by Ross (1988), in her analysis of Rimbaud's poetry:
...to conceive of space not as a static reality, but as active, generative, to experience space as created by an interaction, as something that our bodies reactivate, and that through this reactivation, in turn modifies and transforms us... [T]he poem [Reve pour l'hiver] creates a 'non-passive' spatiality – space as a specific form of operations and interaction. (Ross 1988, as cited in Gregory, 1990, p.9)

In other words, space is an active entanglement of multiple trajectories and histories, including the nonhuman.

If, however, space and place are the products of active entanglements of multiple trajectories, this is at odds with the popular view of space and place, which sees them as having boundaries and being closed-off Massey (2005). From the viewpoint of closed-off space, place is then generated by looking inward and at a singular past trajectory. This perspective leads to a view of place as fixed, always the same, and unchanging. This research uses Massey's concepts. In her view, space and place are open and ever-evolving, based upon the interactions happening in any given moment. Employing this framework allows me to account for similar experiences amongst volunteers while still maintaining the differences between how those experiences are manifested. This approach would not be possible if space and place were conceived as already set. A fixed space perspective would expect experiences to be similar since any differences would be ignored or disregarded.

What does this mean in terms of more deeply understanding interactions at Granton Community Garden? This research can interrogate garden interactions between human-human and nonhuman-human using this entangled, relational, and open conception of space and place. Massey (2005) calls these interactions "social" and "natural" trajectories (p. 142). These
terms and the distinction between them are essential, as they acknowledge that the nonhuman plays a vital role in creating space and place. This research aims to include interactions with the nonhuman related to the volunteers' benefits while participating in garden activities. The idea that interactions (human or otherwise) produce space permits emergent threads from the data to be analysed from two perspectives: the social and natural. The use of the social and natural views means that inanimate and nonhuman objects play a role in the garden's interactions, particularly when looking at the thread of identity construction and maintenance of the volunteers in the garden. This thread is further explored using symbolic interactionism, which is explained later in this chapter.

3.3 Power-geometries

So far, I have covered how this research will use Doreen Massey's (2005) conceptualisation of space to frame the garden's space and how that space is created in relation to the Granton Community Gardeners' broader social arrangements. This section will discuss how Massey views power within space and our interactions and pays specific attention to her ‘power-geometry’ concept. The current view of space-time is that time trumps space, which leads us to our current globalised view (Massey, 2005). By this, Massey (1993 & 1999) means that the temporal (time) has squashed the spatial (space) so that they become viewed as one-in-the-same. This view then leads to the idea that there is only one trajectory (story) to follow with one set destination. If our stories are no longer relevant, then our differences can be ignored, and those in charge can effectively ‘write’ history to serve their own needs. This situation allows select countries (primarily in the global north) to control globalisation narratives and the "correct" ways for a country to develop. As discussed earlier, Massey
believes this control of the story is reproduced on a more localised scale. In turn, this control and representation of globalisation effects our power relations across the micro and macro. I will now discuss how Massey views power within our interactions – as influenced by spaces that are open, relational and evolving – and how this position will strengthen my interpretation of the data.

In her book *Power-Geometries and the Politics of Space-Time*, Massey (1999) discusses that there are always power-relations in the social sphere and embedded in the power-knowledge systems. These power-relations impact how we conceptualise space-time and are linked to what she calls power-geometries. Power-geometries is her term to explain how space and place are constructed through relational interactions. These interactions are laden with political, cultural, and economic power (Massey, 2007) and reflect how our interactions are complex, relational and connected to broader social and political structures. Power-geometries concern who moves, who does not move, and the power concerning these flows. Also, power-geometries consider that different social groups and individuals unequally experience these relations. These flows and interconnections begin by questioning who moves and does not move, who is in charge of these flows, who initiated the flows and received these flows, and who is imprisoned by them. In essence, power-geometries are about the power within our interrelations and interconnections that take place within, and create, spaces and places.

Further, power-geometry is the mechanism in which Massey shows the relationship between the global and the local. When discussing power-geometries concerning globalisation, she often points out that these larger-scale productions of power are reproduced on smaller scales (and even the individual scale) due to the power structures in place on larger scales (for
example, at the nation-state level) (Massey, 1993). This reproduction of power structures is possible because place and space, no matter the scale, large cities and small community gardens, are constellations of ‘throwntogetherness’ of different trajectories that carry with them different pasts, futures and power-relations.

So how does this relate to the study? Gardens can be highly social spaces where, at least in this study, one's identity is created or maintained. The data indicates a strong connection between one's identity in the garden and one's role in the garden. For example, in a garden with volunteers from different backgrounds (economically, ethnically or culturally), there will be existing power-relations, real or perceived, based upon the individuals' experiences (trajectories). For example, a white native of Scotland may be given (or assumed to have) more authority or power over a person who has immigrated to Scotland. This authority might be even more significant (perhaps) if the Scottish person were born and raised in Edinburgh, in Granton. Their trajectory has had them in the area most of their life, so it is presumed that they have more extensive knowledge of the place and how to grow plants in the area. However, this general example can also be examined slightly differently. What if the newcomer to Edinburgh had extensive training and experience in growing crops? How would this newcomer’s trajectory alter the power-relations with the native Scottish person? Would it be different? Would it begin the same but change when knowledge and recognition of the newcomer's experience came to light?

By exploring power through the conception of space as open, entangled and relational, one must accept the different trajectories people travelled to arrive at Granton Community Gardeners. By acknowledging that our trajectories are different, we recognise a worldview that
features different sides of the familiar historical stories we have heard. When we recognise the other sides of the stories, we can see the inherent power-relations within our everyday interactions. The interaction between a male boss and a female employee, the teenager laughing at a rough sleeper on the street, or a male colleague (not his female counterpart) are examples of power-relations connected to historical contexts. In terms of the garden, with acceptance of these power-relations and what comes with them, we can begin to connect one's identity, power and garden role and comprehend how these are all related. This perspective thus demonstrates how power is perceived in the garden. Understanding power relations in the garden helps answer my research question of how their interactions influence the volunteers.

3.4 Symbolic Interactionist theory

The conceptual framework used in this research draws on two different theories to explain my findings more deeply. In the first part of this chapter, I discussed Doreen Massey and her reconceptualisation of space and place and its applications in this research. This next section focuses on how interactionist theory from George Herbert Mead, Charles Horton Cooley, and Herbert Blumer uses interpretative tools to analyse the data. All three theorists are drawn-upon, as their concepts build upon one another. Blumer is the primary theorist used, and his concepts are supported by his predecessors Cooley and Mead. While all these scholars had communication as a starting point for understanding identity (self) and social interaction, they differed slightly. Blumer has three premises that provide the main structure for my interpretations. I go on to use three additional concepts of his to more deeply interrogate the findings: Line of Action, Joint Action and Group Life, and Sense of Group Position. As outlined below, these three concepts are broad, as Blumer did not detail how our identity is initially
formed in relation to others. I have drawn upon Charles Horton Cooley and George Herbert Mead to provide this level of identity-related level analysis. Cooley's theory of the looking-glass self proposes how we form our identities by considering how humans consider their responses to social cues by imagining what others might think of possible courses of action. This view is closely related to Mead’s concept of the generalised other, which Vail (2007) summarises as a "collection of roles and attitudes that people use as a reference point for figuring out how to behave in a given situation" (p. 1899).

Herman-Kinney & Reynolds (1994) describe symbolic interactionism (SI) as people acting upon the world rather than just having the world act upon them. (H. Griffiths et al., 2014) further explain that SI is "a micro-level theory that focuses on the relationship among individuals within a society. Communication...is believed to be the way in which people make of their social worlds" (p. 17). George Herbert Mead (1913) first proposed this approach, which Blumer later expanded and labelled symbolic interactionism. A central feature of SI is the individual's inseparability from the context of the individual (Handberg et al., 2015). Within this model, the situation is defined through ongoing communication and is not set by just one individual involved but instead set by all individuals involved (Little, 2016). There are several thinkers within this framework, but as mentioned above, this research will feature the three seminal theorists of symbolic interactionism: Charles Horton Cooley, George Herbert Mead and Herbert Blumer. All three of these theorists believed indirect observation is one of the best techniques for gathering data and considered objects to be human, nonhuman, animate or inanimate. As explained in the following sections, they also included space as part of the identity formation process. These approaches to data collection and classification of objects
are an exact fit for answering my research questions on the social and nonhuman interactions in the garden. I will now explain how specific concepts from Blumer, Cooley, and Mead are used to inform the interpretation of findings.

3.4.1 Blumer's Symbolic Interactionism

According to Becker (1988), Blumer’s most significant impact was his conceptual work. He did not develop a specific field method but rather more abstract concepts that would function in the background (Becker, 1988). Despite a lack of a technical field procedure, he highlighted two things a researcher had to do: (a) put yourself into the position of those whose conduct you want to study; and (b) capture the process from the standpoint of the whole group. The whole group's standpoint can be called the collective act or joint action and is explained later in this section. These two steps could be done by merely watching the participants and speaking with them (Wiley, 2014). This approach matches how I collected my data for this research, as explained in the Data Collection section of the Methodology chapter beginning on page 101.

For Blumer ([1969] 1986), the central feature of symbolic interactionism is that humans, both as individuals and groups, interact with each other and surrounding objects. These interactions give rise to meanings that are continuously being renegotiated through "a process that forms human conduct instead of being merely a means or a setting for the expression or release of human conduct" (p. 8). Blumer’s symbolic interactionism comprises three premises. First, individuals act towards objects based on their meanings for them. Second, these interactions give rise to meaning. Third, meanings are constantly being negotiated and modified based on our interactions.
Blumer (1986) further argued that we act towards three different types of objects: physical (inanimate), social (people), and abstract (intangible concepts). For Blumer, objects are anything towards which we can ‘indicate’, and this view sees meaning for these objects arise from our interactions with them. Furthermore, this action suggests that our meanings for things are social creations, and thus they "have no fixed status except as their meaning is sustained through indications and definitions that people make of the objects" (Blumer, 1986, p. 12).

Our interactions with these objects help us maintain or construct our identity and meaning. Another essential object we can indicate towards is ourselves, an object to ourselves (our age, occupation, or rich are some examples of how we can be an object to ourselves). Blumer calls this the "self-object", with which we can only interact if we have a sense of self (Blumer, 1986). To have a self, we must be able to view ourselves from outside ourselves; we must also be able to view ourselves from others' perspectives. This idea expands Mead's (1913) concept of role-taking. This self-object arises just like other objects; it comes, in part, from others defining us to ourselves (Blumer, 1986; Mead, 1913; Stryker, 2001).

Being defined by someone else can be seen in the garden when volunteers refer to each other as gardeners or volunteers when the other may not wish to be defined in those terms. We can now interact with ourselves within this self-object concept, but not in a psychological concept sense, like needs versus emotions or id versus ego. Instead, we interact with ourselves as a self-object in a more literal way. It is a process of communicating with ourselves. We can see this whenever we are disappointed in ourselves for making a mistake or when planning something (an action or activity). This action is called self-interaction or self-indication and was considered by Blumer to be the essence of human life (Morrière & Farberman, 1981b). The
self-object and self-indication can be seen in the data when volunteers try to negotiate their identity between what others call each other (volunteer or gardener) and what they want to be called (gardener or builder or handyman or carer). Using this concept to answer my research question of how their interactions influenced the volunteers, I viewed exchanges between people, between people and nonhumans, and within the volunteers themselves.

Blumer's view of meaning and self is key to interpreting the data as it allows for the observation and interpretation of the volunteers' interactions with one another and the nonhuman. Blumer's view on SI is vital to the study of community gardens because he believes that we act towards more than one object type. In the garden, there are inanimate objects (e.g. tools, plants or outbuildings), social objects (people), and abstract objects (e.g. feelings of care or anger) when in the garden. Examining all three of these objects is in line with how I approached this study, collected field data, and answered my research question: How are the volunteers impacted by both their social and nonhuman interactions?

3.4.1.1 Line of Action. “Line of action” is one of Blumer’s most popular concepts, and researchers who use his theory primarily focus on this. While a line of action is "the effort of an actor acting towards some goal – which, in his designation of it, becomes an object" (Morrione & Farberman, 1981, p. 114), it is not presupposed. Our efforts to note indications toward us and create plans of action change based on who or what is involved in the interaction. We cannot assume our line of action or fully know our line of action from the outset. Indeed, in Morrione & Farberman's (1981a, 1981b) conversations with Blumer, he discussed how people could get stuck on a specific line of action. Often when this happens, the individual(s) will not
give up that line of action, irrespective of the potential consequences. This line of action was evident in the data and is discussed in the Identity section of the Findings chapter.

3.4.1.2 Joint Action. According to Azarian (2017), one of the key concepts to Blumer's symbolic interactionism theory is joint action. Blumer (1986) defines joint action as "a societal organization of conduct of different acts of diverse participants" (p. 17). Simply put, joint action can be a marriage, a parliamentary discussion, the digging of a hole, or a collective of engagements such as a family, a church, or business (Blumer, 1986). However, he cautions that joint actions are more than the sum of their parts and can instead be regarded as having a character that lies in the articulation or linkage as apart from what may be articulated or linked. Thus, the joint action may be identified as such and may be spoken of and handled without having to break it down into the separate acts that comprise it. (p. 17)

Blumer goes on to explain that joint action cannot be presumed; it always must go through a process of formation no matter how "well-established or repetitive a form of social action" (p. 17). This continual formation is because the individuals' actions are coming together to make joint action still have to go through a process of interpretation. If one person changes their line of action or leaves the interaction, the joint action (or potential joint action) will vary. Joint action is an important concept for this study as it is used to explain the Granton Community Gardeners as a group and how they identify themselves. It also discusses how identity work is done in the garden. This type of interaction is seen in the data when the volunteers and Nancy (the chef) get together to prep and cook the community meals, bringing with them their different histories and experiences to contribute to the creation of the meal.
3.4.1.3 Sense of Group Position. As part of his work with joint action and the social world, Blumer did some work on race relations. He approaches this from what he calls a "sense of group position" (Blumer, 1958, p.3). According to Blumer, this sense of position comes from the processes that the group defines in relation to a subordinate group or between subordinate groups. This process is a collective one stemming from the shared experiences of the individuals making up the group. Blumer suggests that tensions are raised when a material threat to the group identity happens. Perry (2007) interprets Blumer's focus on identity and includes a broader concept of a threat to include more than the material. She also includes emotional and ideological threats. She regards our need for an identity as responding to our need for ontological security; if we have no identity, then we arguably do not understand how we fit into the world. I take Blumer and Perry's ideas about racial group relations and apply them to group relations within Granton Community Gardeners and between Granton Community Gardeners and other local organisations in this position of ontological group security. It is my belief that groups competing for resources in the same areas also experience a form of ontological insecurity with regard to how they fit into their respective communities. In the Findings chapter, I use this concept of sense of group position when discussing how the Granton Community Growers interact with other Granton community groups and how the gardeners form a collective identity.

Blumer's theories provide the foundational SI used to investigate my data more deeply, but he did not thoroughly explain the background mechanisms upon which he built his ideas. For example, he describes identity as being formed through interactions with objects that would give rise to meaning. However, as Becker (1988) explains, these were more conceptual
than technical steps. To fill this gap, I have expanded my SI framework to include two related concepts: the looking-glass self and the generalized other. The discussion of these two theories follows.

### 3.4.2 Charles Horton Cooley's Looking-glass Self

Pre-dating the arrival of symbolic interactionism, Cooley was investigating the social world and how individuals construct who they are (identity) in relation to it. Along with Massey and Blumer, my subsequent analysis of data also draws on Cooley's concept of the looking-glass self (Cooley, [1902] 1983) to investigate how the volunteers maintained or constructed their identities in the community garden. Initially conceived in 1902, the looking-glass self describes how humans present an identity that is our interpretation of how we think others view us. Therefore, we act how we think others expect us to act. This process of self-identity is an active one. As Cooley (1983) is often quoted as saying, "A self-idea of this sort seems to have three principal elements: the imagination of our appearance to the other person; the imagination of his judgment of that appearance, and some sort of self-feeling such as pride or mortification" (p. 184). This means that how we view ourselves is not just an automatic response, but instead is our "own conceptions about others' ideas of us" (Franks & Gecas, 1992, p. 51). In other words, our self-view is an interpretation of what others think of us.

An interesting point regarding the looking-glass self is that Cooley believed in a level of autonomy within how other people's ideas of us impact our self-evaluations (Franks & Gecas, 1992). Franks and Gecas (1992) explain that Cooley's use of autonomy refers to an individual's "resistance to or independence from the social pressures of the immediate context of interaction" (p. 52). This autonomy means choosing whose responses to our interactions to
incorporate into our self-evaluations framing our identities. Cooley (1983) imagined a balance between independence from immediate social pressures and others' influences and felt that this balance would create a continuity of self. Thus, the looking-glass self is a balance between taking in how others view us while remaining autonomous from those same views.

This concept has importance in determining how and why identities are constructed in the garden. The looking-glass self as an individual's interpretation of what they feel others think of them can be seen with some volunteers. This explanation of identity formation was observed with the volunteer Jay, in particular, and is discussed in the Findings chapter. Further, Cooley's idea that we can choose to incorporate some responses to our self-evaluation while rejecting others (Franks & Gecas, 1992) can be seen in the garden on several occasions. For example, as discussed in the Findings chapter, Oliver denies a gardener's identity that some other volunteers attempt to bestow upon him.

Despite the contribution of the looking-glass self, Cooley was never clear on the situations that would give rise to his theory (Franks & Gecas, 1992). Franks and Gecas go on to say that "This gap in his theory was partially filled by Mead's notion of the "generalized other." Here, Mead made a fundamental advance over Cooley in providing a mechanism that would account for an element of stability, continuity and autonomy for the self" (p. 54). The following subsection covers George Herbert Mead's theory of the generalized other.

### 3.4.3 George Herbert Mead's The Generalized Other

As mentioned above, the conceptual framework also employs George Herbert Mead's concept of the generalized other to explain further how identity is maintained or constructed by the Granton Community Gardeners volunteers. His concept is needed because, as Franks &
Gecas (1992) highlighted in the previous subsection, Cooley did not fully explain the background mechanism that supported identity development (self-evaluation) through the looking-glass self. However, Mead's concept of the generalized other provides this theoretical explanation. Mead ([1934] 2015) describes the generalized other as a social group or organisation whose attitudes are absorbed into an individual's experience and impact how they act in a given situation. In the Findings chapter, this is evident in how Jay fails to recognise the generalized other (Granton Community Gardeners as a group) and does not consider the group's social norms in his thinking or actions. On the other side, we see the incorporation of the generalized other as Nancy incorporates the group's social norms and attitudes into who she is and expresses that through her cooking. However, the concept of the generalized other is not restricted to just people. Indeed, Mead (2015) states:

Any thing – any object or set of objects, whether animate or inanimate, human or animal, or merely physical – toward which he acts, or to which he responds, socially, is an element in what for him is the generalized other; by taking the attitudes of which toward himself he becomes conscious of himself as an object or individual, and thus develops a self or personality. (p. 154)

Still, how do inanimate objects or physical space "act" back with attitudes or respond to us in ways that influence our thoughts and actions -- our identity? Mead does not say they have to act back or respond, but instead that an awareness of our identity can come about by acting towards ‘things’ in a way that makes us reflexively think about who we are. If we think beyond direct action, or as acts being solely a physical movement, and instead incorporate indirect actions and the atmosphere of space (the feeling space or place can give us), we can see how
inanimate objects and spaces can act towards us. A reaction thus implies that there was an initial act from which to respond. This type of action is seen in the data when pumpkin plants and a curry inadvertently become the avenue through which we can see colonial power evidenced in an interaction between Nancy, Beth and Beth's friend. This interaction happened when discussing using the pumpkin plant in food and when a volunteer brought curry to the community meal the same day as Nancy cooked curry. This exchange is discussed in detail in the Findings chapter beginning on page 169.

3.5 Summary

In this chapter, I covered Doreen Massey's (2005) reconceptualisation of space as consisting of a multiplicity of trajectories and place as an event of ‘throwntogetherness’ and an entanglement of multiple trajectories and histories. This concept of space includes the nonhuman and is employed as the overall theoretical platform upon which the interpretation of data is based. This theory on space and place strengthens the analysis by providing a lens through which to interrogate my data on power and roles in the garden, including historical trajectories and current interactions. Massey's work also provides a path towards understanding the garden's interactions in a broader social context while acknowledging the importance of the nonhuman in creating space and place. I also use Massey to examine how power-geometries are experienced in the garden and how these impact the volunteers' roles.

As Massey's work does not explicitly examine how identities and meaning are maintained or constructed, I explained how Blumer's (1986) symbolic interactionism theory is used to investigate how the volunteers create and maintain their identities through their participation in the garden. Further, Blumer's concept of a sense of group position was applied
to help understand how the group views itself in relation to other Granton community groups. Finally, since Blumer's ideas are somewhat abstract, I employed Cooley's concept of the looking-glass self and Mead's notion of the generalized other to support Blumer's premises and provide a more in-depth analysis as needed.

From Massey's and Blumer's theoretical underpinning, and some support from Cooley and Mead, I was able to construct a bespoke analytical toolbox with which my data could be interpreted, and thus enabled me to answer my research question: How are the volunteers influenced by their interactions, both social and nonhuman, in community gardens? These combined perspectives provide a broader and more in-depth understanding of how the garden elicited the data's emergent threads and, ultimately, answered my research question. Massey's concepts and all three SI theorists are strongly aligned with every facet of this inquiry. They have permitted me to investigate how community garden experiences are expressed and felt differently across the volunteer membership. Having this more in-depth understanding of the multiplicity of experiences can help garden organisers to explain their project's importance to the community, funders, and policymakers. This knowledge can also help community groups create gardens that support their volunteers as best as possible. The next chapter is the Research Site Context and discusses the history of Granton and the community gardens and backgrounds of the volunteers.
Chapter 4: Research Site Context

4.1 Chapter Overview

The chapters so far have discussed the literature around community gardens and how it led me to my research approach, framework, methodology, and guiding research question: How are the garden volunteers impacted by the garden’s cultural ecosystem services? However, my first choices for a framework, research approach, data collection methods, and guiding question would change after talking with Edward (pseudonym), a co-founder of the gardens, about my research. The literature review chapter discussed the second part of my literature review as I developed my research questions: How do the individual volunteers express their identities in the garden; and how do the volunteer’s roles and the power structures impact the volunteer’s experiences? This mini-chapter exists to remain faithful to the chronology of my thesis journey. It links my original thinking in the research process to the path I would ultimately take to investigate the lived experiences in community gardens. The following mini-chapter has four sections: first, I cover the process of how I worked with the community gardeners to gain knowledge and insights so that I could make the most appropriate choices for consent, data collection and other methodological decisions. Second, I discuss these changes more precisely. The next section covers the history of the Granton area in Edinburgh and the Granton Community Gardeners' backstory, followed by the chapter summary.

4.2 Adapting to Feedback and New Knowledge

At this juncture, I want to explain my relationship with Edward in terms of understanding the garden volunteers and community in a broad sense. Edward was my
consultant and go-between when trying to reach multiple garden members. As mentioned in the next paragraph and on multiple occasions throughout this thesis, I would pose questions, ideas, or initial findings to him (as described in the Trustworthiness section on page 118). He would then take these to other key volunteers and staff; then report their thoughts back to me. Where Edward felt he could legitimately discuss the broader Granton community or the Granton Community Gardeners in a general sense, he would. However, he would not connect my queries with other members and report back where he could not. An example of how he provides a general insight into the Granton Community Gardeners' atmosphere concerns their distrust of authority. This distrust was something that, in a general sense, had not changed since the inception of the group. However, he confidently knew that this was still the case, and I found it true during my fieldwork. Partly because of this distrust of authority, I chose to use Edward as a go-between when needing insights into the community I could not gather without compromising my balanced position as a volunteer and researcher before beginning my research, during my fieldwork and at the member checking stage of data analysis. This setup allowed me to balance my dual roles as a researcher and volunteer. This balance is discussed in more detail in the Reflexivity section of the Methodology chapter on page 113. I also interpreted that the volunteers’ distrust of authority would slow my decision-making process when the time was of the essence (my ethics application took time to be approved and discussed in the Ethics section of the Methodology chapter on page 98).

