GROWING ‘COMMUNITY’, PLANTING RESPONSIBILITY, SOWING GOVERNMENTALITY: SINGAPORE’S COMMUNITY GARDENS AS SPACES OF INCLUSIONS AND EXCLUSIONS

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this thesis is my original work and it has been written by me in its entirety. I have duly acknowledged all the sources of information which have been used in this thesis.

This thesis has also not been submitted for any degree in any university previously.

Chua Cheng Ying

May 2015

SUMMARY

Community gardens have seen a rise in popularity across cities in recent years, particularly because of its well-regarded contribution to community bonding, political development and urban-environmental justice. Cast in this context, community gardens are receiving increasing academic attention from geographers and other scholars, as they provide a meaningful lens for understanding the complexities and ambiguities of socio-political life. Using the ‘Community in Bloom’ (CIB) community gardening project established by the Singapore National Parks Board (NParks) as a case study, this thesis addresses the ways in which the ‘community’ has been conceptually and empirically studied in relation to inclusions and exclusions. By proposing how the ‘community’ may be understood as a technique of governmentality, the thesis seeks to understand how and why CIB gardens, despite its purported benefits as spaces of inclusions, are also *necessarily* spaces of exclusions. The thesis proceeds in two parts. Firstly, I show how community gardening in Singapore is