Therefore, using this setup of information exchange to access the larger group of volunteers, as needed, was an efficient choice in addition to a reflexive balance choice. To further emphasize why I chose to have Edward be a consultant (he acted in this “role” as both
my consultant and one for the Granton Community Gardeners) was because as a volunteer in 2016/2017, I witnessed the volunteers answer the questions from researchers in a somewhat rehearsed way. As if they had practised telling researchers and interviewers what they wanted to hear. As such, I believed the volunteers would act similarly to me if I discussed data collection ideas and similar topics with them. However, I had observed them do the same with Edward less likely. Therefore, as a result of this arrangement, when I mention ‘going to Edward’ or similar phasing, I am using it as a short-hand of confirming or gathering information from the larger community in an efficient and participant-centred process.

4.3 Changes to the Research

As described in the Introduction and Literature Review chapters, one of the research goals was contributing to academia and the Granton Community Gardeners. To help me keep on track with this goal, I ran my ideas and data collection choices past Edward (who would confer with other key volunteers and staff) to check their usefulness and appropriateness to the organisation. He would then respond with any potential issues I would run into, such as gaining consent, conducting interviews, and gaining trust. Edward was accommodating in explaining the community’s concerns, what kind of language would be understood and how the garden community views authority. One of the first things I discussed with Edward was cultural ecosystem services as a framework for my research approach, data collection, and analysis. The issue is that the resultant data would only be partially helpful to the community. The concepts and language used in cultural ecosystem services are not what the community is concerned with and not how the community thinks about their gardens. He also mentioned that since many of the garden volunteers distrust authority, it was feared that they would answer me with
what they thought I wanted to hear. So, I decided that the ecosystem services framework would not work with this gardening community. Changing the framework led to adjusting my guiding question: How are the volunteers impacted by both their social and nonhuman interactions?

Another change I decided to make was not to do formal interviews but instead to note casual conversations that I both overheard and participated in. It was noted above that some community members volunteering in the garden are wary of authority figures and were reluctant to participate in interviews in his experience. Further, we both had observed volunteers provide the answers they felt the interviewer wanted to hear. So, Edward suggested that it may not be the best way to gather data and wanted to know if I had thought of other options. With this information in mind and concerning other circumstances, as will be explained in the Data Collection section, interviews were not conducted formally. I also consulted with the garden community about what is appropriate for the participants while still being ethically acceptable. These discussions would shift my research to an inductive approach led by my guiding question: How are the volunteers impacted by both their social and nonhuman interactions? After data analysis, I would ask further questions about my themes (threads, to be explained on page 94). This additional questioning of my data would lead to two further questions about the garden’s identity, power, and organisational roles. The process of arriving at these additional questions is discussed later in the chapter at the end of the Data Analysis section.

The next section first gives an account of Granton and Granton Community Gardeners’ history, providing an understanding of the community and the volunteers who live in Granton.
The history section also includes information on the research fatigue in the Granton Community Gardeners. This history and research fatigue are crucial to understanding the population as this information drove some of the research design and methodological choices.

4.4 History of Granton and Granton Community Gardeners

Since this research was modified as I gained a deeper understanding and appreciation of the norms and attitudes of the Granton Community Gardeners, it is important to understand the historical context of Granton and how the Granton Community Gardeners emerged as a group. Therefore, this section will provide a brief overview of the Granton area, followed by a summary of how Granton Community Gardeners got started.

Unlike parts of Edinburgh that were eventually absorbed into the city, Granton did not have a long-standing village or settlement as the area was mostly farmland with few residences (D. King, 2011). With a new harbour finished in 1838, more housing was built to accommodate the construction and industry workers. The early 1900s brought various manufacturing industries, such as electrical equipment production (Bruce Peebles) and United Wire Works, built sites in the Granton area. After World War I, Granton was absorbed into Edinburgh when there was a demand for housing constructed in Granton. Unfortunately, the manufacturing industries and other employment places left the area over time, and the harbour ceased operations (Oliver, personal communication 28th August 2018). Many initiatives have been proposed to redevelop or reinvest in parts of Granton, but none have come to fruition (King, 2011). Based on the conversations from the 2016 – 2017 growing season I had or overheard in the garden, this lack of support and reinvestment in the area has left residents feeling abandoned by the Edinburgh Council. One garden volunteer and many area residents survived
the transformer manufacturing plant fire in 1999. The residents used to have a cinema but have since been used multiple times as a grocery store and other businesses (Oliver and Mandy, personal communication, 28th August 2018). The residents seem to believe that they have to find a way themselves if they want something done.

Over time the Granton population became ethnically diverse (Oliver, personal communication, 28th August 2018). The Granton Community Gardeners reflect this history as they are ethnically diverse and primarily working-class. As mentioned above, many community members feel they must take care of their own and find their way when they want something done. For example, when two community members wanted to garden but were tired of being on the waiting list for allotments in Edinburgh and no gardens in the Granton area, they found their way (Edward, personal communication, 2017).

As summarised from their web page (Granton Community Gardeners, n.d.), the story of Granton Community Gardeners began on a sunny April day on an unused plot of land at the corner of Wardieburn Road. The property was so unused that no one could remember the last time it had activity on it. That day was seminal for many reasons as next-door neighbours met for the first-time forming friendships. After donations of old tools, some seeds, and an unearthed tenner (£10) and 54p, a community garden was born. Not long later, another group of neighbours decided to form another community garden on a larger unused plot at the other end of Wardieburn Road, and now there were two. As the number of volunteers grew and diversified, so did the group's skills. A "Grow Your Own" skills course was taught, and the group kept scaling up the amount of food grown. To keep their gatherings and the community vibe going, they started cooking for each other in public buildings, trying to use the vegetables they
had grown in the garden. These also grew, and special holidays began to be celebrated as a community. Eventually, they would form partnerships with Pilton Community Health Project, Royston Wardieburn Community Centre and Granton Parish Chruch to host community meals, baking clubs and community celebrations. Some of these celebrations (Burns Night and Harvest Festival) have grown every year and are now annual events, and the community meals are offered weekly all year round. There are now so many corner lots occupied with gardens that the community members are no longer surprised to see a garden in a once-empty lot. In 2017 Granton Community Gardeners became a charity (Granton Community Gardeners, n.d.) and started providing weekly (or close to weekly) lessons and activities in the garden for Granton Primary School classes. In 2018 they were granted access to a gap site where a building had been recently demolished behind Stepping Stones North Edinburgh (Karen and Oliver, personal communication, early May 2018). It was a desert of compacted rubble and dirt, no utilities or running water, but it had a storage shed, space and potential. Over the 2018 – 2019 year, its potential was beginning to shine through as multiple garden beds were created, over 30 fruit trees were planted, a large community table was built for outdoor community meals, and an old mobile house was donated. The group has not stopped there. Graton Community Gardeners has grown so much in 10 years because they are willing to try out ideas and support those ideas. There is now a chicken flock, a hoop house for season extension growing, a Free Shop, and the baking club has become a pay-as-you-can bakery. The group now has two large-sized gardens while supporting 12 more neighbourhood gardens throughout the Granton area (Granton Community Gardeners, 2019).
Currently, Granton Community Gardeners have 12 neighbourhood corner lots turned into gardens. Two of these gardens are larger in size and are where the main group activities and gatherings happen, which are located on the Figure 1 map below. The group jointly manages these two spaces. The corner lot is the location of the original garden with two mound garden beds, six in-ground beds, and a tool shed with an attached hothouse (both built by Oliver). The other large lot located at 10 Wardieburn Road is their newest and most prominent garden site. This space has become the central meeting location and host to the group’s community events, such as the weekly community meals and volunteer days. This garden is still evolving, but it contains a new fruit orchard, five tool sheds, a coop for the community chicken coop, and an outdoor kitchen and dining area. There is also an outbuilding (donated by the parks and recreation department in Edinburgh) with five rooms that host an indoor meeting space, a free shop, electrical tool storage, and a kitchenette. The rest of the area is divided up into garden beds. This location was where I collected the majority of my fieldnotes.

The rest of the garden locations are spread throughout the Granton area and are within the blue outline in the Figure 2 map. As mentioned above, the garden volunteers are primarily residents of the Granton area and come from diverse backgrounds. The volunteer’s backgrounds were not explicitly collected, nor are they listed in documentation held by the group. Through casual conversations for my data collection, I know that most of the volunteers are Scottish from Edinburgh, a few are from other parts of Scotland, and two are from England. Additionally, the volunteers are from Nepal, Nigeria, Northern Ireland, a family from Syria, and a couple of other volunteers are from countries surrounding the Himalayan Mountains but did not disclose their home country. The main group of organizers do not keep an exact count of
how many volunteers there are in the garden. However, my study included 17 volunteers, though these volunteers were rarely in the garden at the same time.

**Figure 1**

*Map of the locations of the two main garden locations for Granton Community Gardeners.*

**Figure 2**

*Map of the area Granton Community Gardeners service area.*

*Note.* This map indicates the area that Granton Community Gardeners consider the area they serve. The map is borrowed from the website: [https://www.grantoncommunitygardeners.org/some-future-plans](https://www.grantoncommunitygardeners.org/some-future-plans)
In my three years (2016-2019) with Granton Community Gardeners as both a volunteer and researcher, I have witnessed multiple other researchers come into the garden to do their research or use their time in the garden to write their thesis or thesis. When I initially approached Edward about doing my research within the garden, he mentioned that this had become a common request for university staff and students. Edward said even the media have caught on to their garden. The media have even requested to film in the garden and do some interviews. However, having witnessed the number of researchers in the garden and Edward saying he felt that if I interviewed volunteers, he believed they would only give me answers they thought I wanted. This conversation with Edward and my own experience watching researchers in the garden has led me to conclude that the Granton Community Gardeners' volunteers suffer from research fatigue. Clark (2008) says that repeatedly asking a group or individuals to participate in research is one context in which research fatigue can set in.

I saw what I felt was an excellent example of Clark’s description above while volunteering before my fieldwork. A public health student from one of the other universities in Edinburgh had come to the garden one morning to administer a questionnaire in person. I am not sure if she had prior permission to do this or had just shown up—either way, she was allowed to do the questionnaire. Being curious, I observed her and the volunteers talking through the survey. I noticed that all the volunteers I saw talking with her seemed unengaged and uninterested. Their answers seemed canned and rehearsed. Perhaps it was poor engagement tactics from the student. Given how often the volunteers have been interviewed or taken part in research, I was inclined towards research fatigue. I kept this example in mind as I worked through setting my data collection methods outlined in the next chapter.
4.5 Summary

This chapter covered the history of the Granton area and the Granton Community Gardeners group. The Granton area has a history of manufacturing middle-class jobs and residents. Unfortunately, many of these factories and businesses have left the community. The loss of jobs and companies in the area has many current residents feeling like the council have left them behind. The feeling of being left behind has given rise to distrust in authority. This distrust is one reason I outlined in the chapter that led me to adjust my research to better match the garden community's needs. I would learn about some of the community members' dispositions towards authority and other attitudes through discussions with Edward. I outlined how I would take some of my research ideas, such as gaining consent, data collection, and theoretical framework, to Edward, bringing the ideas to other members. I explained that I used this process of receiving feedback from the group to maintain the balance between volunteer and researcher in the garden. The next chapter, Methodology, covers my methodological choice in more detail.
Chapter 5: Methodology

5.1 Chapter Overview

The previous chapter described the Granton area's history, the diversity of the garden volunteers, and how the Granton Community Gardeners emerged and grew. The last chapter also outlined how I approached gaining insights into appropriate data collection methods and other research decisions and understanding the community's general atmosphere. I also covered the concerns that the group may be suffering from research fatigue and how I considered that when choosing data collection methods and making other decisions in the garden. Next, this chapter explains my conceptualisation and philosophical paradigm, the ethnographic approach to my research, ethics, the decisions and choices for data collection and analysis, reflexivity in my study, trustworthiness, and the limitations of this study. Finally, through this chapter, I will be outlining the choices that would lead me to my revised research questions:

1. How do both their social and nonhuman interactions impact the community garden volunteers?
   a. How are the community garden volunteers performing identity work in the garden?
   b. How do power and the garden roles the volunteers perform impact their experiences in the garden?
5.2 Conceptualisation

Researcher positionality refers to how the researcher views the world (Holmes, 2020). This section and section 4.3 describe my worldview and its influence on this research project. Further, in section 4.8, I discuss my reflexivity during the research process.

Environmental thinkers, such as Aldo Leopold ([1949] 1968), have influenced my positionality, which affected my current worldview and thinking. Aldo Leopold believed that people and nature were part of the same system and impacted each other. That wildlife, plants and even the soil played a role in our lives and acted on us as we did them. This research does not go so far as to prescribe agency to the nonhuman, but it does borrow the idea that the world is relational (Fox & Alldred, 2018) and entangled (Massey, 2005). By referring to the world as relational, I understand that space and place are constructed through interactions and the relationships between humans and nonhumans (Massey, 2005). An entangled world means an interrelationship and a weaving together of our interactions and relationship. Entanglement refers to our interconnections with our histories and broader social structures (Massey, 2005). These relational approaches and world view influenced how I viewed interactions in the garden. They also affected my choice of data analysis, as explained later in this chapter.

In paying attention to both the human and nonhuman objects, my research can deepen the understanding of the garden's relational interactions and how those interactions impact the volunteers' lived experiences. The relational aspects of the above theories led me to investigate Doreen Massey's conceptualisation of space and place. Massey's concepts involve space as entanglements, relational and always open. She includes both the human and nonhuman in this
process. Her conceptualisation of space and place frames this research's approach and philosophical paradigm. This philosophical paradigm is explained more in the next section.

5.3 Philosophical Paradigm

This research inquiry is underpinned by an interpretivist and constructivist paradigms that recognise that multiple realities are constructed in the garden. Interpretivism relies on the participants' views of a phenomenon while understanding the researcher's own experiences in the research (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Further, interpretivists believe that social reality is a "product of its inhabitants" (Blaikie, 2009, p. 99). In other words, this research is my interpretation (based on participant observation and casual conversations) of the impacts of social and nonhuman interactions on community garden volunteers. Constructivists believe that knowledge happens through transactions (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000) or interactions, as I call them in this research. In terms of my research, this means that volunteers construct their reality through their interactions. In my research, I go a step further to include social and nonhuman interactions through which individuals in the garden help construct their realities. This paradigm is used while recognising my position as a researcher. My past professional and personal experiences in community gardens, food systems capacity building and minority farmer training carry prior knowledge and biases with them. The inclusion of the nonhuman into this research also stems from the influences I have from environmental thinkers like Aldo Leopold (1968), who considered humans part of nature rather than separate systems. Leopold (1968) believed there are no human and separate natural systems. Instead, there is one system of which we are both a part of.
Epistemologically, this research is grounded in the thought that knowledge is contextually situated in place and person. The constructivist interpretivist research paradigm fits my ethnographic methodology (described later in the next section). Further, this epistemological stance supports my data collection and analysis approach through participant observations and casual conversations, as described in the Data Collection section. A further aspect of this research is to capture both the nomothetic and ideographic elements of the data – the general and the particular (Eisner, 1981). Ideographic is described as an "analysis of phenomena in the particular context" (Haslam & McGarty, 2014, p. 396) and is specific to a person. In this research, we see the ideographic context during the discussion of the findings, Chapters 6 and 7, when I use individual volunteers' vignettes to describe a particular interaction within a conclusion. For example, I discuss how Jay specifically constructs his identity through specific interactions within the garden space.

In this research, I use a nomothetic approach to discuss how Granton Community Gardeners build their identity through the group's interactions with other community organisations. Haslam & McGarty (2014) define nomothetic as "an analysis of phenomena that apply generally to a member of a given group or population" (p. 396). The nomothetic is also used when I examine Granton Community Gardeners' "group actions" (Blumer, 1986) and the implications those have to the group identity. The use of both of these concepts within a single philosophical framework and paradigm is supported by Herman’s (1988) view that "several turns [between nomothetic and ideographic] within one research endeavour can deepen our knowledge of the territory, i.e., the individual at the interface between the general and the particular" (p. 807). This research was accomplished using the nomothetic and ideographic
through threads (theme) that share the participants' common experiences. For example, my study's general or shared experience would be identity construction. Then vignettes are used to discuss a particular interaction that is specific to the moment it was observed. Before proceeding with the rest of the chapter, particularly the data analysis, I must explain why I use the term "thread" rather than "theme" for my findings' categories. Typically, qualitative research analysis uses the word "theme" when grouping the data into commonalities.

A theme is more about what is shared and less about what is different. Themes do not imply a connection between them. The reason I chose to use the term "thread" to describe my categories in the findings as it suggests a link to something else or a weaving together of different parts. Understanding uniqueness with shared experiences is essential in my research and is part of my relational and philosophical paradigms. The use of "thread" matches my research question of understanding how their garden interactions impact the garden volunteers. For example, not everyone will experience identity the same in the garden. However, they may all perform identity work (construction or maintenance of one's identity) in the garden. My idea of a thread can be thought of like this – different pieces (individual) combined in a thread (a common experience). Further, the term thread fits Massey's (2005) idea that the world is relational and entangled. These threads are the entanglements.

In contrast, a theme implies a singularity or dominance. Thus, I used the word thread to better match my research. This research design helps me understand the daily life of Granton Community Gardeners and answer my research question: How the volunteers are influenced by their social interactions and their interactions with the nonhuman.
5.4 An Ethnographic Approach

This study was conducted during five months of the summer of 2018 at Granton Community Gardeners (a discussion of the population is covered in Chapter 3) and used an ethnographic approach. This research aimed to tell the community garden stories answering the question: How are the volunteers impacted by both their social and nonhuman interactions. As an ethnographer, I endeavoured to record and present the ideographic and nomothetic data, requiring attention to the subtle differences in interactions and broad similarities between garden volunteers. To achieve these research aims, I took an ethnographic approach. Hammersley & Atkinson (2007) suggest that ethnographies are nuanced studies responsive to local cultures. This study is a nuanced description, and interpretation of the volunteers' lived experiences with Granton Community Gardeners. However, lived experiences consist of more than just our interactions with other people; they also include nonhuman entities. As Hammersley & Atkinson (2007) state, "We are attentive to the nuances of social interaction, and we devote a considerable amount of time and effort to the analysis of social interaction. We need to give equally appropriate attention to things" (p. 134). In this study, the 'things' Hammersley & Atkinson refer to are the nonhuman in the garden, including the plants, the weather, the food, and furniture, to name a few. While not all of the 'things' appear in the Findings chapter, my field notes are accounted for. These ‘things’ (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007) also were part of the analysis when developing my ‘threads’ as explained in the Data Analysis section.

I chose Ethnography because ethnographies involve an emersion into a group in a natural setting to get a 'thick description' (Geertz, 1973). A case study is attributed to more
broad studies and causal relationships (Blaikie, 2009; Gray, 2009; Outhwaite & Turner, 2007) and would not have answered my research question as well as an ethnographic study does. This ethnographic methodology allows me to move away from a dualist perspective, that things are separate and distinct, and move towards a more entangled view of community gardens. Doreen Massey’s (2005) idea of space and place as consisting of a multiplicity of trajectories, always open and becoming, has been used in ethnographic research before (Pitt, 2013). Further, other researchers (Gille, 2001; Horst et al., 2012; Pink & Morgan, 2013) have suggested that Massey’s work suits various ethnographic studies. Her concepts encourage us to stop viewing the biophysical (nonhuman) as inert objects for us to use wantonly. Instead, we should recognise nonhuman actors with their own distinct trajectories.

Further, her book *For space* (2005) discusses that farming is (or can be) a conjunction between the human and nonhuman trajectories that recognises the social structures while simultaneously responding to nature’s specificity. I view community gardens in the same light. This research is concerned with more than just human-human exchanges. It also includes the nonhuman interactions and how these social and nonhuman actors impact the volunteers. Ethnography was chosen as it allows for multiple types of interactions to be recorded to document participants' lived experiences and answer my research question.

As was demonstrated in the literature review, there is a connection between a community garden’s activities and politics, economics, and interactions with abiotic and biotic species; an encompassing methodology is needed to explore these interactions. I can record these interactions through various means such as observations, semi-structured interviews, casual conversations, and descriptions from the participants. Hammersley (1992) notes that
"description is explanation" (p. 23), meaning that when an event is described through explanation, the researcher is providing the significance of that event. In writing up this research, I use vignettes from my field notes describing interactions in the garden. I then use either Doreen Massey's ideas of space and place or symbolic interactionism to describe further and explain the significance of that interaction. Outhwaite & Turner (2007) posit that researchers can find ethnographies more open so that chance discovery or new insights can dictate where the research goes. In doing this process, a researcher can find a complete understanding. This openness of ethnographies is beneficial since social settings are often complex and ever-changing. In this research, an ethnographical approach's open-ended quality helped me address my research question: How do their social and nonhuman interactions influence the volunteers. Furthermore, an ethnography allows me to gather as much information as possible and analyse that data to let the data determine what was significant. The data collection and analysis are further explained in this chapter's Data Collection and Data Analysis sections.

5.5 Ethical Considerations

This research complies with and follows the British Education Research Association (2018) guidance. According to the University of Edinburgh's research regulations, this research was given ethics approval through the Moray House School of Education and Sport in late May 2018. Throughout this research, I made my decisions with the best interest of my participants' safety, wellbeing, dignity, and rights in mind. As part of this consideration, I gave all the participants pseudonyms. Another example of respect for the garden volunteers was when choosing a method of consent for participants to be observed and the use of casual
conversations; I had initially decided to have the volunteers sign a consent form or pick up a ribbon to wear if they did not want to be part of the study that day. This consent process would allow the volunteers to remain involved in the garden without participating in the study. I decided to put these ideas to Edward and other key group members via Edward as described in the Research Site Context chapter for their thoughts on its effectiveness. Edward communicated back to me that there was a general opinion that this would not work with this group of volunteers. I was informed that the garden volunteers are particularly sensitive to not standing out from the crowd. Having a ribbon on them would draw attention that they most likely would not want. This community was a bit more direct and preferred that type of communication. I was further informed that not all garden volunteers would be comfortable signing an official-looking document.

Nevertheless, these participants will want to participate in the research. His suggestion was to seek approval for getting verbal consent for these few participants. Edward had warned, none of the garden volunteers was willing to provide permission in writing, only via assent described in the following paragraphs.

Through further conversations with Edward and in consultation with the MHSES Ethics Committee, combined with the information sheets at the entrance to the garden, the door to the outbuilding and tool shed, a participant gave consent when they elected to enter the garden. Volunteers could withdraw consent by informing me or Edward, who would pass the information on to me. However, this process is complicated because some individuals will not want to come up to me to say that they do not wish to participate on that day. Further, Edward may not be in the garden every day for them to approach (as was the case multiple times
during my fieldwork). As an ethnographic study on this community, it is essential that I get everyone willing to participate to join the research. Thus, for this study, I used assent via their body language in addition to the option of written consent. In his book *Communication in the Real World: An Introduction to Communication Studies*, Jones (2013) discusses that some key body language indicators represent a person's desire not to socialise and therefore not provide assent.

During my fieldwork, if I observed some of those body language indicators, I assumed they wished not to participate on that day. I used visual cues to indicate that participants were not assenting to be included in that day's observations, interviews, or casual conversations. Some examples of these cues, according to Jones (2013), are avoiding eye contact, not looking in the researcher's direction, their proximity in relation to the researcher (outside of the personal space zone can indicate a desire not to socialise), and closed-off postures (arms crossed or turning away from a person). Despite written consent being the preferred method, the garden organiser (Edward) suggested that allowing individuals to assent verbally or through body language is in line with the culture of the community I am studying. The above steps of going back and forth between Edward (my consultant) and the MHSES Ethics Committee to receive approval for assent in addition to consent took over three months. This delay resulted in postponing my fieldwork for data collection by two months. This statement is not intended as a complaint but rather an indicator that the approval process possibly interfered with my access to a larger population. This delay in fieldwork is explained below in the Limitations section of this chapter when discussing my study's population size.
I was aware of my role as a volunteer and a researcher throughout my data collection. Therefore, I aimed to strike a balance between performing my volunteer work and recording data. To achieve this balance, I made notes of interactions and conversations afterwards, either in an unoccupied space in the garden or on the bus ride home. I did this process so that my note-taking was less disruptive to the daily tasks and avoided making the volunteers uncomfortable with me writing down what might have happened or discussed. To further help with this balance of roles, I worked alongside the other volunteers in the garden and introduced myself as both a garden volunteer and a researcher.

5.6 Data Collection

When I began to debate data collection methods in earnest, I kept in mind that the participants would have their own goals and objectives for coming to the garden each day. So my data collection techniques should not be more work for them or interfere with their goals or objectives (Clark, 2008). For this reason and those already discussed in the History of Granton section (research fatigue) or discussed later in this section (local culture and weather), I would change how I would collect my data in the field.

Data collection for this study occurred during the growing season, which included the beginning of the "closing up" of the gardening when there was a natural reduction in volunteers in the garden. The fieldwork spanned five months between May and September 2018. Initially, the fieldwork was planned to begin in April when volunteering increases, but I was awaiting ethical approval until May. I chose to end my fieldwork at the end of September because, historically, the number of volunteers decreases as young kids and families go back to their school year routines and activities.
As discussed above in the introduction to this chapter and throughout this thesis, my research approach has been responsive to the Granton Community Gardeners' needs to best accommodate the Granton community's culture. In the introductory paragraphs of the Methodology chapter, I discuss that I had initially chosen to include interviews as the primary data collection method. These interviews would gather the lived experiences in the volunteers’ own words of how they are impacted by their time in the garden. Interviews would then be paired with participant observation to add context to the interview data further. In data collection, several factors influenced my choice to hold back on using interviews as a primary source of data collection. First, the garden volunteers are wary of authority figures and even more wary of signing anything that seems like it comes from authority. This wariness would make obtaining consent difficult (the ethical considerations discussed in the Ethics section above) and challenging to encourage interview participants. To adjust to this situation, I set up two options before going for fieldwork. If interviewees were easier to recruit than predicted, I would use interviews coupled with participant observations (which would include recalling casual conversations) to collect my data. However, if interviewees were challenging to recruit, I would rely on informal conversations (both overheard conversations and ones I participated in) in-lieu-of formal interviews. In either of those cases, I would also use participant observation. This choice of data collection is supported by Bhatti (2017). She states that ethnographies are said to use a multitude of data collection techniques depending on the research context and situation, including participant observations.

A second factor emerged once I began my fieldwork. The summer of 2018 in Edinburgh had higher temperatures and was dryer than usual. As a result, at least partly, the garden had
fewer volunteers participating in the hotter summer’s gardening activities. Before moving into more detail on data collection, I want to briefly discuss my comment on the number of volunteers that summer. During the previous summer (2017), I had regularly volunteered in Granton to get to know the community and build relationships before choosing a research site. I undertook this process with multiple community gardens to help me choose an appropriate research site. During the summer of 2017, there were well over a dozen regular volunteers, and in 2018 there were less than a dozen regular volunteers. Based upon this comparison and conversations with Edward, Karen and Gretchen (the latter two are board members), I concluded that the hotter, sunnier weather kept volunteers from coming into the garden. I say only partly influenced because it is entirely reasonable that some volunteers chose not to go into the garden to indicate their desire to not consent to research participation. If this was the case, it appears not to have had a long-term impact on the number of garden volunteers this past summer.

Coming back to my data collection methods, I chose to use participant observations during the volunteer days on Tuesdays and Saturdays. I would arrive at the garden between 11:00 – 12:00 as Edward, Karen, or Jenn opened the gates. On average, I spent five hours in the garden on those days. Volunteer days are when the garden is guaranteed to have someone to open the fence for anyone to work in the garden. It should be noted that during the growing season, someone is there almost every day, but only Tuesdays and Saturdays are announced as volunteer days. I would also attend most of the community meals on Tuesday nights. The dinners’ time was to remove my researcher hat and instead join solely as a Granton Community Gardeners member. Through attending these meals helped build rapport and relationships with
the garden volunteers and other Granton community members. At the beginning of the fieldwork, I went to the garden both on Tuesdays and Saturdays. However, as mentioned above, the summer of 2018 was a sweltering one for Scotland. As a result, fewer volunteers came to the garden during the summer months. By August, I decided to only attend fieldwork on Tuesdays for the remainder of the data collection period, as these were more regularly busy. The five months of data collection resulted in 64.5 hours of fieldwork and 59 pages (10.5x14.8 cm) of field notes.

To collect my data, I brought with me to the garden a small notepad and pen to record the daily activities and interactions in the garden. I recorded everything I saw whether or not I was part of the exchange. I would note all the people and objects involved in an interaction. Having volunteered with Granton Community Gardeners previously, I already had the trust of many volunteers, and this trust was strengthened as I would attend the community meals as well. This familiarity put me in a unique position as a participant-observer to be included in many of the garden conversations. My status also allowed me to listen in on conversations without people being wary of my presence. I would listen and take notes during the exchange or immediately after the interaction to record the conversations. I would jot down the conversation in my notebook in a narrator/observer style and where the conversation took place in the garden, including any nonhuman objects involved (Emerson et al., 2007). Direct quotes were included when I remembered them or had time to write them down during the conversation. The following is an example of my fieldnotes:

Edward, Nicole and Gretchen discussed an issue with a volunteer who had helped fill in while Matthew was gone. She wanted to get paid for it. Someone (they presume it was
Matthew) told her she could get paid for it. But no one else was told about it. Nicole just thought she was there to help cook; a new volunteer. In the end they decided to pay her, but as Edward said: "make sure she knows this was just a one-time thing." Nicole apologised for not knowing how things worked and for making a mistake.

I would make notes in the garden whenever I could, as soon as possible after the interaction (Hoey, 2014). Doing my note-taking this way meant that sometimes I would go inside or behind the outbuilding to make my notes not to disrupt the flow of activity. In addition, I would review and make further notes while on the bus or back home after my day's fieldwork. During this review stage each day, I would fill in more of the incomplete interactions and note things about the weather and overall impressions from my notes. Two examples of daily note taking are in Appendix A.

5.7 Data Analysis

This research used an inductive approach to the analysis of the data. Inductive methods stay close to the data to reveal new understandings of the phenomenon (Kennedy, 2018). Chalmers (1999) and Hanson (1958) both critique inductive approaches as not truly being free of a priori theoretical influences and fail to situate the researcher in their historical context. However, in this research, I approached the inquiry from an interpretivist perspective in which my data and findings are interpretations of the interactions I observed (Charmaz, 2014).

5.7.1 Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis

This research aimed to find a way to explain the intrinsic benefits of community gardens by answering the question: How do Their Social and Nonhuman Interactions influence the Volunteers. To fulfil this aim and answer the previous question requires attention to both the
similarities and the differences in the volunteer's experiences. I chose to use a modified version of Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) to analyse my data with the above goal in mind. IPA is "committed to the examination of how people make sense of their major life experiences" and "is concerned with exploring experience in its terms" (Smith et al., 2009, p. 1). Smith et al. (2009) further explain that research using IPA is particularly interested in examining everyday life events take on a higher level of significance than usual. In my research, those daily events are those that happen in the Granton community gardens.

IPA has six broad steps to data analysis: 1) Reading and re-reading 2) Initial Noting 3) Developing emergent themes 4) Searching for connections across emergent themes 5) Moving to the next case and 6) Looking for patterns across cases.

As I mentioned above, I modified the IPA analysis slightly to accommodate my data and best answer my research question. My research took place at one location and included no formal interviews. Instead, I wove casual conversations with participant observations to gather data and create a Granton Community Gardeners picture. As such, I only have the five steps listed below. IPA analysis has “considerable room for manoeuvring” (Smith et al., 2009, p. 80), allowing me to adjust the steps needed for the data I collected. While IPA has a particular set of phases, characteristics, and principles, these are applied flexibly according to one’s specific research aims (Reid et al., 2005). This flexibility allows me to modify the process slightly to fit my analytic goals best. Latif et al. (2004) used a similar approach when analysing single cases in the early stages of their research on psychosis and early interventions. As such, I have used the following five steps: 1) Read and re-reading 2) Initial Noting 3) Developing emergent threads
(themes) 4) Searching for connections across emergent threads and 5) Looking for related volunteer experiences across threads.

While Smith et al. (2009) suggested that I use a grid or spreadsheet when doing the analysis, I opted for using highlighters to colour code each of my threads when reading through the line-by-line setup of my fieldnotes. As you will see in the coming paragraphs, there is some overlap between stages and some steps blending. As Smith et al. (2009) state, it is “not a linear one, and the experience will be challenging” (p. 80). Indeed, I found this form analysis rewarding and challenging, taking me four months to complete. As IPA uses a line-by-line analysis where interviews are written line-by-line (one sentence, one line), I organised my fieldnotes similarly. I took each interaction and transcribed them from my notebook to an Excel sheet as one line. One interaction equalled one line. I grouped the notes by day as a researcher would do, grouping data by interaction (see Appendix B). This process was effectively both an organisational tool and the beginning of data analysis in step one discussed below.

5.7.1.1 Step One. In phase one: the reading and re-reading of my fieldnotes, this exact action was what I did. As mentioned in the above paragraph, this stage began when I started transcribing my field notes from my notebook to an excel sheet to organise them into individual lines. This format helped me take notes (in later stages), keep each interchange distinct to be analysed independently, and make comparisons across interactions as necessary (again later in the process). Next, I spent weeks reading and re-reading my notes. I did this daily, though not all day long. This first step would be about half my working day. The purpose of this stage in the data analysis is to fully engage and immerse yourself in the data and reengage with the events
described in my fieldnotes, as Smith et al. (2009) state that the importance of this stage is to “ensure that the participant[s] becomes the focus of the analysis” (p. 82).

Additionally, this stage helps to gain an overall pattern of the days and the interactions within that day. This structure also aids in finding details within exchanges or linking interactions to each other or a specific location within the garden. A further aspect that this stage helps with the research is that it aided in reflexivity. During the reading and re-reading, I began to see how my rapport with and trust from the garden volunteers grew and gave me more details about their lives and thoughts. When I had read and re-read the fieldnotes to when I sufficiently had understood the general structures and nearly memorised the data to where I could tell you which date most of the interactions had taken place. At this point, I moved on to the second stage of data analysis.

5.7.1.2 Step Two. The second step of IPA data analysis is the initial noting and often merges with step one as I got more familiar with my data (J. Smith et al., 2009), as was the case with my data analysis. While this is still an exploratory process, it is detailed with descriptive comments, the questions the data brought to mind, comments on the participant's language, or conceptual comments. These notes are then included in further readings as they build. During my analysis, I ended up noting a combination of comment types. For example, I would take note of descriptive comments about a conversation I had with a volunteer. When Jay talked about his niece, I would note that he spoke of a happy memory or an upcoming happy meeting. I would also make what Smith et al. (2009) refer to as linguistic comments. These notes would often already be marked in my fieldnotes, and I would add them as part of my initial remarks.
An example of this is when I would note the tone of voice a volunteer would use – did they sound happy or angry. Linguistic comments can also include pauses or laughter (awkward, exuberant or cut-off) in a conversation. These initial remarks were already in my fieldnotes and demonstrate how there is sometimes a blending of data collection and analysis in ethnography and IPA analysis. These sometimes-blurred lines indicate that both of these steps in this research are iterative processes.

The final type of commenting used in the analysis are conceptual comments. This stage is more interpretive and steps back from the data's details towards larger abstract concepts (J. Smith et al., 2009). I began thinking about why Jay talked about his niece so much at this point in the analysis. Why did Edward care so much about how aesthetically orderly the garden looked? Why did Oliver always insist that he was not a gardener? I wondered about identities, power roles, how the weather impacted the volunteers, and how plants draw people together? These broader ideas start to show relationships between people’s experiences in the garden or connect the individual’s work in the garden to their lives outside of it.

5.7.1.3 Step Three. The third step in my analysis was to develop emergent themes, which I call threads as described earlier in this chapter. As Smith et al. (2009) discuss, this stage shifts from the actual data, the fieldnotes in my research, towards the initial noting done in step two. They further explain that this is fine as the initial notes should be closely tied to the data. During this process, the data is broken up into chunks and compared to each other. These parts are later brought back together at the end of the analysis and during the Findings chapter's writing-up. To find the emergent threads, I read through the field notes and the initial noting, before describing looking for emergent threads, a short comment on how I tracked these.
While reading for threads, I initially tried using an excel sheet with two tabs to follow my notes. As described earlier, one tab was a line-by-line transcription of my fieldnotes by interaction. The second tab was blank, and I would fill in the threads as they emerged. Excel numbers the lines so the interaction on line #1 matched the emergent thread on line #1. However, I found this system challenging to trace across volunteers and move to the following analysis step. So, I kept both printed excel tabs and switched to using a highlighter colour-coded to the different emergent threads into larger related groupings. During these additional readings, I would write what I interpreted as what an interaction meant or represented conceptually. Some examples of these interpretations are “value of the garden”, “roles in the garden”, and “working on identity”. I would repeat this process until I felt that I had all the threads I could develop, and nothing new was coming out of the data (J. Smith et al., 2009).

5.7.1.4 Step Four. The next step is to search across the emergent threads for connections. This step is when I changed my system slightly. Despite my notes being in chronological order, as suggested by Smith et al. (2009), I found it difficult to trace these across interactions on different days and different volunteers. This tracing is an integral part of discovering both ideographic and nomothetic data within my research. As a result, I used highlighters to code for the larger combinations of emerging threads. An example of this can be seen in Appendix B.

This fourth step aims to find connections across emergent threads and bring them together under one “title”. That means slightly renaming the grouping to better match the examples it covers in some cases. An example of this in my research is when I found that two emergent threads, ‘Organisational Structure’ and ‘Garden Roles’, were inseparable in my data.
They ended up forming one thread called ‘Power and Organisational Roles’ in the final analysis. I worked through this process by re-reading the emergent threads and, as necessary, the related fieldnotes and marking ones connected by either being alike or conceptually related. Once through the whole fieldnotes, I would go back over it again, moving threads into or out of clusters as needed. I kept repeating this until I could no longer move any of the threads around. At the end of this process, I came up with seven threads. These threads are listed below in Table 6, with a key indicator I used to provide a name to the thread. Next, I would use numeration to find which of the seven threads appeared more often than the other threads. These two threads – ‘Identity’ and ‘Power and Organisational Roles’ are the ones I go over in more detail in my Findings chapter and are my primary findings.

Table 6

The threads were found during data analysis and an indicator from my field notes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Thread</th>
<th>Field Note Example or Key Quote</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Inclusion</td>
<td>1) Edward and board members regularly discuss how often gates are unlocked and safety of gates always being open. 2) Diversity of/lack thereof in foods prepared during community meals.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Gardeners VS an Other</td>
<td>Conflict with Knitting Ladies over use of church hall</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Connections Outside the Garden</td>
<td>Purchased fruit trees and bushes from Crops in Pots (another community garden)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identity</td>
<td>Oliver told me &quot;I'm not a gardener.&quot;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Relationships Between Gardeners

1) Many of Jay’s interactions involving his behavior. Particularly his inappropriate jokes to children
2) The Polish lady donating tomatoes and the Indian family joke about sharing the Indian husband.

### Power & Organizational Roles

Karen and I were discussing what to do when the boys come over without their parents and that they shouldn’t be allowed to come without parents. Karen mentions that “It’s not that Edward makes the rules. But it’s Edward’s rule.”

### The Human - Nonhuman Interactions

Beth and her friend ask often about using other parts of the plants and teaching the other gardeners about this. The curry incident during the community meal (British chef made curry as did a Bengali lady)

#### 5.7.1.5 Step Five.

At the beginning of this section on data analysis and earlier in this chapter, I mentioned using a slightly modified version of IPA analysis. It is at this point where I slightly diverge from IPA. Technically, IPA analysis has six steps, and I only have five steps. Smith et al.’s (2009) fifth and sixth steps are moving to the next case and looking for patterns across cases, respectively. I did not have multiple research cases, so I moved to a fifth step to look back at the field notes and threads to find which threads volunteers experienced. As I mentioned in the previous step, I had two main threads, ‘Identity’ and ‘Power and Organisational Roles’, so I specifically look at these two threads in the most detail. These two threads showed in my field notes 33 and 28 times, respectively. These two threads also had the most robust connections to and overlap (17 instances across threads) with the other threads.
This overlap indicated that these two threads had a more prominent role in the data while still demonstrating my research's relational aspects. This step also helped find vignettes that demonstrated these threads and helped build the connections between these two threads. This connection and the vignettes are discussed in the Findings chapter.

These five analytical steps gave rise to the threads listed above, and at this stage, I began to ask additional questions about my data. This questioning led me to two sub-questions in addition to my overarching research question.

At this juncture of my investigation, my research questions became:

1. How do both their social and nonhuman interactions impact the community garden volunteers?
   
   c. How are the community garden volunteers performing identity work in the garden?
   
   d. How do power and the garden roles the volunteers perform impact their experiences in the garden?

This process of continually asking questions about my data and research processes is part of reflexivity. Therefore, an essential piece of qualitative research and an IPA approach, reflexivity, is discussed in the next section.

5.8 Reflexivity.

Reflexivity is the procedures we reflect upon and question our way of doing research (Hibbert et al., 2010). Hibbert et al. (2010) continue explaining that “through questioning the bases of our interpretations, reflexivity necessarily brings about change in the process of reflection – it is thereby recursive” (pp. 1 – 2). Throughout my research, I have taken a reflexive
approach concerning my participants and the community gardener's needs. The changes made in response to this reflexivity can be seen throughout the thesis when I adjusted my initial framework, consent process, data collection, and when choosing my data analysis method.

I approached my fieldwork with the mentality that “fieldwork encompasses an entire social system. Understanding and fitting into that system, therefore, is at least as important as developing rapport and trust with the people with whom we plan to work directly” (Mandel, 2003, p 12). In this study, I already had a rapport with many of the volunteers. Still, I had to work on fitting into their social system and culture while building rapport with those volunteers I had not met while volunteering before my study. As I would find out, the garden volunteers' culture and wariness would play a role in my data collection and ethics processes.

To understand the culture and social system of the Granton Community Gardeners, I began by volunteering in the garden in 2016. Volunteering was part of my exploration process in Edinburgh and choosing which garden to work with for my research—volunteering before investigating allowed me to release my researcher hat and fit in with the community without much impact from the researcher dynamic. At this stage, I introduced myself as a PhD student and worked with community gardens and organic farmer training before starting my studies. Taking this approach, I built rapport and trust with many of the volunteers and integrated them into the community.

Beyond volunteering with the garden, I would talk with Edward about how the group would react to a researcher doing an ethnography in the garden and being around a lot. These conversations with Edward would help me communicate with him about doing interviews and
gaining consent from participants. These decisions are explained in this chapter's Data Collection and Ethics sections, respectively.

While I approached my fieldwork and data collection as free from preconceived notions or theory-driven biases as humanly possible, I cannot claim absolute objectivity. As Morrison (2002) suggests that complete objectivity can also be interpreted as providing absolute or universal truths, I recognise that the nature of an ethnography means this is not possible. Instead, ethnographies aim to explain the lived experiences during the study period. Further, this research uses Doreen Massey’s idea of space and place as always open and changing. My presence or absence in the garden changes the space and its meaning. As Woods (1985) states, this positioning provides me with an “open-ending dialogue between data collection and theory” (p. 104). This open dialogue and flexibility are required to effectively represent my data decisions and research that depicts the Granton Community Gardners volunteers' reality.

Besides the reflexive practices that aided in the aforementioned research processes, I was continually aware of my position as both an outsider and an insider. This duality refers to me as a garden volunteer and researcher, community member, and community member who did not live in Granton. This distinction between being a community member and not living in the community is important as only four of us did not live in Granton. So, in some cases, I had to work harder to build relationships with some of the people in Granton I had not met before my research. An excellent example of building rapport with new people in the garden is when I first met Matthew. He had seen my posters at the garden entrances but appeared to only pay attention to the fact that I was researching in the garden and not volunteering here.
Two members were leaving the garden saw my poster and commented on how every researcher wants to come here to research. I [Matthew] tell them to come and do drop-ins and do some work first.

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I was talking with Edward about building a new garden bed and Matthew came over to talk with Edward and introduced himself to me. I responded and introduced myself as Ethan. His response was “Oh you’re the researcher”. I responded with, “and a volunteer. I’ve been coming here since 2016”. He made a “Hmuf” sound with a slight shoulder shrug.

(Field Notes 6 June 2018)

This incident was the first but not the last similar interaction I had with Matthew. There were multiple similar conversations, and it was not until about halfway through my fieldwork that he seemed to accept that I was part of the community.

Even once I was accepted as a community member, I was still an outsider in my daily lived experiences and my lack of knowledge about the Granton community. This status was kept sharply in focus that I am from a part of Edinburgh of lower deprivation than my participants. Al-Makhamreh & Lewando-Hundt (2008) discuss the impact of gender and nationality in research and how they negotiated these culturally situated norms. As a white, educated, and straight male from the United States of America, I am afforded a status and authority others are not always granted, such as the volunteers of colour from non-developed countries (Manohar et al., 2017). Being conscious of this, I worked to relinquish this authority in some instances, such as my knowledge of Granton, growing plants in Scotland and culturally
appropriate uses of the garden plants. A balance between a position of authority (researcher) and less authority (not living in Granton) was continually being negotiated between myself and the garden volunteers. I did not try to reject either role. Instead, I embraced both and recognised that my presence helped shape the space's feeling, which made me privy to some insider information while making some participants act guarded until they felt comfortable sharing with me.

I believe that this balance was accomplished, as is evidenced by the two following interactions:

Harry had his eldest granddaughter with him today and while we were putting the lower cladding on the outbuilding, we talked about schools. He was telling me how his granddaughter got such high marks and that she will be going to a well-respected secondary school next year. He said this with lots of pride in his voice and showing on his face.

(3 July 2018)

This vignette shows how many of the volunteers shared with me, particularly early in the fieldwork. We would share an idle chat about what we had done that week, were going to do next week, what we liked about the garden space and the new outbuilding, and similar conversations. They would share about themselves and sometimes their troubles. However, it rarely would go to the administrative level, as shown in the following vignette.

Later after Jay had left, Jenn asked how I would have handled those kinds of conversations. She said she views me as a sort of “professional volunteer” in the garden
and wanted to make sure we weren’t going to break any confidentiality by discussing the situation with Jay. I said I thought we were fine as she was bringing it up and was feeling ok that she wasn’t breaking any confidentiality she might have with Jay. She shared with me that Jay has a brain injury.

****

After discussing Jay, we decided that a group training on working with kids for all the adults in the garden would be a good way to approach it and help Jay stay involved.

(10 July 2018)

This vignette is a prime example of reflexivity in this research. This conversation led to one conclusion that day and one realisation as I wrote it for this thesis. On that day, this conversation confirmed that the paid staff with Granton Community Gardeners viewed and treated me slightly differently than most of the volunteers. Most of the volunteers treated me as just another volunteer, chatting idly about daily news, life updates, what to make with the garden veggies and sometimes sharing more intimate life details as they felt comfortable. While the staff would share this, they would include me in more organisational-level conversations or more private volunteers. As I wrote and thought about the above vignette, I discovered that this was when my view (as a researcher and a person) of Jay changed. Mills & Morton (2013) state that writing is central to ethnography. This sort of immersion into the data and reflexively thinking during the writing process is a crucial element of an ethnography and seeps into all parts of the research process (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007). Thus, I continually thought about what I was doing and why during my research phases. Through this process, I uncovered new
information in my data and thought about what those meant for my research process and final product.

5.9 Trustworthiness

Given that this research endeavour is an interpretive process, and every researcher will bring their worldview and interpret the data differently. It is then important that my interpretation of the data is trustworthy. As Birt et al. (2016) state, “The trustworthiness of results is the bedrock of high-quality qualitative research” (p 1802). As such, I used the four broad principles created by Yardley (2000) and, as suggested for IPA analysis by Smith et al. (2009), to check my results' quality and trustworthiness. Yardley's (2000) four criteria for assessing qualitative research's quality and trustworthiness are sensitivity to context, commitment and rigour, transparency and coherence, impact and importance. While these principles are broad, they were developed that way purposefully, as there is a danger where such lists become too prescriptive and simplistic in their application (J. Smith et al., 2009).

Furthermore, qualitative research approaches vary considerably based upon the question(s) the researcher is trying to answer. Thus, Yardley's criteria (2000) are meant to have an openness and flexibility to be applied to the various approaches used in qualitative research. In the following paragraphs I will go over how my research fits into these four principles. Then I will discuss my use of member checking to further test the validity of my findings.

The first criterion of sensitivity to context refers to the many contexts within research, such as the participants' socioeconomic status or the community being studied, the current literature of the topic being investigated, or physical objects and materials obtained during the investigation (Yardley, 2000). With my study, I demonstrate my orientation to a sensitivity to
the context by volunteering with Granton Community Gardeners before my fieldwork. This process is covered in more detail in the Reflexivity section. In short, by volunteering early on, I began establishing relationships and sensitising myself to the Granton neighbourhoods and the Granton Community Gardeners' culture. This sensitivity is further demonstrated throughout this thesis, particularly in the Methodology chapter, where I would change my research procedures to accommodate the garden volunteers' needs and culture. A sensitivity also carried over into my data analysis. Smith et al. (2009) describe that IPA analysis shows sensitivity by how the researcher treats the data and immerses themselves into it. During the writing up, numerous verbatim extracts support their analytical claims. Indeed, in the Findings chapter, I use multiple exact participant quotes and extracts of my participant observations. I use these excerpts from more than one garden volunteer to support my findings that identity work is being performed in the garden. A volunteer’s power and role in the garden positively and negatively impact their garden experience and is supported by excerpts during writing. Thus, sensitivity to context is demonstrated throughout this study in more than one way.

The second principle, commitment and rigour, has some overlap with the first principle of sensitivity to context. I will discuss commitment first and then rigour. An IPA analysis shows commitment through the researcher's attention when interviewing or having casual conversations. This attention to the participant(s) helps gather more detailed data by making participants comfortable (Smith et al., 2009). While this principle seems similar to the first principle and in IPA, this can be the case. However, as Smith et al. (2009) state, “[f]or some elements of the research process, a demonstration of commitment can be synonymous with a demonstration of sensitivity to context” (p. 181). During my research, a demonstration of
sensitivity to context did overlap with a demonstration of commitment. Before and during my fieldwork, I took many steps ensuring my participant would be comfortable around me and with my presence in the garden. I regularly sought input from Edward (my gatekeeper) while developing my data collection techniques, gaining participant consent and other aspects of this research. I would then use his feedback to create a better an approach and data collection sensitive to the garden's culture and its volunteers. It took a considerable amount of time and a commitment to sensitivity and my potential participants to achieve a workable solution. The steps I mentioned above are covered in greater detail in the previous sections of this Methodology chapter, particularly in the Ethics and Data Collection sections.

The next part of the second principle is rigour. My study demonstrated a detailed write-up on my results in the Findings chapters and the commitment described above. Creating a data collection and analysis that respects my participants is appropriate for my research question, and ethically responsible requires considerable rigour. Additionally, I provided detailed examples from my fieldnotes to support my claims from the garden during the findings. I also drew from related literature to further support my assertions in the Findings chapters. Thus, rigour and commitment go hand-in-hand. To show accuracy, the researcher must commit to their participants, gather detailed data, and present their findings well supported by quotes from participants and existing literature.

The third principle Yardley (2000), presents transparency and coherence and is most often judged at the level of presentation of the research. This principle is about the quality of the narrative, not just in the clarity of findings but also in constructing the study's story from beginning to end. This research project's narrative includes the fit of the methods to the
research question(s) and reflexivity (Yardley, 2000). While it is still to be determined if I fulfilled this criterion until it has undergone examination, I have spoken to many of these criteria in the current Methodology chapter. I have attempted to construct my research project in chronological order (for coherence), including all the choices I have made and why those choices were made. Further, beyond presenting an orderly account of my research, I strove to present a clear understanding and picture of the Granton Community Gardeners' daily lives and how the volunteers are impacted by their time in the garden. Upon reflection of this principle, I do feel that I have succeeded in making my research transparent and coherent.

Finally, Yardley (2000) states that impact and importance is “the decisive criterion by which any piece of research must be judged” (p. 223). While this is arguably the most important criteria she presents, she believes there are various ways to demonstrate usefulness. Some ways to show valuableness include a practical implication to the group studied, a theoretical and methodological contribution, or a suggested policy change (Yardley, 2000). This research contributes a novel conceptual framework to the academic literature by using Doreen Massey and symbolic interactionism to conceptualise community garden space and investigate its impacts. The usefulness and contributions of this research are covered in more detail in the Conclusions chapter.

Besides the principles described in the above paragraphs, I used member checking to confirm my research's trustworthiness. In qualitative research, there is a danger that the researcher will impose their own bias and take over the participants voice (Mason, 2017). One of the most significant ways to ensure the accuracy and trustworthiness of qualitative research findings is member checking (Doyle, 2007). According to Lincoln & Guba (1985), member
checking is when the researcher verifies if their interpretation and presentation of the research findings are accurate from the member’s perspective. To achieve this verification during my research, I took my data analysis to Edward, who would also bring it to other key garden members. I sent him a list of the threads I found with an example of each one taken from my fieldnotes. I asked Edward to provide his input on whether he thought these were accurate threads and illustrations of those threads. Edward was also informed that he was could also share these with other key volunteers or staff to confirm the accuracy of my interpretations. After a week or so, Edward contacted me, saying there was a consensus that these threads and their respective examples were accurate to some of their observations during their time with Granton Community Gardeners.

Further, there were no issues with continuing with these threads and examples. The only concern that was brought forth at this point was that anyone who has spent a considerable time in the garden would most likely be able to identify the volunteers I discussed despite having given them pseudonyms. However, it was also admitted that it was probably unavoidable with so few volunteers that year. This situation led me to some reflexive thinking and discussions with my supervisors about better hiding and protecting my participants' identities. Given the smaller population and their familiarity with each other, my supervisors and I decided that we could also delay making the thesis public. As a result, some of the recorded interactions may fade in memory to be less likely that a participant will be identified. In summary, using the principles, sensitivity to context, commitment and rigour, transparency and coherence, and impact and importance set forth by Yardley (2000) combined with member
checking, I have demonstrated that my research has aimed for a high standard and trustworthiness.

5.10 Limitations.

This research set out to investigate and share the impacts the interactions, both social and nonhuman, in the Granton Community Gardeners’ community garden had on its volunteers. This research, as with all research, has its limitations. The following paragraphs will cover this research's limits, including research population, data collection, and generalisability.

This research took place over five months (May – September) in 2018. The original plan was for data collection to cover an entire growing season which would have run for seven months (April – September). Unfortunately, the ethics approval process delayed the initial plan to enter the field in April as I sought to justify my consent process to accommodate the community's needs, I would be a part of and studying. The means of consent and approval was covered in more detail in the Ethics section. This noting of the ethics approval is not a critique of the approval process. Instead, it helps point out that this delay may have impacted my research population's size. The summer of 2018 was unusually hot and dry, but the spring (April and May of my proposed fieldwork) was much more accommodating for working in the gardens. As such, the number of volunteers was closer to normal levels of approximately 12 per day. Whereas during the summer months of 2018 (June, July and August), the number of volunteers was about half.

While this small population may seem to be a limitation, it is a fair number for my research as it is an ethnographic study that focuses on a group of people (large or small) or a specific case (or cases) (Punch & Oancea, 2014). Further, Reid et al. (2005) found in their
introduction to IPA that on the higher end of the sample size recommendations was 10 participants. Additionally, they found the mean population size to be 15 participants at the time of their publication.

Another limitation of this study was the decision to move from semi-structured interviews to casual conversations as a form of interviewing. This change was made in response to the community culture towards authority, and the justification for this change is covered in chapter 3, Research Site Context, under subsections 3.2 and 3.3. Despite this change, there is the opportunity for future research to use this data collection technique to gather a deeper understanding of the data or discover different findings. Further, while Granton Community Gardeners do not have a lot of archival data or documents, the small amount they do have could be combined with other community gardens’ archival data in Edinburgh or greater Scotland. This combined data could be used for future research on community gardens. For example, my study used historical data, as cited, to inform subsection 3.4 History of Granton and Granton Community Gardeners. However, since my data collection ended, Granton Community Gardeners have proposed community projects that cover the history and changing landscape of the Granton area. These projects could lend themselves as good data sources to provide even more context to the future site or community garden research.

5.11 Summary

My ethnographic research investigated a community garden in the Granton area of Edinburgh. Granton Community Gardeners have been operating since 2010, and now they run two sizeable community-maintained gardens and help with 12 neighbourhood gardens. Before and during my research, I was aware that the group might be suffering from research fatigue.
To adjust for this fatigue and be sensitive to the group's culture, I made adjustments to gain consent and collected data. For five months during the summer of 2018, I collected data through participant observations and casual conversations while working in the garden alongside the volunteers. Then, I analysed the data using a modified IPA approach to analysis. Typically, IPA has six steps in their process.

Nevertheless, as it is a flexible approach depending on the researcher’s aims, I adjusted to having only five steps since I did not have more than one case. To help demonstrate my data analysis's trustworthiness, I used Yardley's (2000) four criteria to help ensure my interpretations were valid and trustworthy. I further used member checking once I had threads determined from my data. I did this by summarising the seven threads with a prime example of each thread and sending this to Edward to provide feedback on my threads. The threads were confirmed to be accurate interpretations of the interactions within the garden.

As mentioned at the onset of this chapter, I approached my fieldwork guided only by my overarching question: How do both their social and nonhuman interactions impact the community garden volunteers?

I asked more questions about the threads I found in the data through reflexive practices and data analysis. As a result, I came to two further questions: How are the community garden volunteers performing identity work in the garden? How do power and the garden roles the volunteers have impact their experiences in the garden? At this stage in my research, my revised research questions are:

1. How do both their social and nonhuman interactions impact the community garden volunteers?
a. How are the community garden volunteers performing identity work in the garden?

b. How do power and the garden roles the volunteers have impact their experiences in the garden?

At the beginning of this research process, the current revised research questions were outside the first part of the literature review scope. So, as explained in Chapter 2, Literature Review, I went back to the literature and looked for concepts that help answer in detail the above questions that are novel to community garden research. With these research questions and my conceptual framework using Doreen Massey’s conceptualization of space and place, and power-geometries combined with symbolic interactionism, I analysed the data through an IPA lens. The following two chapters cover my findings under the threads of Identity, and Power and Organizational Roles, respectively.
Chapter 6: Findings – Identity

6.1 Chapter Overview

This research used an ethnographic approach and an inductive analysis of field notes described in the Methodology chapter. My analysis found seven threads: 1) inclusion, 2) the gardeners versus an other, 3) connection outside the garden, 4) identity, 5) relationships between gardeners, 6) power and organisational roles, and 7) the human – nonhuman interactions. These threads are broad, include multiple different interactions between the volunteers, and often overlap. It is beyond this study's scope to entirely capture all intricacies and complexities between each of these threads. I have therefore chosen the most prominent and underpinning threads – Identity and Power and Organisational Roles - to consider in-depth. This research aimed to answer my central research question: How do their social and non-human interactions influence the community garden participants. As explained in the next paragraph, I found that two of these threads, Identity and Power and Organisational Roles, best answered this research question. Within my data, I found that these two threads provided the most substantial evidence to understand how their interactions within the garden influenced the garden volunteers.

Further, I chose these two areas as they were the most prominent during my analysis, appearing in my participant observation notes 33 and 28 times, respectively. Also, these two threads overlapped with other threads and each other most often, demonstrating the relational aspect of the data and my research’s conceptualisation of space as an active entanglement of multiple trajectories and histories, including the non-human, as described in the Conceptual Framework chapter. The current chapter presents the two threads separately, with a
description of each thread before providing vignettes about the volunteers who best demonstrated the respective thread's examples. 11 vignettes are used across three key exemplars for the Identity thread. They involve six volunteers (all with pseudonyms). The Power and Organisational Roles thread presents seven vignettes for the Granton Community Gardeners as a group and involves ten garden volunteers. These vignettes are presented along with the literature to provide conceptual support. For the Identity thread, I use Blumer’s concepts of line of action (self-object and blind spot), joint action, and sense of group position. Blumer’s ideas are supported by Cooley’s looking-glass self and Mead’s generalized other as needed. I also use Massey’s concept of “throwntogetherness” (p. 140) when discussing the volunteer Jay’s identity. I use Massey’s ideas on place (‘throwntogetherness’), space, and power-geometries during the second thread of Power and Organisational Roles. Each thread ends with a synthesis of what was discussed.

Due to this research's relational approach, some volunteers may appear in both threads, and the respective vignettes as no volunteer appeared in only one thread. This aims to demonstrate that while the volunteers share one thread, they experience it in different ways, attempting to show both the idiographic and nomothetic aspects of the data. These interactions are brought to light and explained using Doreen Massey’s conceptualisation of space and place and Blumer’s theory of Symbolic Interactionism. Blumer’s work is further supported by Cooley’s and Mead’s ideas, as described in the Conceptual Framework (Chapter 3).
6.2 Identity

Identity is the first theme analysed in these Findings chapters. Garden organisers and local councils need to create policies and spaces conducive to this identity work. As will be demonstrated, identity is connected to our self-esteem and how we position ourselves in the social world. When individuals feel comfortable with who they are and their place in the world, they are more likely to participate in their communities. Throughout this chapter and the following chapters, I refer to the process of the volunteers constructing or maintaining their identities as identity work. Watson (2008) conceptualises identity work to be:

the mutually constitutive process whereby people strive to shape a relatively coherent and distinctive notion of personal self-identity and struggle to come to terms with and, within limits, to influence the various social-identities which pertain to them in the various milieux in which they live their lives (p. 129).

What this means in the context of my research is that the volunteers are working through a mutual process to maintain and build identities of how they see themselves in their own minds (self-identity) combined with how they interpret others want them to be (social-identities). This definition matches the symbolic interactionism I use as they believed identity has an internal looking and outward-facing component. The concepts of identity I use were described in the Conceptual Framework chapter.

Through 11 vignettes (one for Oliver, seven for Jay and three for the Granton Community Gardeners group), this chapter analyses the production and reproduction of identities in the garden using Symbolic Interactionism (SI) through Blumer’s ideas of line of action (self-object and blind spot), joint action, and sense of group position and supported by
Cooley’s looking-glass self and Mead’s the generalized other. Herman-Kinney & Reynolds (1994) position SI as a theory that describes how people are acting upon the world rather than just being acted upon by it. This research uses Blumer’s (1986) belief that we act towards physical (inanimate objects), social (people) and abstract (intangible concepts) objects. Blumer has three premises: 1) that we only act on objects that have meaning for us, 2) these interactions give rise to a meaning, and 3) that meaning is continually being negotiated and modified based upon our interactions. Blumer’s view of meaning and self allows for the observation and interpretation of the volunteers interacting with each other as well as the non-human (plants and physical space in this study). Further, since our world is made up of joint action – where individual actions cross with other peoples’ actions so that they fit together (Azarian, 2017), also called the “collective act” (Becker, 1988, p. 17) – which are in turn made up of individual interactions we can investigate the individual concerning joint action (Becker, 1988).

Some volunteers were trying to construct their identity based on their garden interactions. In one instance, the interactions outside and inside the garden were connected. The section on the volunteer Jay goes into more depth on his identity work. In this chapter, I will be discussing how two of the volunteers, Oliver and then Jay, are either maintaining an identity or constructing one. After presenting the volunteers, I will look at the identity of the whole group of Granton Community Gardeners and its relationship with the volunteers’ identities. These different applications of SI on identity provide multiple and deeper understandings of how identity construction and maintenance happen within the garden. This
new knowledge helps to understand better how the garden volunteers’ interactions influence their identity work so that garden organisers or managers can be aware of it.

6.2.1 Oliver

Oliver is an example of how the volunteers construct or maintain their identity in their work with the garden.

When I met Oliver in 2016, I was just starting to volunteer in the garden, and he was working on a small building job in the corner lot garden. Over the next couple of years and during my field observations, these are the tasks Oliver would do in the garden. While he’ll take part in watering or planting on occasion, he’s mostly doing small building or construction projects. He goes so far as to say he’s not a gardener and doesn’t identify as one of the gardeners. As such, when the group is referred to as “gardeners” he doesn’t include himself in it. But instead includes himself if you call the group “volunteers”. This identity is tied to his working history, where he’s mostly been in manufacturing or building types of professions. His wife does the gardening at home, and he builds her things for their garden.

(Field Notes – 26th May 2018)

Oliver’s resistance to being called a gardener rather than a volunteer demonstrates a different perspective on identity in the garden. Viewing mine and Oliver’s interactions as Blumer suggested, we must consider that our interactions have a ‘career’ or a history regarding what each of us brings to the exchange. The interaction has a history – what we discussed before talking about his past careers and how we acted, our gestures, eye contact, and many other things during our interactions. This ‘career’ helps inform our line of action we will take with
each other (Blumer, 1966). As such, it is important to know that Oliver, before retirement, was a blue-collar worker with jobs ranging from manufacturing to construction. Oliver has always worked with his hands, in some fashion, to build or put together things. For example, he was part of the crew that erected the James Clerk Maxwell statue at the end of George Street in Edinburgh and worked at a manufacturing plant in Granton that burned down in the 1990s. So, he has built an identity in line with those professions. Changing that identity more towards a gardener or incorporating being a gardener may challenge the traditional, more male-oriented mentality within those professions. Although Oyserman et al. (2012) suggest that our identity is fluid and adjusts with the situation and context, Oliver does not seem to be the case.

Oliver appears to be resisting this fluidity of identity within the garden context. So engrained is Oliver’s identity that no longer being in the working environment, there is nothing to keep that part of his identity in the forefront. So, he resists potentially giving up that part of his identity. Blumer (1986) used the concept of ‘self-object’ (an object to ourselves), which allows us to respond to and interpret actions towards us. According to Blumer, the ‘self’ is a process allowing for interactions and resistance to an aspect of identity. In Oliver’s case, he is resisting the role of his ‘self’ in the garden as a gardener.

Another way to look at Oliver’s rejection of the gardener identity is by seeing him as an object with its (his) meaning (identity) being constructed by me. In their conversations with Blumer, Morriere & Farberman (1981) discuss that an object is anything that we indicate towards (point out or refer to) and that an object can be physical, social or abstract (Blumer, 1986). In the above interaction, Oliver is an object, as indicated by me. As the vignette above
discusses, I would include Oliver in the group of “gardeners” and thus give him the identity of a gardener. However, as Blumer (1986) mentions, these objects can act back on us and impact how we interpret the interaction and social situation. As a self-object (with the ability to view ourselves as an object), Oliver was pushing back on the meaning of gardener being given to him (Blumer, 1966). This resistance is seen here through the process of self-indication (Blumer, 1966), with a reflexive interpretation of indications, where Oliver is thinking internally about his interpretation of how I was indicating towards him. Then deciding how or if he would adjust his line of action. In this case, Oliver chose not to change, attempting to maintain his current identity as a builder. By not changing his line of action Oliver is, in essence, making me (and the other volunteers) to do the same reflexive process and decide how or if we will change our line of action towards him. The more he resists the other volunteers’ indications, the volunteers, will have to choose to accept this resistance or and no longer consider ‘gardener’ as part of who he is.

Fearson (as cited in Beames et al., 2018) discusses how personal identity can contain personal attributes or achievements. Challenging these personal attributes or accomplishments through our interactions can lead to a loss of self-respect or self-esteem (Beames et al., 2018). If Oliver accepts this new identity of a gardener, he could lose his current identity of a volunteer as a builder. This loss of identity could potentially lead to a loss of confidence and self-esteem. Perry (2007), through her use of Blumer’s group position model, described the security of our individual and group identities as a “sense of ontological security” (p. 378), a sense of security of who we are and how we fit into the social world as we see it. In essence, challenging one’s identity is to challenge one’s place in the social world. With Oliver, this is not challenged
often in the garden except when the group is collectively called gardeners, and he responds with “I’m not a gardener”. Having your identity challenged in the garden would create a negative experience. In that moment and possibly for some time in the future, the garden would represent a negative space. Therefore, garden organisers must understand that identity construction is not always readily apparent. Sometimes, the subtle phrases uttered by participants demonstrate to us that identity work is happening. If garden organisers can recognise this identity work, they can record this type of interaction and help justify to funders why a garden is vital to the community members.

Oliver’s interactions with the non-human also lend to his attempts at maintaining his identity as a builder. Blumer (1986) provides a theory to examine how we construct identities through our interactions and how we ascribe meaning to those we interact with. Blumer (ibid) categorises the objects we can interact with as physical (inanimate), social (other people) and abstract (intangible concepts or ideas). Within the garden, there are many objects to interact with and ascribe meaning to. However, this part of Oliver’s vignette notably demonstrated how he interacted with physical objects. In Oliver’s case, this is frequently the building tools (a heavier duty hammer or saw, for example), rather than the gardening tools that are either provided in the garden or brought with him. He does not often bring his tools unless there is a more substantial building project, such as the large communal dining table he built over the autumn and winter of 2018.

Through his previous career, Oliver has given meaning to these tools. These tools are often provided with a remarkably similar meaning by others, as most of our experiences with tools involve constructing something or watching someone build with them. As a result, we
generally have a shared meaning for the tools Oliver was using. The difference here is that for Oliver, these tools do not just hold meaning; they hold meaning concerning his identity as a builder, as described in the previous paragraph. By working primarily with these objects, he is reinforcing his projected identity. He is doing this visually; everyone can see that he uses tools and builds something with them. This activity is usually in contrast to what the other volunteers are doing in the garden simultaneously. Sometimes, other volunteers work with the plants (such as watering, planting, or harvesting). Other times people are just in the garden casually catching up on the latest life news. In these contrasting interactions, Oliver blatantly displays what he does in the garden and who he is. He is not a gardener; he is a builder, demonstrating how identity can be maintained or built in the garden space.

Oliver’s vignette demonstrates that one individual can be doing identity work in multiple ways while volunteering in the garden. In Oliver’s case, he is attempting to show he is a builder through two avenues – voicing his rejection of the gardener title through the process of self-indication and his predominant use of building tools in the garden. This kind of activity is essential for garden organisers to recognise and allow volunteers to perform multiple tasks. Further, understanding why an individual repeatedly says a statement, such as, “I’m not a gardener”, and trying to reduce the use of rejected terms (within limits, of course) can make a space more comfortable and approachable. These interactions are important because they offer a more in-depth look at how people use their time in the garden and its space. These types of interactions are often overlooked by observers and therefore left out when describing the importance of the garden, particularly in funding applications.
Nevertheless, these are the stories that the volunteers discuss. Oliver would often point out the different things in the garden he had built. This research cannot say if Oliver would find other spaces or activities to reinforce his builder identity. However, the study can say that a garden is essential for Oliver to maintain his identity.

6.2.2 Jay

I first met Jay when I began volunteering with Granton Community Gardeners in 2016. I would describe him as a “character” who cracks lots of jokes (many not child-friendly). Jay has a thick Scottish accent and strong opinions but also a gentle manner and a cheeky smile. During my field research, the amount of time I spent in the garden increased, and the layers and depth of Jay’s identity emerged. He is very willing to help, but at the same time, can be a part of ongoing tensions within the garden while asserting his identity. These tensions are varied. They range from Jay not taking orders well to his sometimes inappropriate behaviour with the children and young people in the garden, as demonstrated in the following field note excerpt:

The Tuesday night meal was another success; this is the second one without Edward or Matthew. The garden seems to be a very popular place to hold our community meals, as they are well attended here. The really nice weather this summer has also been helpful in getting people to come out. As usual, I helped set up the tables, chairs, and in Matthew’s absence, I prepared some of the food. Louise helped organise everything and shuttle food from the community centre to the garden, and Nancy cooked and served the food. With the weather being so warm and nice lately, there were a lot of families that came to this meal. With all the kids around, Louise usually has some sort of activity ready for them to do when they aren’t entertaining themselves playing with the other children. But today,
she hadn’t had time to get anything ready. So, the kids went about their business making marble runs in the sand with odds and ends found in the garden and/or playing with some of the sports equipment left in the garden. Jay really seems to enjoy working with the kids and does so whenever he has the chance. After eating, he spent the rest of his time there playing with the kids. There is a partially deflated rubber ball in the garden, and most of the kids were tossing it back-and-forth. It appeared that the game, in essence, was that you tossed the ball to another person over a short distance and they had to catch it. If you caught it, you got to toss the ball. If you didn’t catch it someone else got to throw. At one point during the game, Jay tossed the ball to a young teenage girl, and when she dropped the ball, he said: “careful handling the balls” then laughed a little. The girl gave him a strange look, to which he responded with “keep it clean, I know what you’re thinking” followed by another laugh. Louise had overheard this exchange and later went and talked to Jay about it. She reminded him that while he’s really good with the kids and that we are happy he works them; he has to stop with the adult content and innuendos. This conversation upset Jay, and he left the meal.

(Field Notes – 21st August 2018)

Blumer (1966) discusses that we all have a self through which we meet and interact with the world helping form our identity. Therefore, this self and our identity is not a set structure; instead, it is an ongoing process of always becoming. Also, as seen in the vignette about Oliver above, Blumer (1986) believes that we can be objects to ourselves, self-objects, with which we can also interact. These concepts of our identity that is always becoming and being self-objects means that we have reflexivity in our interactions as we examine how we change over time.
This reflexivity implies that we are not just reacting to an indication from others but instead actively interpreting and thinking of our actions. In the case of Jay, this means he is actively interpreting indications from those around him and adjusting his line of action. However, as seen in the above vignette, Jay is not necessarily particularly good at interpreting the indications being made towards him, which is possible, according to Blumer (Morrione & Farberman, 1981b).

During Blumer’s conversations with Morrione & Farberman (1981a), he describes the process that Jay is going through. Jay continually works with the kids without getting the desired outcome and getting into trouble instead. Jay’s behaviour is an example of what Blumer calls a “blind spot” (p. 290). This blind spot prevents Jay from seeing himself from the outside, how others are interpreting his actions. As a result, he gets stuck in a loop trying to work with the kids unsuccessfully. Throughout my research, I found that the tension between Jay and the garden volunteers increased with each unsuccessful attempt to work with kids in the garden. While he would vent his frustrations towards one or two individuals, typically those who confronted him about the incident, his frustrations seemed to encapsulate all the volunteers and even the garden space itself. I noticed this a couple of times in my visits following confrontations. For example:

*Today while working in the garden, I saw Jay walk very quickly past the garden. He didn’t even glance in our direction, and later I didn’t see him at the community meal either.*

(Field Notes – 28th August 2018)
Then again:

*This is the second Tuesday that I saw Jay just walk quickly past the garden. But this time he greeted me with a wave only. He didn’t come to the community meal again.*

(Field Notes – 4th September 2018)

Jay’s trouble with discovering his “blind spot” has made it so that he did not return to the garden, a place where he previously seemed to enjoy his time. However, these “blind spot” interactions involved other people. The way social interaction works is that the others must continually interpret the indication made towards them to interpret it accurately. Either people misinterpreted Jay’s indications or chose a line of action that did not help him continue to want to come to the garden. During my fieldwork, I never heard about or witnessed anyone having a conversation with Jay about finding alternative things to do in the garden to continue to have a presence there. When there is a failure in the interpretive process of interactions, communication breaks down, and the interaction falls apart. Managers or organisers of community gardens should be aware of this even if there is a possible reason for the misinterpretation of the indications, as might be the case with Jay.

During my data collection, it was revealed to me that Jay had a traumatic head injury from before his time volunteering in the garden. The exact nature of the injury was never detailed to me. However, based on my fieldwork, I found that the injury plays a role in how Jay interacts with people and views himself. Much of the current literature (Beadle et al., 2016; Berman, 2016; Horowitz, 2018; Ylvisaker et al., 2008) discusses how the impacts of trauma on identity are complicated and how trauma can interfere with our social relations. However, within this complex relationship, one possible issue is how negatively affected identity can be
after a traumatic event. The above vignette is one of the multiple times Jay plays with or entertains the children and young people within the garden. From the discussion in the above paragraph on “blind spots”, it seems that Jay has misinterpreted things, feeling that the volunteers in the garden did not think he should help with the kids in the garden or that he would not be helpful in this role. Jay’s interpretation of what others want him to do is further demonstrated by a conversation Louise and I had in July:

Louise and I were alone in the garden for about an hour after lunch today. She informed me that she considered me a ‘professional’ volunteer and wanted to talk about one of the volunteer’s behaviour. We discussed that Jay had been talked to about his behaviour with the kids multiple times. So, she wanted to get the volunteers some Protecting Vulnerable Groups (PVG) training, especially Jay, so that they know how to work with those groups. She said he is always so good with the kids initially but that he often oversteps boundaries. He works with the kids in the garden as often as he can.

(Field Notes – 10th July 2018)

In the vignettes above, Jay felt that he was supposed to entertain and play with the kids. However, at the same time, his “blind spot” in the interpretation of the indications made to him ended up causing some issues in the garden.

We can explore Jay’s inability to interpret the indications made towards him more deeply through Cooley’s (1983) concept of the looking-glass self. The looking-glass self is when an individual visualises how they appear to others and what judgement the other people we are interacting with are making about them (Cooley, 1983). That individual then can choose to adopt that view others have of them (Franks & Gecas, 1992). Cooley believed that people
would balance adopting others’ imaginations of us by rejecting another person’s image. This balance would create continuity and stability in our sense of self (Franks & Gecas, 1992). Perry (2007) describes identity as creating an ontological sense of security in the world. However, I do not believe that we cannot have a sense of security without some sort of continuity within our identity. Without this sense of security of our place in this world, we would constantly search for this sense of position in our lives. This instability can be seen with teenagers, who are dressed in dark gothic clothing one week, and the next to have given up on the gothic look. They are searching for their place and identity. They are unable to imagine how others are seeing them correctly. I view Jay’s interactions in the garden in the same light – he is unable to understand how others view him in the garden adequately.

Cooley (1983) explains how imagining ourselves in another’s mind helps ground us in the world. He states as much when he says, “To be normal, to be at home in the world, with a prospect of power, imaginative insight into other minds that underlies tact and savoir-faire, mortality and beneficence” (p. 205). As discussed in the above paragraph, having this sense of normality or stability provides a sense of place and security in this world (Perry, 2007). This security is discussed in more detail in the Granton Community Gardeners subsection. However, with this example of Jay, if we think of this stability or normality oppositely, then not having it would be unnerving and possibly lead to feeling uncomfortable with your place in this world. Indeed Cooley (1983) says as much when discussing what happens when the social influences overwhelm us, “they overbear him so that he appears to be not himself, posing, out of function” (p. 205). I imagine this overbearing feeling would cause an individual to continually search for this stability, as I know I would. This behaviour is what I saw with Jay. He could not
adequately absorb the social influences into his sense of self (identity), possibly because of his traumatic injury. This lack of absorption of influences led to an instability in what he thought his identity should be.

This identity Jay is trying to show us becomes an issue when he crosses the line with inappropriate behaviour, as demonstrated in the 21st August vignette when he makes an improper comment to one of the kids. The following vignette shows another discussion with Jay about the same topic of his behaviour.

*Jay must have had another incident because, near the end of the day, Matthew had a talk with him about having contact with the kids in the garden. Matthew explained that he’s not to touch (including hands-on the shoulders) or pick up the kids. Jay gets upset and starts defending himself and arguing against this, but I can’t hear all of what he is saying. Matthew tries to explain that it’s not just Jay that has to follow these rules, but every adult in the garden has to follow these rules. Jay got really upset and defensive in both posture and language. I’m surprised Jay didn’t yell, but he did swear at Matthew. Jay ended the conversation abruptly by walking out of the garden. After Matthew had left Louise confided in me about some of Jay’s medical history. We talked about how to handle this so that Jay can still work with the kids without feeling singled out about his behaviour.*

(Field Notes – 10th July 2018)

As shown by the vignettes on Jay, he was talked to more than once about his behaviour. However, the result was always the same – he leaves and often does not come back or attend any garden-related events for a while. Nevertheless, if he is trying to show us this is his identity,
and each time is talked to about how he is not doing it right, Jay could be interpreting that we are rejecting his identity. This rejection would lead him to experience negative emotions (Burke & Stets, 2009) and result in the actions described in the vignettes and not returning to the garden after some time.

The point that Jay is trying to present (reflect?) the identity he feels people want him to have is not just demonstrated through his work with the kids in the garden. He also frequently talks about doing things with his niece, especially in the weeks leading up to going to visit her, as demonstrated in the following field note:

*Today was another hot and sunny day. Our main task for the day was to get water for the plants; many are showing signs of a lack of water. We all show a bit of wear from the heat. Jay, Louise, and I have taken our time to start work so that we can avoid the sun. As we are waiting, Jay starts talking about his plans next week. “I’m going to see my niece next week. She’s a cheeky little shit. My sister blames me for her misbehaviour. But I always back my sister’s rules, so my niece probably learns it from her.” Jay goes on talking about how excited he is to see his niece and how he loves her cheeky behaviour.*

(Field Notes – 7th July 2018)

Jay interprets or misinterprets, through conversations, how the volunteers want him to work with the kids and were attempting to influence his identity. However, this gets confounded whenever he gets reprimanded for his inappropriate behaviour. It is important to be aware that some garden volunteers might be experiencing their time in the garden and constructing their identity in ways similar to Jay. By understanding these situations, organisers can work to ensure
that interactions do not breakdown and work with the volunteers to keep them wanting to come to the garden.

According to Blumer (1986), our actions lead to shaping our identity and, according to Cooley (1983), are reflections of what we interpret others to think of us. The audience around us shapes them at that moment. Mead's (2015) concept of the generalized other helps explain how our audience influences how we act. The generalized other is an organised social or community group involved in the process or activity in which an individual is engaged (Mead, 2015). Through the process of an individual absorbing the shared attitudes of the generalized other and then adjusting their actions, one can help “achieve a sense of self [identity] within the social” (Dodds et al., 1997, p. 485).

We see with Jay that he is unable to see the common attitudes and actions of the generalized other (e.g., the Granton Community Gardeners as a group) in relation to how to interact with kids in the garden appropriately. As described in the conceptual framework chapter and the paragraph above, a person must recognise the generalized other and the common attitudes and norms of that other before incorporating them into that individual’s experience to adjust their actions. Once the generalized other is recognised, and a person has chosen to assume those attitudes, they become part of the generalized other. To engage in this process, you have to see things from another person’s perspective and interpret their actions to adjust your actions accordingly (Dodds et al., 1997). Jay either does not see from the generalized other’s perspective or chooses not to adjust his action to become part of the group. From the data and the research on traumatic injuries (Beadle et al., 2016; Berman, 2016; Horowitz, 2018; Ylvisaker et al., 2008), Jay’s traumatic injury may cause some disruption to his
ability to identify the generalized other properly and the related attitudes and norms. No matter the reason why he does not adequately recognise the generalized other, this lack of recognition or refusal to “join” the generalized other repeatedly causes tension through his inappropriate interactions with kids in the garden.

Another possible interpretation of Jay’s interactions is that two generalized others are playing into his choice of actions. In work by Dodds et al. (1997), they insinuate that there are more than one generalized other in their comment, “By assuming the role of the Generalized Other, the person becomes able to participate in different aspects of organized social life” (p. 498). Having more than one social group influencing our actions makes sense, as most of us spend time with more than one group. Holdsworth & Morgan (2007) supported the idea of multiple generalised others who applied this concept to leaving home and found that family, neighbourhood communities, and age groups all could be classed as a generalized other. In Jay’s case, the data points to two groups, the Granton Community Gardeners and his sister’s family. From this information, it is reasonable to interpret that Jay may be confusing the Granton Community Gardeners with the other generalized other, his family. As pointed out in the 7th July field note vignette on page 137, Jay visits his niece and takes care of her occasionally. When he is with his sister’s family, taking care of his niece is a common attitude for that generalized other. Jay may be mixing the attitudes of the two generalized others and as a result, tensions arise in the garden when he fails to conceive of his expectations as a part of that community.

Unlike Oliver, who regularly interacted with his construction tools, Jay did not have specific non-human objects that he interacted with regularly. Instead, his interactions with the
non-human were indirectly part of his social interactions in the garden. This research does not attempt to give agency to non-human or non-living objects. Nevertheless, as Blumer (1986) says, the empirical world “talks back” (p.22) to us in the sense that the empirical world can resist our conceptions of it. Remember here that Blumer says our empirical world consists of objects, such as people, material things, or more abstract ideas. Other authors discuss how objects also influence how we conceive of space and, by extension, our identity (Burke & Stets, 2009; Mayerfeld Bell, 1997; R. W. Smith & Bugni, 2006). I would conceive things such as the weather as an object since it manifests as things we can feel (rain, snow, heat, cold) and things that are more conceptual or untouchable (clouds, atmospheric winds, air). Through this conception of weather as an object, we can start to see how these objects play into Jay’s identity. In the following vignette, you can see how both the hot weather and, by extension, the water play a role in setting the situation for Jay to work with kids again.

*It’s been hot so far this summer (at least by Scottish standards) and today is no exception. The new and soon to be main garden has no water tap. So, we have to either borrow water from somewhere else or rely on rainwater. After a failed attempt to use the inside tap in the nursery behind the garden, the community centre’s janitor said we could attach a hose to their outside tap. But it’s a slow process of filling one large wheely bin and then shuttling buckets of water to other wheely bins spread throughout the garden. We decided that if we could get the kids to help us shuttle water between bins that would be simultaneously filling multiple bins by having the hose in one bin to fill it and at the same time fill buckets to be shuttled around. Luckily it was a hot day, and the kids were game for helping us. The hose just barely reached the closest bin so Jay said he*
would hold the hose in place while the rest of us shuttled buckets. After a bit, Jay decided to challenge the kids to a game of “cat and mouse”, where they would have to try to fill their bucket without getting sprayed by the hose. He would often spray them before they even got to the bin and resulted in very wet kids. While there were a few adults who got unwillingly drug [brought] into the game, the kids seemed to love it. They laughed and giggled playfully.

(Field Notes – 3rd July 2018)

The weather and water (particularly if we view them as objects) played a role in shaping Jay’s identity. Without the hot weather causing us to water the plants, this scenario would not have happened.

Through all the above vignettes, it is apparent that Jay enjoys playing with the kids. He wants to work with them and appears to default to this during community activities or kids in the garden. This desire to work with kids, combined with the apparent interpretation of how the other garden volunteers see him, has led Jay to present the identity of someone who works well with kids in the garden. Following Blumer’s thoughts on joint action from Azarian’s (2017) paper, joint action has a history or career, as Blumer calls it. This idea means all interactions have a history of who was in the interaction and a history of what we bring to the interactions from previous similar interactions. Massey (2005) has a similar thought in her views of ‘place’, interactions, and ‘throwntogetherness’ (this is discussed and applied in more detail later in the Power and Organisational Roles chapter is brought in here as it partially relates to Blumer’s ideas discussed). ‘Throwntogetherness’ is about how in our interactions, we bring with us our history of past interactions (this includes broader cultural and historical contexts as they relate
to an individual’s interactions), which impacts our identities and how space and place are given meaning. Jay’s personal and medical history may affect the formation of his identity in the garden and how he views that space. This means that the other garden volunteers, the socio-economic status of the residents of the Granton area, the development of Edinburgh and the many other factors that ‘indicate’, as Blumer (1986) says, towards Jay and have an impact on his identity. It is a complicated process.

The two vignettes focusing on Jay and Oliver demonstrate that their interactions influence the volunteers’ identities in the garden in more than one way. While both vignettes are about identity, it is clear that different individuals manifest identity differently. This chapter’s vignettes show how a shared experience can impact people differently through the manifestation of their identity. While this research discusses, so far, how identity is revealed in the garden, it is not unfathomable that other impacts on garden volunteers are also demonstrated differently for different individuals. Knowing these various manifestations of community gardens’ impacts is important for garden organisers to know so that they may better accommodate more diverse people and more accurately report the garden's influence.

6.2.3 Granton Community Gardeners

The central tenet of Blumer’s work is “joint action”. Joint action is when the lines of action of two or more individuals cross and fit together. Joint action is a fundamental unit of society and human group life (Blumer, 1966). Thus, groups are formed through joint action, and this process is ongoing. Stryker (2001) also discusses how both society and persons are derived from our social interactions—so extending both Blumer’s (1966) and Stryker’s (2001) ideas, we can say that our identity is formed through the same social interactional process as group
identity and society. Put another way, a complex combination of interactions with others contributes to individual identities, so too is the group identity created from a complex set of interactions with other groups, society, and other broader social groups. Blumer (1958) discussed the idea of human group interactions as positioning in relation to other groups and how one defines the other. Blumer uses these as a basis for exploring how a group identifies itself and the group’s identity. By looking at Oliver and Jay maintaining and forming their identities in the broader context of the joint action of the whole Granton Community Gardeners and how the group positions itself among the other Granton community groups, we can think about Jay and Oliver’s identities in relation to the identity of the Granton Community Gardeners group. We can also look at how the Granton Community Gardeners identify themselves.

Leap (2015) used a similar approach when analysing a national wildlife refuge's management and its meaning of space in Missouri. One of his conclusions was that socio-environmental processes impact the meaning of space. In other words, spaces and their meanings are co-constitutive related to interactions, identities, culture and politics (Gieryn, 2000; Leap, 2015). For the Granton Community Gardeners, this means that they have given meaning to their gardens. They have formed their identity in relation to each other, the other groups within the Granton area, the local politics and the history of Granton. The group’s relationship with other Granton area community groups appears in the threads ‘Connections Outside the Garden’ and ‘Gardeners Versus an Other’. The following vignettes show that these relationships with other organisations are positive and negative.
The gardeners get the use of the church kitchen for free to use for the community meals. Though today there was talk about how the clean-up may need to happen faster and that the group should make sure to put the tables back in the original positions better. The knitting group who uses the space (the open hall) after the community meal, had complained multiple times about the table set up and how the gardeners use the church space. This is a bit of a recurring issue between the groups.

(Field Notes 26th June 2018)

This short vignette indicates that the same positive relationship with the church staff allows the gardeners to use the kitchen and open hall for community meals and creates a strained relationship with another community group. To keep a more positive face to the community, they adjust what they are doing to accommodate others. These adjustments eventually led the gardeners to move the day of the community meals from Tuesday to Thursday to avoid conflict and allow both groups to serve the community, each in their way. Perry (2007) used Blumer’s group position model to investigate how white students have a sense of white universal identity. While her research was about racial group identity and prejudice, the same principles she uses can be applied to group identity in a general sense. Perry (2007) describes how Blumer’s sense of group position arises as a “process of collective definition, that is, interactive and communicative processes by which the dominant group defines itself, the subordinate group, and the relations between them” (p. 377). Initially, it was difficult to determine which group, the knitting group or Granton Community Gardeners, is dominant or subordinate. Nevertheless, this was a recurring conflict and related to another conversation where the knitting group was referred to as “a group of old ladies” with a bit of condescendence in their
tone. I would say that Granton Community Gardeners was trying to position themselves as the dominant, or at least the more important, group of the two.

The following short vignette shows that the relationship between two organisations can move from good to strained relations.

_Matthew and Nancy discuss how to cook the meals in the garden, as the church is having work done to it and they won’t be able to use the church kitchen for 4 weeks. Nancy thinks the community centre might let them use their kitchen to cook and prep even though they don’t always like us using the dining space in the evenings; which I found strange as when I first started to volunteer the group used the kitchen and dining space of the community centre for the meals. It was mentioned that the community centre didn’t like having staff stay after hours for the meals._

(Field Notes 31st July 2018)

Blumer (1986) supports this idea that the relations between groups change by believing that the complex interactions and interlinkages between people, networks, institutions, or organisations are constantly moving and not static.

According to their website (Granton Community Gardeners, n.d.), they describe themselves as:

“Local people, growing, cooking and eating food together.

_We are a community-led charity based in North Edinburgh. We create and cultivate community gardens, host community meals and events, support anyone in the area who wants to grow food, and think creatively about how best to make sure everyone in our area is fed._”
As mentioned earlier in section 3.3, the “History of Granton Community Gardeners”, the group began with two individuals who were tired of waiting (an average of 10 years) for an allotment space to open up for them to grow on. So, they asked the local council if they could use one of the corner lots to grow a garden. This ethos of growing food is a large part of their identity. It is at the centre of all their decisions, as evidenced by the garden’s origin story and the above vignette. Besides calling themselves a community, they also serve the community of Granton through their community meals and a bread club (which is now a bakery). Despite these activities, there is room for improvement, as discussed later in Chapter 7, “Power and Organisational Roles”. Another aspect of their identity is shown through their desire to beautify their community through the gardens they cultivate. Again, this is not stated in the description but instead came out through observations, conversations, and interactions with Edward.

*After a lunch break everyone leaves except Edward and I. He says that we should transplant some of the flowers to along the front fence and more evenly space them out there. He wants to move the flowers that are more clumped together along the back fence to the front fence. Then also spread out the clumps along the front fence. Without me prompting him, Edward says this is to make the fence line (particularly the front fence line) look more appealing, friendly and inviting for others. He then continued with that it also helps prevent the council workers from spraying weed killer along the fence and killing their plants, as they’ve done in the past. If it looks purposefully planted then they leave it alone, he says.*

(Field Notes – 26th June 2018)
This short vignette shows how they want to present themselves to the rest of the community by beautifying their gardens and making them aesthetically appealing. It also demonstrates how they interact with council employees. Leap (2015) found in his study that how local groups interacted with and anticipated the reactions/actions of a bureaucratic other influenced the ways in which the local groups would view the state-owned space and, by extension, their group identity. In the case of Leap’s study, he found that the local group increasingly viewed the wildlife refuge as a space of frustration. Through this frustration, they gained a negative opinion of the National Wildlife Service. This negative opinion made their group identity shift away from the wildlife refuge. In the context of Granton Community Gardeners, they have had minimal support from the local council (one member is their champion) in what appears to be a hands-off approach and, at times, a negative interaction with the council when their plants are harmed, as described in the vignette above. This relationship has led to many of the volunteers' mixed views of the council. For example, on 26th May, Edward showed a councilwoman around the gardens. Edward said this was a good thing, “as we lost our supportive council member last year”. Both Leap’s (2015) work and my research can be viewed through what Blumer (1986) refers to as ‘group or collective action’. Collective action is the concept that since society is made up of acting people (interpreting each other’s indications to each other and themselves), collectives, groups, and organisations are made up of individuals acting together by aligning their actions to those of the others around them. The acts of these collectives, groups, or organisations make up ‘collective action’. This concept allows groups or organisations to indicate towards each other or other individuals. What is seen in this research and demonstrated in the above vignette is a form of collective action from the Granton Community.
Gardeners towards members of the Granton community or other groups within the Granton area demonstrating, at least in part, what they are about – beautifying the Granton area.

Further, on the 6th of June, a woman from the Parks and Greenspaces Department came to talk with Edward and Karen about possible future partnerships if a new community space was approved. Neither seemed sold on the potential but appreciated the effort and willingness to connect with local organisations. These are just a few examples of the group interacting with someone in a government role. Nevertheless, the council is often referred to when discussing water access and electricity, with an air of suspicion. This mistrust stems from the promise of these two utilities to the group without any timeline. This cynical tone is often the case when the council comes up in general conversation. These chats feel like they are waiting for the council to change their minds about the gardeners' free use of the land. While the group’s interactions with the council have not affected their view of the gardens, continual negative interactions could lead the space to represent frustration. Beyond the two main gardens – at the corner of Wardieburn and Boswall Parkway and behind the Royston Wardieburn Community Centre – it is unclear how assured the other 12 corner gardens’ tenancy is. The two main gardens, in my understanding, are tenuously secured, provided someone on the council champions the gardens. In its current state, I would describe Granton Community Gardeners’ identity as a community-oriented group aiming to support the Granton community through food production, beautify spaces with gardens and host community activities.

To consider how the group’s identity influences the creation or maintenance of an individual’s identity, we can look again at Blumer’s (1986) idea of social or joint action. However, Blumer also says that you have to look beyond the everyday norms, rules, and
processes to study groups, organisations, and institutions. Instead, you must look at how the people define each other’s perspectives and how they are, through self-indication, changing their viewpoints (Baugh, 1990). Further, Perry (2007) states, “Blumer’s group position model proposes how a sense of group positions [and group identity] comes about. It arises through processes of collective definition, that is, interactive and communicative processes by which the dominant group defines itself, the subordinate group, and the relations between them” (p. 377). This collective definition arises from the members' lived experiences and significant events to relate to (Blumer & Duster, 1980). So, a collective identity and group position come from all the volunteers' experiences and lines of action, and this identity and position are in flux, changing slightly based upon the volunteers participating at that moment. Thus, we must not only look at Oliver and Jay’s interactions, but also the collection of different interactions happening within that moment or day.

Blumer’s joint action is particularly useful in examining collective identity related to individual identity. As mentioned on page 149 in chapter 6, joint action is the merging together of various individuals' different lines of actions through their interpretation of each other’s actions. In other words, social action is an interpretive process by which people interpret each other’s actions and align their actions with those of others. It is like weaving together individual lines of action to create a single line of action. When we identify ourselves as part of a group, we take on the group’s mission and actions. Thus, our identity becomes part of the larger group’s identity. Both Oliver and Jay perform tasks they perceive or know are helpful for the group’s common good. They are attempting to bring their lines of action into harmony with the rest of the volunteers’ actions to contribute to the group. By volunteering, they are contributing
to the identity of Granton Community Gardeners by assisting in achieving the group’s tasks of beautifying the gardens and providing food, community activities and a space to gather. Oliver’s actions focused on building valuable objects for the garden volunteers, the community table, the outdoor sink and food prep unit, and the greenhouse. These objects were helpful and improved the aesthetics of the garden. In the main new garden, the table and sink unit make the garden feel more inviting by giving off a feel of a home. The community table gives the feeling of sharing and contributes to a sense of “homeness,” making people feel comfortable and at ease. It is like saying that we are all family here in the garden. The greenhouse is attached to the tool shed and cleans up the corner garden’s look in the corner garden. These actions align with Edward’s assertion that the gardens must be aesthetically pleasing to the community and the council members so that there are no complaints and the gardens are not considered unsightly. While it is possible that Oliver consciously knew his actions were aligned with Edward’s idea of beautifying, he never mentioned it. Thus, either consciously or unconsciously, Oliver’s line of action became part of the joint action to make the gardens attractive by aiding the Granton Community Gardeners’ collective identity as a beautiful and comfortable space for the community to gather and share food.

As mentioned in his vignettes, Jay’s actions are an attempt to draw his line of action into the other volunteers’ lines of action (Blumer, 1986). Unfortunately, Jay often misinterprets others’ indications towards him, resulting in conflict. Then let us look at what joint action he is trying to participate in and what group identity he is trying to contribute. I have already established from their mission statement that Granton Community Gardeners aim to be an inclusive group that serves the whole community. One of the ways the groups fulfil this aim is
by providing community meals free of charge. At these meals, many families come, and generally, the kids from these families entertain themselves with minimal supervision. During the volunteer workdays (Tuesdays and Thursdays), there was always talk about working with schools and the other kids visiting the garden. The group hired Jenn to work with the kids, and, as a result, the conversations increased about what kids can do in the garden and how to make the garden spaces more child-friendly. Jay was a frequent volunteer (until he stopped coming in late summer/early autumn) and was either part of those conversations or just listened in on the discussions. Based on my observations, Jay did not start actively working with the kids during the volunteer workdays and the community meals until these conversations with Jenn increased. As such, Jay felt that he needed to align his line of action (Blumer, 1986) with the group by working with the kids, and I would say he felt “needed” based upon his continued attempts to work with the kids despite the resistance he eventually ran into. As all lines of action and joint actions have a career (Blumer, 1986), we can see how Jay’s past actions with his niece could also lead him to work with kids in the garden. Taking Jay’s time with his niece in the context of his past actions regarding managing kids in the garden and who should be responsible for them brings to light that Jay may have been trying to be part of the solution of how to manage kids in the garden. Since Jay repeatedly attempted to work with kids, I would conclude that he was trying to create his identity as good with kids. However, he was also trying to align his actions with the other gardeners’ actions to bring about the garden's group identity (Azarian, 2017) as a safe and inviting place for everyone, including the neighbourhood kids. The group identity and position of Granton Community Gardeners are collectively created by the
joint actions of its volunteers, positioning the group as the organisation providing space and food for everyone.

In her paper on white universal identity, Perry (2007) discusses it as a sense of ontological security when expanding on Blumer’s concept of group position and identity. Since Blumer (1958) claims that identities are more than reflections of the material structures but are still fundamentally shaped by those material structures, Perry proposes that “identities have a grounding force: a means of locating individuals not only socially but also ontologically, and of establishing a sense of ontological security” (Perry, 2007, p.378). From my field observations, analysis, and interpretation of the data, I would expand this to be true for Granton Community Gardeners, even though they do not identify as a group by a single race. The group shows signs of insecurity when coming into conflict with another group in Granton competing over the same limited resource. This tension was seen when the group competed for the church space with the knitting group. Both groups were, in a sense, trying to establish dominance and importance over the other. This conflict challenged the sense of ontological security the Granton Community Gardeners had concerning the community temporarily. This security appeared to return once the group had collectively adjusted to its current position in the community.

6.3 Summary

This study found that the garden volunteers both construct and maintain their identities differently through their work in the garden and with the group's community activities. However, sometimes these attempts are unsuccessful when misinterpreting others’ lines of action. It is worth noting that many of the volunteers showed hints that their identities were
connected to the garden. However, both Oliver and Jay showed the clearest indicators of this. According to Blumer (1966), this identity maintenance or construction is an ongoing process through a continual interpretation of the indications being made between one another.

Further, it can be seen that the group identity and position are constructed collaboratively via Blumer’s (1986) concept of joint action, positioning themselves in relation to the other community groups as the source for community space and food. Then how does this fit with the broader framework of how Massey describes space and place? For her, ‘place’ is an event of the interweaving of different ongoing life stories. Each actor has their trajectory and, with that, their history. The identity thread shows how other actors (volunteers) within the garden have met in this place. Through their interactions with humans and non-human, they have created a ‘place’ while constructing or maintaining their identity.
Chapter 7 Findings – Power and Organisational Roles

7.1 Power and Organisational Roles

The first part of the Findings, Chapter 6, covered the (re)production of identity in the garden, which was discussed concerning both volunteers and the group Granton Community Gardeners. This current chapter discusses the thread of Power and Organisational Roles. For this thread, Massey's conceptualisation of space and place is used to understand how the volunteers’ trajectories in the garden space influence their interactions and the role(s) they perform in the garden. As was explained in the Conceptual Framework, Massey's view is that space and place are made of entanglements, always open and becoming; a ‘throwntogetherness’ (Massey, 2005) of multiple trajectories. This view of space works well for this community garden as the volunteers come from different ethnic groups, countries, and income backgrounds. These characteristics can be accounted for when discussing the thread of Power and Organisational Roles. I further use Massey's (1999) concept of power-geometries, the interconnection and flows of people, goods, or information related to the inherent power an individual or individuals have, to examine the power-relations between staff and volunteers. Power-geometries are also employed when discussing the interactions between volunteers. This chapter will discuss two sets of interactions and their power-relations from the perspective of space and place as discussed in the Conceptual Framework.

During my field observations, one of the first things I noticed was that while no one would call themselves the group leader, everyone would default to Edward for leadership, making final decisions, and other management duties. As mentioned in the History of Granton Community Gardeners section of the Research Site Context chapter, Edward is one of the
group’s founders and the only one who is still involved with the group. One of these consequences is that Edward does many duties in the garden, particularly around hosting larger volunteer groups such as corporate groups. So, when Edward is gone, and a corporate group is coming, there is much anxiety over who will host them in Edward’s stead. The following interaction between Edward and Karen demonstrates the stress Edward’s absence can cause.

When I arrived, Karen and Edward were talking about the day’s tasks for any volunteers who came today. Edward was going to be showing the new councilwoman around their garden sites this morning, and he wasn’t sure how long it would take him. So, Karen was going to be in charge of letting people know what is needed in the garden. After a few hours, Edward returned to the garden and had some lunch with us; it was just the three of us – Karen, Edward and myself. Edward said that next week there was going to be a large group of volunteers from a local business coming to help prepare the garden for the summer, but that he was going to be gone for family reasons during the same time. Karen was charged with being the host of the group and asked if I would be able to come along too. Unfortunately, I told him that I wasn’t able to make it back to the garden until Saturday. So Karen was going to be on her own. After eating Edward walked around the new garden and the corner garden telling us, mostly Karen, what things the volunteer group could do and how to do the task if she didn’t know how it was done. When Karen and I didn’t have any more questions, Edward said he needed to go and pick up his child and that he may not be back today. For the next two hours, Karen wouldn’t stop talking about how she wasn’t sure how she was going to handle the group for five days next week and how nervous she was about it already.
Looking at this interaction from Massey’s standpoint of place and the meaning of place as a meeting of trajectories and the power-geometries (the placement of social groups and individuals concerning the flow of power and goods) within all interactions, we will need to consider the histories of both Karen and Edward. Edward is one of the garden's co-founders, well-versed in horticulture and gardening, and was previously a primary teacher. As a result of this background, Edward is often considered the group leader. While Karen works with children at her church, it is often not by herself. Besides, her knowledge in plants and gardening is not as strong as Edward’s knowledge, and she often does not lead the volunteers on her own. Due to her background and perceived lack of experience, we can see that the garden, at this moment, has become a place of anxiety for Karen. Usually, Karen is chatting in the garden. She greets everyone in the garden or walks by and often discusses her dog’s latest antics. However, on that day, because she was taking on a leadership role, the garden became a place of anxiety.

Massey often discusses power-geometries, the power concerning the interconnection and flows of people, goods, or information, usually in terms of larger-scale relations (Massey, 1993). However, power-geometries can be applied to individual interactions as well (Bird, 1993; Massey, 2005; Massey, 1999). In the vignette above, we can view Edward attempting to give Karen some leadership experience in the garden by choosing her to lead the group instead of another volunteer. However, she is resisting this new role, even if it ends up being temporary because she still sees Edward as the authority in the garden. The power-relation between these two volunteer gardeners is that Edward already held a role of power or advantage over Karen. He has the background and knowledge to work with large volunteer groups. Edward's inherent
or given power means that it is difficult for Karen to reject his offer of leading the group on her own for the week. As Massey would say, Edward has the power over people's movement, information, and the plants in the garden. Karen is only a recipient of this power in the above vignette.

Another interaction that demonstrates how Edward’s trajectory had given him power and a leadership role in the garden, as seen when Karen and I were discussing the garden's rules.

Later after lunch, the neighbour boys came over into the garden. They often do this without a parent, as their mom can see them from the flat window. Other times the parents would drop them off in the garden as they went to the shop to get some food for everyone. Today the boys came over by themselves and wanted to help put the wood siding up on the outbuilding. I was using a drill gun, so I showed them how to use it properly and assisted them in putting screws into the siding. After they left, Karen and I were talking about what to do when the boys come over without the parents. Karen said that technically they weren’t supposed to be here without a parent. “It’s not that Edward makes the rules. But it’s Edward’s rule”.

(Field Notes – 2nd June 2018)

As one of the two founders of the gardens and the only one left living in the Granton area, people in the garden default to what Edward says as a hard and fast rule. Despite a board of directors taking more leadership responsibilities, Edward has this unofficial/official role as head of the gardens. Further still, Edward attempts to give some of these leadership and management-like roles to other volunteers, as demonstrated in the first vignette. However,
these offers of higher positions are often rejected. Thus, Edward ends up maintaining his more elevated status. Again, looking at this interaction from a power-geometries perspective, we can see that Edward’s life trajectory, having taught earlier in his career and particularly his help to start the gardens, gives him an air of authority in setting rules for the other volunteers.

Despite his attempts to give others more authority and responsibility, as mentioned in the above paragraph, he is often the only one with a plan or idea of organising events in the garden. For example, on the 12th of June 2018 (from field notes), we needed to prep the garden for the Community BBQ. Edward was the only one who had an idea of what needed doing in the garden and how to arrange the space to accommodate the more significant number of people and the cooking. Edward did this even though another paid staff member, whose job is specifically to manage the volunteers, around that day. So, he ended up providing tasks and detailed instructions to everyone.

An interesting example of how Edward still holds a high level of authority in the garden, despite more paid staff being added during 2018, is that the paid staff always deferred to Edward regarding rules or future management plans for the garden spaces. Whatever the actual hierarchy is, all the staff treat Edward as if he is their line manager. For example:

Edward has been gone for the past two weeks for family business, and Jenn feels there is pressure to have something to show for her/our efforts while he has been gone. She asked about what we could do this week to really make the garden look beautiful when Edward gets back this week. We all decided that the courgettes and pumpkins needed weeding the most, and then we could lay mulch around them. We took the daisy flowers
growing around the pumpkins and replanted them to form a flower hedgerow (border) 
separating a walkway from the pumpkin bed.

(Field Notes – 21 August 2018)

Jenn has a working knowledge of plants and working with kids. Hence, a portion of her part-time job is to work with the kids in the garden (during the community meals and when school groups visit), manage volunteers as needed, and help with the gardens' future planning. There is no indication that she would need to account for her and the volunteers’ efforts in Edward’s absence. Still, that is what Jenn feels like she has to do. Despite her background, experience, and responsibility, she still defaults to pleasing Edward due to his authority in the garden. From the above vignettes, when viewed through the lens of power-geometries (Massey, 1999), we can see that volunteers’ professional backgrounds and roles, or perceived roles, influence what power and authority one is given within the garden.

The plants in the garden, in some instances, were conduits for showcasing another example of power-geometry (Massey, 1999) between the garden volunteers.

While preparing the garden for the community meal this week Beth and one of her friends came into the garden looking for Edward to ask if they could pick some of the pumpkin leaves for their dinner that night. “How do you cook them?” Louise asked as we both were curious. Beth said “you pick the smaller ones and use them in the soup. But you can use them as a wrap too. We have lots of uses for them.” This conversation led the four of us to talk about how the plants in the garden are used in many ways, and that other cultures sometimes use different parts of the plants for food than we are used to. We all discussed how we felt there was a missed opportunity to share our food
cultures with each other, particularly since we have a community meal every week.

These meals are planned by Nancy, who is a trained cook but is white British. So, her “ethnic” foods all have a British slant to them. The four of us talked about a number of ideas we had like – a cooking class that would be themed from different regions and recipes could be shared, having a “guest” cook for the community meals where one or more dishes is prepared in their own cultural background’s style. While Beth and her friend thought these were great ideas, they were reluctant to pose them to Nancy because they didn’t feel they had the position to do so. But by the end of the conversation, with a little encouragement from Louise and I, Beth and her friend decided that they would talk about their ideas with Nancy.

(Field Notes – 21st August 2018)

This vignette demonstrates how the non-human aspect of gardens can be a window into how our histories play a role in the power-geometries of our interactions and relations. In this example, food and food cultures provide that window. Both Beth and her friend are immigrants from Africa. They have lived in Scotland for a long time and have established themselves here. However, they show signs that they feel they have less power in comparison to a person born in the UK. In this case, that lack of perceived control is related to an English chef. While Nancy would not consider Beth and her friend as having less power and status in the garden or even in Scotland for that matter, there are those in society, typically supporting right-wing politics, who would. This view of immigrants having less power has most likely influenced Beth and her friend’s view of their place in Scottish society. This feeling of lower status could make them more reluctant to approach Nancy with their ideas for using community meals to share food
cultures. This vignette also showcases the power and status related to our professional roles. Nancy is a trained chef with years of experience, whereas Beth and her friend are not. Therefore, they could view telling their suggestions to Nancy as a challenge to her knowledge and ability, like telling a doctor how to do their job.

The vignette mentioned above is an example of the non-human playing a role in the power-geometries, of how the meaning of space is co-constructed through our relations and interactions (Gieryn, 2000). It also demonstrates how interactions with the non-human, specifically the pumpkin plants, expressly impact meaning. Blumer (1986) says that an object’s meaning is based on the interpretations of social interaction. The meaning of an object then plays a role as part of the meaning in the interaction and contributes to the space where the exchange happens. These pumpkin plants added a level of cultural significance to the interaction. In much of Africa (Nigeria, in Beth and her friends), pumpkin leaves are a dietary staple, whereas, in many western countries, we do not consume pumpkin leaves. Without them, this interaction would have taken on a different meaning, lacked a cultural significance, and not displayed the power-relation between the individuals involved. While a similar conversation may have happened — and likely has — the pumpkin plant’s presence and meaning were key factors in why this conversation happened when and where it did. The above vignette was the only overt interaction in my field notes where plants or food displayed the inherent power structure built into our society. However, if you peeled back a layer or two of other interactions, you could see this built-in power structure:

It’s another community meal tonight, but Tanya put the grill grate and heat disperser into rainwater a few weeks ago to try to clean them. This is only presumed as she had
told multiple people that she felt the grill looked too dirty and needed cleaning. Either way, no one knew the parts were in the water, so the grill parts are ruined, and we’ll need to change part of the meal plan. The grilled vegetables will have to be sautéed in the community centre kitchen while Nancy made a curry. But the roti can still be grilled on the top grill shelf as that hadn’t been soaking in rainwater. One of the families who are from the area around India (they wouldn’t say what country they were from) made a pumpkin curry with pumpkin from the garden. When tasting the two curries side by side, it was clear who made which one. I felt kind of bad for Nancy as fewer people complimented her curry or [they] used the phrase “your curry was nice too” or a similar phrasing after complimenting the other lady first. But this reminds me that there is a stark difference between individuals cooking their own culturally appropriate foods and individuals cooking foods they have appropriated from other cultures. You can often taste a clear difference between them, as there was tonight.

(Field Notes – 28th August 2018)

When I first looked at this night and the individual short interactions during and after the meal, it seemed only to be that a community member had brought some food to share. Perhaps it was coordinated to have two curry dishes there, and maybe not. However, as I analysed that night more holistically and viewed the interactions together as a whole with different trajectories involved, I could see the various power structures underneath the surface. Massey (1999) discusses how power relations within our social sphere and interactions play a role in how we conceptualise space. Food justice, cultural appropriation of foods and associated topics are not directly related to my research question. However, these topics need
to be investigated in-depth to find the underlying power structures in interactions where individuals are from different ethnic backgrounds. When you find those structures, you can see how someone experiences an interaction, in this case, in the context of a community garden.

To see the hidden power structures within this vignette, we must look at the larger historical picture of the British Empire. During what history textbooks call the Second British Empire, Britain controlled almost 25% of the world’s landmass, including Pakistan, India, and parts of Africa (British Broadcasting Corporation, n.d.). Both of these regions have versions of curry dishes as local foods, and there was most likely sharing of different curry styles via British soldiers. Immigrants and, most likely, soldiers brought these dishes to the United Kingdom (UK). Currently, places serving curry dishes are almost as ubiquitous as fish and chip shops. As a non-UK citizen myself, I was and still am surprised when I hear UK nationals talk about curry as if it was their native dish or that they made it better.

Before moving on, a bit more historical context is needed to demonstrate how a nation’s history and culture can impact how individuals experience their time in a community garden. The connection between our actions and our cultural-historical contexts giving rise to the meaning of space and place during our exchanges follows Massey’s (2005) idea that we all have a trajectory (past interactions) that influences how we act and interpret interactions.

The British Empire was at its peak in the early 20th Century, after which its power began to wane. However, Rodriguez (2020) points out that the United Kingdom’s “Imperial tendencies did not disappear at the end of World War II” (p. 21) and this imperial background and mentality, an “imperial nostalgia” (p. 25), influenced the British identity and its policies. Thus, out of World War II emerged an image of the world dominated by Anglo-Saxons (Schake, 2017).
The idea of the great imperial British Empire was still ingrained into the British culture and psyche, even if it is more muted and subdued than in previous eras. While Blumer (1986) believes that our identities are not solely products of our cultural background, upbringing plays a part in identifying ourselves and interacting with others. Since Britain had such a long imperial reign and was one of the largest empires in history, it had an impact on the collective British identity. One of the results of this remaining imperial mentality is Brexit, and nationalist pride as people and politicians want to take back control of Britain, including its borders and economy (Johnson, 2007; Rodriguez, 2020). This mentality has led to the proposal and creation of less inviting policies to non-British people, promoting a continued feeling that Britain can be as good as its old Empire. It would seem that “the United Kingdom has put a brake on the integration and assimilation of other races and cultures” (Rodriguez, 2020, p. 38).

To bring this imperial historical context shaping the British identity and impacting individual identities back to the discussion of curry-making in the garden, how does it play into the observed interactions? Massey (1993, 2005) discusses that historical and global attitudes play out in local settings. So, this imperial mentality of ‘it is ours’ around curry appears to be like the mindset pushed in history textbooks that the British were doing the right thing to help countries worldwide move forward in their growth, to move away from being underdeveloped and primitive. This mentality stems from imperial Britain holding power over so much of the world in the past. As seen in the previous paragraph, this idea that the British are superior to and own or improve what they conquer even now plays out behind the scenes in interactions like the above vignette. An English chef in the garden made a curry dish as if it were a British food staple and unconsciously suggested the mentality of: ‘we know how to make this better
than those who taught it to us’ and reinforced her power over the other garden volunteer. The community member bringing her own culturally appropriate food, curry in this case, can be viewed as trying to take back some power and assert the food’s cultural relevance into the interaction. Whether or not we are aware of these cultural histories play into our identities and interactions with others. They are felt by others and impact how one experiences an interaction or a place, like a community garden.

The above view is what Massey (1999) calls power-geometries, the meeting of power-relations from different historical trajectories and mentalities in a place. Food is often used to lump diverse ethnic groups from a single country together, making them a homogenous group. Rachel Slocum (2011) discusses how “food histories of marginalised people are ignored, appropriated or maligned by dominate groups” (p. 306). Current examples include how a university professor in the United States said curry was “tasteless” (BBC, 2019) and awful. In another incident discussed in the same BBC article, a US news anchor said Chinese food was a bland, congealed mass. By lumping groups together and, in that sense, homogenising them, we strip away some of their identity. Without a full understanding of who we are and our identity, it is not easy to maintain or gain power or status.

Further still, when a UK Foreign Secretary in 2001 said, “chicken tikka masala is a true British national dish”, while at the same time denouncing immigrants as not knowing the British values and threatening Britishness (The Guardian, 2001). This vignette is not to the scale of these current examples toward non-white foods. Still, it shows how our colonial pasts can impact our ongoing conceptualisation of food and challenge those Westernised food concepts.
This view of food directly links us to how volunteers experience their time in a community garden and at garden events.

Besides power and garden roles related to training or ethnic backgrounds, there can be conflicts between paid staff and routine volunteers. There were no paid staff members in the garden in the recent past, and roles were less defined. Nevertheless, some volunteers do not like having less autonomy even with paid staff now, including one position to help manage volunteers. The following example comes from one of the days after a community meal.

While taking a break from helping to water the plants, I joined a group gathered around the picnic table discussing setting up for the community meal. Jay is refusing to help set up because he’s still pissed off at Matthew about last week. Jay wanted to play his own music during food prep and set-up. But Matthew wouldn’t let him. “I do what the fuhck I want to. No one tells me what I can and can’t do”, Jay announces to the group. Karen still tries to convince him he is needed, and they want his help, “We need your help, and you know what to do. No one else does.” Jay still refuses no matter what Karen or the others say. Jay just keeps saying that he’s still upset. This conversation goes on for about 20-30 minutes; Karen is getting visibly frustrated, and Matthew goes to another part of the garden to do work as if giving up. Finally, Edward steps in and reminds Jay that Matthew has apologised a couple of times for the incident. Edward tells Jay that it’s now up to him to move on from it or not. This intervention ends the discussion, and everyone leaves except Edward and me.

(Field Notes – 26th June 2018)
Before getting into the analysis of this vignette, it is interesting to point out from this interaction that it may not have ended if Edward had not stepped in to remind Jay that Matthew had already apologised for offending him. Combining that with my observations that Jay tends to listen to and follow Edward’s advice further sets Edward as the group leader. In the above vignette, multiple people tried to calm Jay or get the conversation to end. Only when Edward intervened was the argument stopped.

For some background, Matthew, a paid staff member, has not been part of the garden as long as Jay has been. As a result, Jay is not used to being told what to do in the garden, except by Edward and, on occasion, Karen, Louise or other senior volunteers or staff. With Matthew being newer to the garden and the Granton community, Jay felt he did not have the right to tell him what to do, especially with a duty he usually performs. Add to this that there were no paid staff members before this year, and when members were added, their roles were explained as volunteers came into the garden to visit or work. If this seems like an unclear process, that is because it is. This vague process of introducing new staff to the volunteers made an unsettled consensus on who had the authority to do and say what to whom in the garden.

Approaching this vignette and data from Massey’s (2005) concept of place as always open and becoming, we can see the importance of recognising the different trajectories interacting in a place. Here Matthew does not fully know Jay’s past ability to set up the dining hall independently with his appropriate music. However, Jay did not recognise Matthew’s authority based on his past experiences working with volunteers in outdoor-based organisations. Suppose both Jay and Matthew had viewed the church hall where the original
incident was located – as a co-construction of all the individuals’ past trajectories (Massey, 2005). They might have been more open and receptive to each other’s opinions of the community meal set-up in that case. If Jay knew why Matthew was hired and what skills he had, Jay might have been more accepting of Matthew’s authority to suggest setting up and what music to play during set-up. If Matthew took time to understand or was open to the idea that Jay already knew how to do all the setup and was a long-time volunteer, then Matthew may have relaxed some of his authority and power over Jay by letting him set up his way. Another part of their respective trajectories (stories so far) (Massey, 2005) that plays into the dynamic of Jay and Matthew’s interactions is that Matthew has a higher level of education than Jay. As a result of this unequal education level, he could view himself as having a higher status in society than Jay.

Further, this higher status could afford Matthew more inherent authority since we tend to value those with more education more highly as a society at large. However, on the other side, Jay could feel intimidated by Matthew because of this higher status. As a result, Jay may feel like he is losing something, perhaps losing a “position” within the group. This desire for a “position” or role within the group to help make decisions can be seen in Edward's absence in the following vignette, where Jay was actively taking part in decision-making.

Edward and Matthew are gone again today, so there were lots of decisions to be made with what to get done in the garden and how to prepare for the community meal that night. Jay was highly active with Louise and I about making those decisions, and he actively contributed good ideas too. He took on more of a leadership role, and his behaviour was appropriate as well. He expressed that he felt like he was part of the
“team” making decisions, which is a good thing because he doesn’t often express those desires or feelings. He seemed really happy, confident and satisfied today; perhaps the first time I’ve seen him really look that way. I feel like Jay is coming along well.

(Field Notes – 21st August 2018)

It is evident in this vignette that Jay relished the opportunity and took it to be part of the decision-making “team” that day. He took the chance to speak up without anyone encouraging him to do so, and it was of his own volition. Jay seemed to want that kind of role in the garden, being part of the “leadership team”. Reflecting on this vignette and thinking about Jay’s past interactions in the garden and his history (at least to the extent he revealed to me), I saw that all of Jay’s interactions and conflicts within the garden stem from his desire to gain more of a leadership role or a role with more responsibility. Gaining one of these roles could make Jay feel more respected when his role with kids was challenged. When viewing the above two vignettes (21st August and 26th June) with the same lens of obtaining a more prominent role, you can see that the underlying issue in the 26th of June’s confrontation was that Jay felt he was losing power and the consistent role he had in the garden.

Further, he was losing it to a person more educated but newer to the garden, who was not from the garden or even from Scotland. The two threads, “Identity” and “Power and Organisational Roles”, of this research can be connected in Jay’s case as his identity work can be viewed as attempts to gain a role or position within the community as well. As seen in the Identity chapter, Jay routinely attempted to work with the children. This role would have allowed him to have a more prominent standing, power in the garden, and some of the decision-making involved in the garden. Thus, in this research, Jay’s vignettes show a
relationship between these two threads, Identity and Power and Organisational Roles. From these two vignettes about Jay’s experiences, we can see that the space changes in meaning depending on who is interacting with Jay and the trajectories they bring to the interactions. On the 21st of August, it was a space of conflict and negative emotions. While on the 26th of June, the garden became a space of acceptance, success and a feeling of importance. Jay’s vignettes demonstrate how space is always undetermined and evolving based on the entanglement of the different trajectories involved (Massey, 2005).

Oliver’s identity work can also be viewed from this lens of gaining a role in the garden with responsibility and leadership or a role of importance to the garden. None of the garden spaces (approximately 12 gardens) had any garden infrastructure before the group began managing them. The two biggest (the central, collectively-managed gardens) have a garden and community activity infrastructure. The corner garden has a tool shed, strawberry mounds, compost bins and a greenhouse, the latter of which Oliver designed and built. He was responsible for building the outdoor food preparation station and a large communal table in the new central garden. He was integral to fixing flooding issues from compacted soil. These structures make his role and importance to the garden highly visible. As mentioned in the Identity chapter, Oliver, before retirement, was in the trade industry and actively sought to keep his builder identity in his garden activities. From personal conversations with family and friends, they mention a sense of losing a part of who they are when they retire. Our lives are largely dictated by our careers and become a part of who we are, and when we retire, we no longer have that career to help define us. This partial loss of who we are would create unstable ontological stability (discussed on page 159). This sense of instability would lead us to try to
maintain that identity in various ways. In Oliver’s case, that would be through his volunteer activities in the garden and giving him a role of importance within the community.

In this chapter on Power and Organisational Roles, we can see that Doreen Massey’s (2005) conceptualisation of space and place as always open and a product of the ‘throwntogetherness’ of different trajectories accurately explains how power and the volunteers’ roles in the garden are experienced differently across various volunteers. Some of the non-white volunteers experienced the garden as a place where their cultural foods were not represented or not represented accurately. At the same time, other volunteers experienced the garden as a place to try to gain a more responsible role in the garden and community. Experiences varied based upon who participated in the interaction and the trajectory that brought them to that moment.

7.2 Chapter Summary

How does viewing power and garden roles of the Granton Community Gardeners through Doreen Massey’s (2005) conceptualisation of space as always open and a “throwntogetherness” (p. 140) impact how this space and place are created? How does this view impact what the volunteers gain from their time in the garden? In the broad sense, these vignettes show that while the construction and maintenance of identities, the push for power, and trying new roles are shared across the volunteers, these three benefits differ between volunteers in how they are manifested. These differences arise from the different interactions happening in the garden at any given moment.

These differences mean that the benefits received from volunteering in the garden will vary slightly for each volunteer. These differing benefits arise from various interactions
volunteers have with each other. In some cases, the interaction is through the non-human, as with Beth and her friend or the volunteer who made curry. Since the place is created through the weaving of ongoing stories, there are no pre-determined assumptions of meaning, community or collective identity until the interaction (Massey, 2005). So, meaning in the garden changes slightly for each volunteer and their interactions. This changing of the garden’s meaning brings up the idea that Massey (2005) believes interactions, space and place are relational and intertwined. In the garden, this relational aspect concerns people and between space and the non-human. Both Massey and Ingold (2011) believe that place and space are created through these relational interactions and give meaning and identity to those places, spaces, and individuals.

Further, as discussed in the Identity chapter, group identity is defined by those who are interacting in the spaces. Suppose their interactions influence the identity of the volunteers and the roles they play in the garden. In that case, we can see a link between the identity the volunteer is either maintaining or creating and the part they are or wish to play in the garden.

It was further found that volunteers maintained or constructed their identity through their time in the garden. This identity work created both positive and negative impacts on the volunteers. The type of impact depended on if the volunteer got stuck in a line of action and failed to correctly interpret the indications made towards them. In this study, both the human and non-human objects played a part in the identity work; how the identity work was performed and experienced varied between volunteers and demonstrates that a garden should be organised to accommodate this difference.
While I did not use neoliberalism as a lens to view the interactions within Granton Community Gardeners, there are similarities between the incidents described on pages 166 – 170 and the conclusion Ghose & Pettygrove (2014) found in their case study. They concluded that community gardens could simultaneously support and rebel against neoliberal practices. The interactions around food cultures within the garden can be viewed through the neoliberal lens, indicating that some volunteers inadvertently reinforce neoliberal ideals. In contrast, others act against them to empower themselves. Both Guthman (2008) and Harris (2009) consider this as a possibility too, but with the suggestion that alternative food networks (which community gardens can be classified as) engage with neoliberalism's strengths to help open up possibilities for these alternative networks to succeed. These would be interesting lines of inquiry for future research investigating the fine line between reinforcing and rebelling against neoliberal practices.

In conclusion, to answer my research question of how their social and non-human interactions influence the volunteers, the volunteers at Granton Community Gardeners benefit from constructing or maintaining their identity through their roles while participating in the garden. However, these are complex interactions with the roles volunteers play influenced by their history and trajectory and those they interact with. These interactions affect the meaning of the garden and its importance to the volunteers. These findings have implications for how community gardens are viewed and managed, as discussed in the Conclusions chapter 8.
Chapter 8: Conclusions

8.1 Chapter Overview

My research began with a desire to know the stories in a community garden and tell them through the participants' voices and experiences. My volunteer work in community gardens and my professional work with sustainable foods and organic minority farmer training inspired this research. I approached this investigation inductively with a guiding question: How do Social and Nonhuman Interactions Influence the Community Garden Participants? I developed two sub-questions through my data analysis: a) How do the community garden volunteers perform identity work in the garden? B) How do power and the garden roles the volunteers perform impact their experiences in the garden?

This chapter summarises my research journey and the potential for further related studies and consists of four sections. Section one, titled Summary, has three sub-sections: summary of the research, critiques of community gardens, an overview of the conceptual framework and methodology. The second section, Research Findings, contains one sub-section: principal findings. Section three, titled Future Recommendations, covers two sub-sections: implications for practice and recommendations for future research related to community gardens – community gardens as third places (Oldenburg & Brissett, 1982) and community gardens and ecological identity (Thomashow, 1996). The fourth and final section, Endnote, reflects my learning experience while performing this research.
8.2 Summary

8.2.1 Summary of Research

When I began my research, I had a general idea that I wanted to tell the stories of the community garden and other gardening enterprise participants. I wanted to do this in a way that avoided the standard impact measures of the number of volunteers, kilograms of produce grown, the number of farmer graduates, and other quantitative measures. As such, I undertook an initial literature review to gather a broad scope of the literature regarding community gardens. As discussed in Chapter 2: Literature Review, the research on community gardens crosses into dozens of disciplines as far-ranging as economics to ecology to community resilience to human health. I had initially chosen to investigate community gardens' benefits and stories through the frame of cultural ecosystem services, the meeting between the human and nonhuman. I eventually changed this approach in consultation with the garden organiser. Cultural ecosystem services would not work with my participants as the language was authoritative and political and could lead some participants to tell me what they thought I wanted to hear, as they had done with past researchers. This decision is explained in more detail at the beginning of Chapter 4: Research Site Context. Instead, I chose to approach the research more inductively to let the participants and their interactions guide the research development and process as their stories were revealed and evolved. My research question then became more of a guiding question: How do Social and Nonhuman Interactions Influence the Community Garden Participants?

To better understand community garden research's broad field, two key terms required more investigation and defining to frame the research – community and garden. The term
community is contested with Ife (2009), ultimately considering 'community' to be subjective, and Shaw (2008) suggesting that when trying to define 'community', one has to look at the context of the group for which you identify 'community'. Within the discourses of 'community', Williams (2014) suggests we rarely take the term ‘community’ to have a negative meaning. My life experience is in line with this assessment; as for the community groups, it has been mostly positive experiences and rarely unpleasant. By extension of Williams's (2014) thought on ‘community’, most people will consider the term to have a positive meaning. One of the issues with defining community is that it is as much about 'us' as it is about 'them' (M. Shaw, 2008). This 'us' and 'them' mentality creates boundaries and differences (Brent, 1997). These separations and differences within and between groups often replicate larger social structures (Blumer, 1986).

The term 'garden' can refer to multiple types of outdoor spaces. For example, it can be a person's back garden of their house, an open green space for public use, or a location, private or public, where people can grow plants (edible and nonedible). Places where people grow plants can be either a community garden (jointly managed lot) or broken into allotment gardens (each individual or family has their plot). I researched a community garden where the participants grew edible plants to benefit themselves and other community members. Despite this distinction, community gardens do not have a set definition either. This study used the description of community gardens from Greenspace Scotland (2013); a community garden is "locally managed pieces of land that are developed in response to and reflect the needs of the communities in which they are based" (p. 6).
Community development is another contested term used in this study. The meaning of community development, like the word 'community', can change depending on the situation and cultural context within which it is used. This changeability causes tensions in the professional field as community development workers attempt to balance the community's needs with government policies (M. Shaw et al., 2016). Depending on how community development work is used, this attempt to balance needs can lead to the programs reinforcing social inequalities or rectifying them (Minnite & Piven, 2016).

Through a rigorous review of the literature, four initial themes emerged: Ecosystem Services and Community Gardens; Public Policy and Social Change in Community Gardens; Community Gardens as a Site; Diversity and Neoliberalism and Community Gardens. Ecosystem services were an attempt to frame ecosystems' benefits to people so that the average person could understand (Lele et al., 2013). This frame would eventually get co-opted into a more economics and monetisation approach to ecosystems, which would be used in public policy language (Gómez-Baggethun et al., 2010a). Between 2001 and 2005, the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment would be performed cooperatively across the globe and eventually grouped ecosystem services into four broad categories: provisioning services; regulating services; cultural services; and supporting services (Millennium Ecosystem Assessment, 2005). Cultural ecosystem services have not been the sole framework of a study previously. As such, this study initially was going to use cultural ecosystem services as a framework to describe the benefits of community gardens. But this decision would change in consultation with the community garden organiser.
Public Policy and Social Change discussed how community gardens could be fruitful in community development (Wiltshire, Crouch and Azuma (2000), as cited in Buckingham, 2005) and could foster a DIY Citizenship (Crossan et al., 2016). The literature review also found the third theme of Community Garden as a Site for Diversity. Within this theme, diversity was broadly defined, including race, age, gender, cultural background and management structure. Pearson & Firth (2012) found that it is possible to strengthen a community by supporting people's relationships while participating in the garden. In the fourth theme, Neoliberalism and Community Gardens, Neoliberalism is defined as an ideological project based on the idea that the state should not interfere with people's liberty, that markets are more democratic than political processes, and that the realm of economics industries should be relaxed. Neoliberalism has been around since the Margaret Thatcher era (Harvey, 2005), and its broader social structures are sometimes replicated within community gardens. These neoliberal policies are brought to light in other instances, and social change is sought within the community garden work.

8.2.2 Critiques of Community Gardens

Despite how perfect community gardens can appear, there are still critiques of them and their potential benefits. One of the criticisms is the term community garden itself. Above and in the Literature Review, I discussed the discourses focused on community garden's individual components – 'community' and 'garden'. For some scholars, this is precisely the problem; these are complicated terms to define. Pudup's (2008) main issue is that these terms are hard to describe, making a group's goals and intentions hard to set and clear to those outside the organisation. On the other side, some scholars and professionals think that there
should not be a strict definition of community gardens that would limit a community's response to their needs (Ferris et al., 2001).

Another critique of community gardens is the generalised claim that they create a more localised food system. While there may be some element of truth to this claim, I have seen evidence of this in my research and my professional experiences; it does not guarantee it. Blumer (1986) believes that the broader societal structures are replicated in smaller groups. If there are racial, gender or other disparities in the wider social system, these are also played out in some fashion within smaller groups of this society. Research has found that neoliberal tendencies are replicated within community gardens (Pudup, 2008). Who initiated the community garden also impacts if the social inequalities are repeated in the garden (Firth et al., 2011). According to Bowens (2015), there are significant inequalities within the current food system, and these sometimes get repeated in the community as aided by the community garden.

My literature review also revealed less research within community gardens, including how the nonhuman impact the garden participants. As mentioned above, cultural ecosystem services as a framework were one of the gaps in the literature. Cultural ecosystem services are the nonmaterial benefits and address human and nonhuman interactions but include human social interactions through categories like spiritual experiences and cultural experiences. My critique of and concern with ecosystem services is that its language is political and commodifies the nonhuman. After some consideration, I decided that cultural ecosystem services would not be appropriate for this garden and its participants, as discussed in the Research Site Context.
chapter. Instead, I would create a novel conceptual framework using symbolic interactionism, Doreen Massey’s ideas on space and place, and her theory of power-geometries.

8.2.3 Summary of Conceptual Framework and Methods

With this new framework, I approached my research and fieldwork from the philosophical position that the world is relational. We make sense of the world through our interactions, including the nonhuman. This framework aligns more closely with my worldview, as explained in the Introduction and Conceptual Framework chapters, and the approaches advocated by Herbert Blumer, George Mead, Charles Cooley and Doreen Massey. Their concepts were core to this study. For this ethnographic study, I used symbolic interactionism as envisioned by George Mead, Herbert Blumer and Charles Cooley.

8.2.3.1 Symbolic Interactionism. Symbolic interactionism (SI) is a social theory that understands the social world as people acting toward the world rather than being acted upon. It tends to focus on the micro-level interactions that help us give meaning to our worlds (H. Griffiths et al., 2014; Herman-Kinney & Reynolds, 1994). Some symbolic interactionists believe SI can only reveal understandings at the micro-level. However, Blumer believed that the larger social structures are replicated on a broad and small scale. The local scale can be seen by observing the interactions between groups and people within a group (Morrione & Farberman, 1981b). Blumer (1986) defines objects as anything we indicate towards and interact with. He says there are three types of objects with which we interact: 1) physical (inanimate objects), 2) social (people), and 3) abstract (intangible concepts) objects. Also, Blumer had three SI premises: 1) we only act on objects that have meaning for us, 2) these interactions give rise to
meaning and, 3) that meaning is constantly being negotiated and modified based upon our interactions.

Our interactions with objects give meaning to those objects and the world around us. These objects help us maintain and construct our identities and the identities of social groups. Throughout this research, we can observe Blumer’s concepts as the garden volunteers interacted with all three types of Blumer’s objects. In the Findings chapter on Oliver, you can see that he interacts with people (social objects) and hand tools (inanimate objects) to reinforce his identity as a builder and not a gardener. Blumer’s concept of “joint action”, an iterative process where each individual’s actions fit together with the others, creates an action towards a mutual outcome. Joint action was used to investigate how the Granton Community Gardeners work together and position themselves in relation to the other community groups in the Granton area.

Blumer built his idea upon the works of Charles Cooley and Herbert Mead. These theorists all offer slightly different perspectives to approach social interactions. In his book, *Human Nature and the Social Order*, Cooley ([1915] 1983) explains one of the ideas used in my research – the looking-glass self. The looking-glass self is when we act the way we are interpreting how others see us, like looking in the mirror. We interpret what we think others are thinking about us, like mental chess for our identity. This can be seen in Jay’s interactions with the other volunteers in this research. His nearly constant attempts to work with the kids indicated that he saw through others’ eyes that he should be that kind of person. For example, on 21st August, Jay discussed working with the kids in the garden with Louise. Louise had almost
convinced him to take child protection training to do this. This perspective also appeared to play out in his personal life when he discussed his niece on 7th July and 21st August.

George Herbert Mead was a social psychologist (after the term symbolic interactionist was coined, Mead would be included as a symbolic interactionist) that was used to support Blumer’s concepts. Many of Blumer’s concepts were expansions on ones that Mead had written about previously. Mead’s (1913) original idea was that our identity was shaped by role-taking, the taking on the role of the other person and seeing ourselves through their eyes. As a result, we shape our actions and thoughts of ourselves around those ideas. Blumer expanded on this, focusing on the interactions rather than role-taking.

8.2.3.2 Conceptualisation of Space and Place. The second part of my conceptual framework came from Doreen Massey and her conceptualisation of space and place (Massey, 2005; Massey, 1999). Massey’s work challenges us to conceive of space and place as a coexisting plurality and multiplicity. She “defines” space as an ongoing creation of the entanglement of interrelations, where multiple trajectories (stories-so-far) coexist (Massey, 2005). In her book “For Space” (2005), she explains that ‘place’ is an event of ‘throwntogetherness’ of these different trajectories, including the nonhuman. Massey (2005) emphasises, "there can be no assumption of pre-given coherence, or community or collective identity" (p.141) and means that participation in the ‘throwntogetherness’ requires navigation. These conceptualisations prove useful for including volunteers' interactions with other people and the nonhuman in my research and gardens. Incorporating the trajectories of the nonhuman is essential to this research as nonhuman objects played roles in both of the finding’s threads discussed in this research.
8.2.3.3 **Power-geometry.** Another important concept of Massey’s is the idea that all of our interactions consist of power-geometry, which are part of the broader power-knowledge systems (Massey, 1999). She explains power-geometries concern who or what moves or does not move and the power concerning these flows. These power-relations are felt unequally across social groups and individuals. Power-geometries are about the power built into our interrelations and interconnections that help create space and place and how those are experienced. Massey (1999) further uses these power-geometries to help demonstrate the connection between the local and the global by pointing out that power-relations on the local and individual levels are often reproductions of large-scale power-relations. This concept examined the volunteers’ interactions, particularly when those interactions involved white and non-white volunteers.

I chose to use Massey's (2005) concepts of space, place and power-geometry (1999) combined with Blumer's (1986) vision of symbolic interactionism supported by Cooley's (1983) looking-glass self and Mead's (2015) generalized other as my framework to interpret my two main findings in-depth. These combined concepts and theories align with all aspects of my research approach, permitting me to answer my research questions:

1. How do both their social and nonhuman interactions impact the community garden volunteers?
   a. How are the community garden volunteers performing identity work in the garden?
   b. How do power and the garden roles the volunteers perform impact their experiences in the garden?
Massey’s concepts of space, place, and power-geometry provide a lens to view community gardens as a multiplicity of trajectories and histories, both human and nonhuman. Additionally, power and organisational roles are examined through her concepts and how they impact the garden volunteers’ experiences.

Massey’s work does not provide a theory to investigate identities, so I employed Blumer’s (1986) SI with support from Cooley (1983) and Mead (2015) to interpret my data. Blumer’s SI theory provided a broad base to interpret the volunteers’ interactions in the garden concerning identity construction and maintenance. Cooley’s concept of the looking-glass self and Mead’s notion of the generalized other supports Blumer’s theories premises. In addition, it provides a more in-depth analysis of the mechanisms of identity when needed.

8.3 Research Findings

8.3.1 Principal Findings

Through an inductive analysis done by reading and re-reading my field notes and then grouping each interaction (one line of data) into similar categories, I came up with seven interrelated threads. A more depth explanation of the categorisation, grouping and analysis process was covered in the Data Analysis section of the Methodology chapter. Below I will briefly recap my two main findings and their position in the current literature.

8.3.1.1 Identity. Symbolic Interactionism (SI) was used to interpret this thread, allowing for interpreting both human-human and nonhuman-human interactions. Volunteers maintained or helped construct their identity through their work with the garden focused on three primary examples: two volunteers – Oliver and Jay – and the group's identity as a whole. With Oliver, it was found that he resisted one identity, a gardener, pressed upon him in favour
of his identity as a builder. He had spent many years constructing this identity through his professional work and task at home, building garden structures and other things for his wife. Through Blumer’s (1986) self-object concept, Oliver would see himself as an object and act towards himself by resisting the role of gardener. Oliver could also be viewed from an object's perspective; it was from my perspective in this research. When I would group him with the gardeners, he would tell me he was not a gardener but a builder. He would make the same comment whenever anyone would include him with the gardeners. People tend to build their identities in part concerning specific attributes and accomplishments. Then to challenge that identity is to question their abilities and achievements (Beames et al., 2018).

Further, Perry (2007) says that our identities give us a sense of “ontological security” (p.378). So, challenging one’s identity also questions one’s place in the world. Oliver also used the tools he brought to the garden to openly demonstrate to all who could see that he was a builder. These tools connected him to manual labour jobs and showed everyone he knew how to use them through the objects he would build in the garden. Oliver demonstrated that one individual could perform identity work in multiple ways while working in the garden.

Another volunteer, Jay, demonstrated identity work utterly different from Oliver. Jay was a regularly active garden volunteer who told lots of jokes and repeatedly attempted to work with the kids in the garden unsuccessfully. Each time Jay would work with the kids, he would make some inappropriate remark and was talked to about his behaviour by one of the garden staff. His repeated attempts signalled that Jay was stuck on an idea of what he wanted to do and thought others wanted him to do despite the evidence to the contrary. Blumer (Morrione & Farberman, 1981a) describes this as a person’s “blind spot” that prevents a person
from correctly interpreting others' actions. As a result of this “blind spot”, Jay kept trying to build his identity around working with kids, continually causing tension in the garden. This repeated rejection of what he considers is his identity would lead to negative emotions and a negative feeling towards the garden space (Burke & Stets, 2009). Jay's identity construction can also be viewed through Blumer's (1986) "joint action" concept. Like Massey's (2005) concept of 'throwntogetherness', this concept says that interactions have a history and impacts how we construct and give meaning to spaces and places. Jay’s past (personal and within the garden) impacts in the end what meaning he gives the garden.

The group, Granton Community Gardeners, can have their identity examined through Blumer’s sense of group position, as explained by Perry (2007), where a group defines itself in relation to a subordinate group (or a different group) a collective and communicative process. Further, we can use Perry's (2007) sense of ontological security to examine their reaction by thinking of the group's action when in conflict or interaction with another group. The Granton Community Gardeners saw this when they were in a conflict with a knitting group who also used the Granton Parish church social hall on Tuesdays. The gardeners, in the end, switched the day of their community meal to avoid conflict. This adjustment was an attempt to appease the knitting group and show that they serve the whole community and not just the volunteers in the garden. The group identity was also investigated using Blumer's (1986) concept of joint action, where the individual volunteers adjust their efforts to attempt to come into line with the other volunteers. This meeting of actions creates an ‘action’ from the whole group. This idea is similar to Massey's (2005) notion of place as an interweaving of different trajectories and histories meeting up through interactions.
My two principal findings showed that identity construction and maintenance vary between volunteers. This finding differs from other identity research in community gardens. Much of the current literature in community gardening explores identity concerning food and how it is prepared and eaten. Claude Fischler (1988), an early researcher of food and identity, stated that “food not only nourishes but also signifies” (p.276). He meant that the foods we consume and prepare them signify how we see ourselves and our identity. Several research pieces take a cultural or ethnic approach to identity in community gardens, indicating that community gardens are essential to maintaining one’s cultural identity and heritage through garden work (Hond et al., 2019; L’Annunziata, 2010; Mares, 2012). My research is positioned slightly differently with identity. While an individual’s cultural background was considered when analysing the data, I did not specifically address cultural identity. Instead, I took a broader look at identity and how all of a volunteer’s interactions (past, present, cultural, or otherwise) influenced their identity work in the garden (Blumer, 1986; Massey, 2005).

Ouellette’s (2012) research investigated identities in community gardens to build evidence for a general theory of multiple identity negotiation. One of her conclusions was a call for research to pay more attention to what people are doing and saying in the gardens. She also stated that place should be considered when investigating identity. Through its ethnographic approach, my research paid close attention to the garden volunteers’ movements, body language, and dialogues between volunteers and nonhuman objects to better understand how these influenced them. This approach led to the realisation that the volunteers perform identity work in the garden and helped address Ouellette’s suggestion for further research into people’s interaction within gardens. Through Massey’s (2005) conceptualisation, my research also
considered how place influenced the volunteers. While Massey’s approach to place differs from Ouellette’s, this research does begin to shed light on how a place can impact a person’s identity and how they describe themselves by observing the garden through Massey’s (2005) view on place as a multiplicity of trajectories and histories where volunteers interact with each other. During these interactions, the volunteers’ identities are shaped while bringing meaning to the garden, through the weaving of various trajectories (Massey, 2005), as a place.

In practice, understanding how identity is constructed or maintained by volunteers in community gardens can help garden organisers create gardens that are more accommodating to the interactions. These interactions help with identity work, but as the data also shows, interactions support the creation of meaning in the garden. If a place holds a positive meaning for us, we are more likely to be involved and work to keep it in the community to benefit the community. As this research sometimes showed, Jay had difficulty finding a home in the garden despite the volunteers' best intentions. If garden organisers were more aware of what Jay was doing, it is possible they could have made the garden more accommodating for him to develop his identity. Another implication of this finding is that volunteers’ identities are tied to their time in the garden and outside of it. This finding was demonstrated in Oliver’s vignette, where he attempted to maintain his builder identity in the garden. This identity extended from his past career in construction. This connection to past careers was also seen with Edward and the power given to him due to his former profession as an elementary teacher and horticulture experience (page 164). To engage as many community members as possible, garden organisers can also make more inviting spaces for those with disabilities. There are many resources on adapting garden activities and spaces, such as the (National Center on Health, Physical Activity
and Disability, n.d.) page on creating accessible gardens or (Rothert, 1994) book *The enabling garden* with descriptions and illustrations of accessible garden ideas. However, these resources are not more centralised. Given the push for more allotments and community growing projects by organisations like the Scottish Food Coalition and the Scottish Allotments and Gardens Society, combined with the Scottish Governments commitment to becoming a Good Food Nation by 2025 (Scottish Government, n.d.), now would be an opportune time to increase support for gardens at a policy level.

**8.3.1.2 Power and Organisational Roles.** The second principle finding of this research is that power in the garden is experienced differently by different volunteers. As such, so are the roles they feel they can undertake in the garden. The data showed that attempts to disseminate power and the lack of acceptance affected the garden's leadership and decision-making. I observed during my fieldwork that Edward’s attempts to share the leadership role, given to him as one of the original organising members, while well-intended, often confused what the rules were in the garden and who should make the final decisions. This lack of definitive decision-making would, on occasion, cause stress to the volunteers and staff. In the Findings chapter, this effort to transfer power was seen in Karen’s vignette (26th May, pages 162-163), where she had to be in charge of the corporate volunteer group while Edward was out of town. Karen resisted this attempt to give her some more power in the garden. This stress was also seen in the vignette (28th August) when Tanya, a board member, left the BBQ parts to soak in rainwater without informing anyone. This action disrupted and stressed Nancy when she was planning the community meal. While these situations caused stress at the moment, there was no longer-term negative impact within the garden space. This idea contrasts with
Rishbeth's (2004) study that found that how a garden was managed directly impacted how the garden was perceived and was more important than a multi-cultural design.

Power was also experienced in the garden through interactions tied to more historical power-relations. As discussed in the 28th August vignette on page 168, one of the families brought a homemade curry to share at the meal on the same night that Nancy was making curry. The family received more compliments for their curry than Nancy, the chef, did. This incident was discussed earlier in terms of power-relations, as viewed through Massey's (1999) concept of power-geometry, and how our cultural histories influence our underlying assumptions of dominance over other cultures. The use of Massey's (1993) power-geometries in a community garden context is an original contribution as much of the literature lack these discussions of this kind of power-relations. One piece of research in which power-relations are discussed, but not drawing from Massey, is Ouellette's (2012) research on navigating multiple identities in community gardens. In her study, Ouellette only addressed race on a couple of occasions. One was related to how the women perceived the garden because of their relationship with their parents. The second was when she describes a few women as white, middle-class, and of a certain age who took special privileges and rights in the garden based upon their demographic. Her research did not further investigate why there were tensions between some of the gardeners from different cultural backgrounds or why the women felt they deserved privileged rights over others in the garden. While there is overlap in our studies, we both identify that race may play a part in how one perceives the garden; my research sits apart from hers. I explored how individuals’ trajectories (Massey, 2005), our stories-so-far, impact our interactions, influencing how we view the garden. These trajectories include our
cultural upbringing and inherent historical biases built into those systems. In the case of the curry dish, a built-in sense of superiority of the British over the non-British. Following Massey’s (2005) concept of place and space, I built upon Ouellette’s (2012) work by connecting our histories (trajectories in Massey’s words) to what roles we take in the garden and how the volunteers’ experience their time in the garden. The data also points out that this trajectory can impact how we interact in the garden without conscious awareness of the impact.

It was observed in this research that volunteers could experience a sense of a loss of power or prominence during their garden work. Jay’s interactions can be viewed as his unconscious attempts to use his time to gain a more prominent and leadership role in the garden and community. His interactions weave both threads, Identity and Power and Organisational Roles, together as his identity work was ultimately connected to his desire to have more responsibility in the garden and community. However, this was never provided to him for various reasons discussed in the Findings chapter. The data did not fully explain why Jay was not given more responsibility in the garden.

Nevertheless, it was observed in the last month of my fieldwork that Jay did not come back to the garden; this may have been the reason. While I did not find literature that discusses this phenomenon within a garden context, I have observed this within my professional experiences. While working with the Minnesota Food Association, we would record the farmer trainees’ stories. Unfortunately, these stories could not be used for grant reporting. Still, we would use them in social media, donor letters, newsletters, and other media to demonstrate what was accomplished beyond growing food. In these stories, one of the common threads connecting the farmer trainees was the desire to gain or regain a leadership role in their
communities. They would tie this leadership role to a greater sense of self-worth, just as Jay did in Granton Community Gardeners.

My research revealed that community garden volunteers may share broad everyday experiences (identity construction or maintenance, power and roles) but that these manifest in unique ways to each individual. These experiences are impacted by the volunteers’ social and nonhuman interactions, past interactions and cultural upbringing. For garden organisers, this means that they should be aware that the garden is more than just a growing space, even if that is the primary objective, like in Granton. These spaces and places are ever-changing based upon the interactions taking place. By gardens open to the meeting up of multiple trajectories, diverse interactions, and accommodating for the multiplicity of stories, volunteers can more readily perform their identity work and find their role in the garden and community. This research provides new academic insights into the impact of social and nonhuman interactions on garden volunteers and deepens the understanding of community gardens' potential stories.

As Perry (2007) suggests, our identities offer us a sense of security and understanding of our place in this world. If this security is challenged or not allowed to stabilize, a person will see this as a threat (Perry, 2007). People who feel threatened or have an unstable sense of place in the community (society) will act out. This acting out would be disruptive to the local community and possibly to society. By providing spaces, I suggest community gardens from my research that can allow for more ontological stability may reduce that pressure and stress on people and reduce disruption to local communities.

Further, my research added a new application of the concepts through which to view identity construction in a community garden by using symbolic interactionism in Blumer (1986),
Cooley (1983), and Mead (1913). It also demonstrates that using Doreen Massey’s concepts of space, place and power-geometry (Massey, 1999, 2005) with the multiplicity and richness these views offer can help deepen our knowledge of what happens in community gardens. As well as these contributions to academic literature and the practitioners in community gardens also raise other avenues of further research, as discussed in the next section.

8.4 Future Recommendations

This research examined the Granton Community Gardeners' lived experiences while volunteering in the garden. This section has two sub-sections: implications for practice and policy and avenues for future research.

8.4.1 Implications for Practice and Policy

Community gardens are a place where people from multiple generations with different ethnicities and cultural backgrounds meet up and interact—based upon the findings summarised above and discussed in the Findings chapter. There are three implications for practice and policy. My research revealed that the community garden volunteers experienced similar benefits stemming from their work in the garden. However, these benefits were displayed in different ways for different volunteers. These different manifestations impacted how positively or negatively a volunteer experienced their time in the garden. The experiences would change from day-to-day as different volunteers would interact with one another.

Further, as was indicated in the Findings (Chapter 6), Jay was not aware of the identity work he was performing and unintentionally caused tensions and conflict in the garden. Garden organisers who are aware of these phenomena can structure their garden space to accommodate the interactions that give rise to these benefits. Organisers should also observe
those volunteers who may unconsciously create tensions and take the necessary actions to assist them. As evidenced by Jay during the research, volunteers who do not receive such help in having a more positive experience in the garden leave and do not return. People are more likely to engage and connect with their community and its activities, in this case, the community garden. I have seen this renewed engagement during my professional career in food systems. The farmer training program I taught on had a Guatemalan and a Karen farmer who, after immigration, had disengaged with their new community in the US. They felt they had nothing to contribute—but credited their positive experiences in the training program and, by extension, success at farming, with helping them take active roles in the community. While the context of the positive experience is not precisely parallel, these farmers’ positive experiences of contributing to the community encouraged them to reengage in the community. This research also indicates that community gardens have the same potential for encouraging community involvement.

My research provides a glimpse into the complexities and multiplicity of benefits community gardens provide in terms of policy. In the current era of politics, many councils, states, and countries focus on ‘green initiatives’ to help fight climate change, as the Scottish Government has done with their updated plan (Scottish Government, 2020). Academic research supports the idea that community gardens can promote sustainability and help fight climate change (Kingsley et al., 2019; Millennium Ecosystem Assessment (Program), 2005). Sustainability and climate change are valuable contributions that community gardens make. However, my research data points to another reason for supporting community gardens at a policy level.
Nevertheless, those are not the only benefits received from community gardens. My research points out that people perform identity work and explore roles to play in the garden to contribute to the community. The data in my research also indicates that these benefits are not expressed typically. Supporting the growth of community gardens through policy or funding could increase the number of gardens in a city and, by extension, how the gardens and their volunteers contribute to the community.

**8.4.2 Avenues for Future Research**

As discussed previously, this research found that volunteers actively construct and maintain their identities through their interactions in the garden, strive for a stable role in the garden and community, and relate these two. Further, it found new applications for theorists in symbolic interactionism and concepts of space and place to examine community gardens. This section will briefly discuss two further research avenues stemming from this current study – community gardens as third places and ecological identity construction in community gardens.

**8.4.2.1 Community Gardens as Third Places.** Through the writing-up of the findings and this thesis, it was realised that this community garden could be a third-place. According to Oldenburg (1999), a third-place is a place outside of the home and the working environment. Oldenburg (1999) has eight characteristics that a place must be considered a third place. Those eight characteristics are: 1) Neutral Ground 2) A Leveler 3) Conversation is the Main Activity 4) Accessible and Accommodating 5) Has Regulars 6) Low Profile 7) Playful Mood 8) Home Away from Home
Oldenburg believes that the lack of third places with these characteristics is why modern society is unhappy. He believes that we are unsatisfied in our other relationships since we lack these places. He states, “It is not so much that people have fundamental needs that society is not fulfilling; rather, it is simply the case that people are expecting much more from their experiences and relationships than they are getting” (Oldenburg & Brissett, 1982, p. 266). This gap between what we expect and what we get makes us unhappy in our social interactions.

In his book (Oldenburg, 1999) and his articles about the third place (Oldenburg & Brissett, 1982; Oldenburg, 2013), he often uses locations from the past he believes exemplify his concept of a third place. While some of these places, such as Irani cafes, were known to be “classless” and “casteless” (Irani Cafés (Cafes), Restaurants & Bakeries in India, n.d.), other locations were not necessarily as open or as inviting as he claims they would be. For example, when he discusses third places in his chapter The Café as a Third Place (Oldenburg, 2013), he uses a neighbourhood or small midwestern town bar as an example of a third place. These bars would be where the local regulars would gather to talk and socialise, but they are happy to invite new-comers. However, having entered many of those places, particularly in small-town Midwest USA, most often, everyone in the bar casts suspicious glances at you know you are not “from around here”. This feeling is not the inviting atmosphere Oldenburg talks about. He also discusses places, such as soda shops and barber shops, in the “old south” as third places where diverse people could gather and socialise to break down class and racial barriers. It is common knowledge that the “old south” was deeply divided and wrought with racism. So, it is unclear as to which classes were being bridged in his third places. Further, his examples of good third
places are all male-centric, with little given from a non-white male perspective through several of his papers.

Despite these issues stated above and the critique of third places as mainly based upon a nostalgic notion of community, some studies show some value to the concept of third places contributing to a positive sense of community and engaging civil society. For example, Glover & Parry (2009) found that third places offered a better therapeutic environment for healing with recovering cancer patients. Continuing in leisure studies, Mair (2009) found that curling clubs have begun to function as third places that reflect and act as agents of change in their communities in rural Canada. They do this by offering a place of shared leisure. Finally, coming back to community garden literature Dolley (2020) found that in Australia, community gardens as third places aid in placemaking and ease the challenges of mobile populations. So, there is some evidence that third places do positively impact people’s lives.

In his book chapter on cafés as third places, Scambler (2013) discusses the potential for the modern café to enable the civil sector to take more action in civil life. He states that cafés could be sites of “lifeworld resistance to systematic colonization against the background of growing inequality and public disaffection” (p.85). It is this avenue I think is critical and exciting. Given that the community garden studied in this research had diverse participants in ethnicity, income, gender, and many more characteristics, I am interested in finding out if community gardens can be third places as sites for more social change. This line of research would complement and build upon the research discussed in the initial literature review under the groupings of both as a site for Public Policy and Social Change in Community Gardens and as sites that push against neoliberal policies. In light of the continued push for neoliberal policies
and the adaptations Granton Community Gardeners have undergone during COVID-19, it would be beneficial to communities and councils to know if these spaces could act as third places that promote social change. Potential areas for social change could be equitable access to fresh foods, incorporation of non-Scottish cultures or resettled peoples into communities, or the breaking down of gendered roles in society.

**8.4.2.2 Community Gardens and Ecological Identity.** This current research discussed how an individual’s time in the community garden could help them construct or maintain their identity in a broad view. Another aspect of identity that would be an extension of this research would be to investigate community gardens to help people understand or develop their ecological identity. According to Thomashow (1996), ecological identity is all the different ways people construe themselves in relationship to the earth as manifested in personality, values, actions, and sense of self. Nature becomes an object of identification. For the individual, this has extraordinary conceptual ramifications. The interpretation of live experiences transcends social and cultural interactions. It also includes a person’s connection to the earth, perception of the ecosystem, and direct experience of nature (p. 3).

It is our ecological worldview (Thomashow, 1996). Zavestoski (2004) says an ecological identity “gives an individual the ability to connect his or her social behaviour to its environmental impacts” (p. 298). In other words, an ecological identity is how we view ourselves in relation to and our relationship with the nonhuman.

However, our ecological identity connects us to more than just the nonhuman. It is also about our environmental heroes and what those heroes stood for. Do we identify with Henry David Thoreau or John Muir or, in my case Aldo Leopold? Whom we identify with influences
how or if we view the environment as the commons. We find that the commons is a resource and a place to understand what we view as the commons, depending on our ecological worldview (Thomashow, 1996). Throughout his book, *Ecological Identity*, Thomashow (1996) expands upon how we can connect our political involvement or lack thereof to our political identity once we understand how we view the commons. In the end, our ecological identity is shaped by many interactions, including environmental heroes, family life (political upbringing and family structure), our careers, and much more. This identity, in turn, impacts how we view and value the earth and everything on it. It helps us understand our place and role in this world.

This line of thinking and expansion of identity are discussed in this research that I find intriguing to follow. During my initial literature review, there was a brief discussion on community gardens responding to peak oil, food security and climate change (Sage, 2014). For Thomashow (1996), ecological identity is a process “linking professional practice, personal growth, and community participation” (p. 176). By better understanding this process, we can better participate in our communities fighting for our beliefs. For some, this could help curb peak oil and climate change. With research pointing out community gardens as sites of resistance to current politics (Crossan et al., 2016) and climate change (Barthel et al., 2015), it would be of benefit to community gardens and activists to know if community gardens would be a place for developing one’s ecological identity.

8.5 Endnote

This research began with a desire to better capture the stories in community gardens and similar spaces while staying true to their experiences and voices. Therefore, I chose not to test a theory or use a specific theoretical framework to boundaries on my data. Instead, I chose
to keep a philosophical framework to my overall research approach, that the world and our interactions in it are relational. As such, the research adapted to the community's needs in which I was working. The result was an inductive approach with some unexpected findings.

Symbolic interactionism explains that all our interactions impact how we construct our identities and view ourselves. I was surprised by how much identity work, the activities individuals or groups do to express who they are (Snow, 2001), is performed within the community garden. This finding is important, as it seemed to tie people to the garden and connect their work within the garden to their lives outside of it. By joining the garden to our identities, we symbolically make it a part of us. While this is hard to quantify and measure, the gardeners must interpret an attack on the garden as a personal attack. Further, a loss of these garden spaces could lead to a feeling of having lost a part of ourselves.

Much of the research on community gardens discusses how they are places rebelling against local, state, or national policies that negatively impact their communities. However, this research explored through Blumer's (1986) symbolic interactionism and Massey's (2005) reconceptualisation of space and place how community gardens can also be microcosms of larger societal structures and histories. In this research's thread of Power and Organisational Roles, I discovered that some garden volunteers inadvertently reinforced past colonial ideals through the community meals and the lack of non-white, western cuisine prepared with the garden vegetables. Since I have worked and volunteered in community gardens and farmer training programs focused on minority populations (non-white male populations), this finding surprised me. This surprised feeling is possibly because my experiences led me to believe that all gardens would break down these historical barriers. However, it also shows some of my
naivety, as the organisations I worked with and volunteered for may not have been as inclusive and noncolonial as I imagined they were.

This ethnographic research only provides a short timeframe when particular trajectories met in the garden and formed a place. This research does not claim to have universal truths but rather truths for this specific garden and these particular volunteers. Massey (2005) suggests that these places are always open and unfinished. However, my research provides a new lens to view community gardens and frame the stories and their impacts on their volunteers. I hope that this new information will help funders rethink their required reporting and evaluate the “success” of community gardens. While COVID-19 has delayed the introduction of the Good Food Nation Bill (Scottish Government, n.d.), there is an opportunity within this proposed policy to offer increased financial and policy support for community gardens. As my research findings point out, these gardens are a place where diverse people meet up and interact. These activities in community gardens foster actions that can help build stronger communities. Through this bill and the resulting policies, more community gardens could be funded and supported through community partnerships.

Further, as mentioned in this thesis, these gardens' management is vital to monitoring the asymmetrical power-relations exercised and encouraging identity work through gardening activities. As I mentioned in section 8.3.1, Implications for Practice and Policy, I have seen in my professional career how well supported gardeners and farmers can reinvest themselves in their communities with positive implications. This re-engagement was supported by trained staff. Therefore, I would suggest that either in the Good Food Bill or related policy, there would be mechanisms to support the training of garden managers or organisers. This training would help
them be mindful and supportive of the interactions that the volunteers and surrounding communities all benefit from community gardens.


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Appendix A

Field Notes

The following figures are two examples of what my field notes look like. Figure A1 demonstrates a day when I could make most of my notes while in the garden. Figure A2 showed a day when I did a combination of notes in the garden, on the way home, and in my office (the latter two are the small notes running along the side).

Figure A 1

An excerpt of my 7th of July field notes.
Excerpt of my 10th of July field notes

10 July, 12:00-4:30 (4.5 hrs)

- Mom had another visit.
- I had to be talked to
- about contact with kids by MT.
- I got really upset despite
- MT saying it wasn’t his kids.
- We all adults in garden. I walked
- with,T6 & didn’t show up to comment
- on how well MT said
- had been very
- direct & rude.
- MT has TB.
- I asked about how I would
- have those kinds of conversations
- since she views me as a sort of
- “actress and volunteer” in the garden.
- MT said to let him know
- going forward.

- I said those are always hard
- conversations because the subject
- is so sensitive. But that I
- would try to ease into it.
- I possibly try to turn it into a
- learning instead of “you’re doing
- it wrong” type of talk. She
- agreed & said MT has TB.
- Good that helping kids maybe
- get sort of his identity back. Shows
- that he still has worth & value, like
- when he talks about helping care
- for his niece.
- Lots of watering still
Appendix B

Data Analysis

This figure shows my data analysis at approximately ¾ of the way through the process. I have some of the threads set, and others would change in the final stage. The right-hand margin has notes to myself of what I was thinking about while going through the analysis.

Figure B1

Example of data analysis
Appendix C

The sign posted at the entrance of the garden and front door of the out-building during my research

Hello!
My name is Ethan, and I am a PhD student at the University of Edinburgh. In addition to volunteering with Granton Community Gardeners, I am also doing my dissertation research in this garden.

I’ll be doing my research in the garden today. If you don’t wish to participate today, that’s no problem at all. You can either let me know or inform Tom, who will pass on your choice to me. I will also be using your body language to indicate if you wish to participate, so you can just go about your day as usual. I will use way you act will indicate that you don’t wish to be part of the study today during my observations and casual conversations.

Whether you participate or not, I’ll happily tell you all about my project. Please come and find me with your questions!
Appendix D

This introduction poster was also posted on the out-building entrance so that volunteers could identify me easier.

Hello!

My name is Ethan and I am a PhD student with the University of Edinburgh. In addition to volunteering with Granton Community Gardeners I am also doing my dissertation research in this garden.

I am trying to more deeply understand everyday activities in the garden. As such, I’ll be doing observations and may ask you for a short informal interview (which you can refuse!).

I invite you to read the information sheet below. If you don’t want me to include you in my observations, that’s no problem at all – just let me know ;-)!

Of course, I’ll happily tell you all about my project. Please come and find me with your questions!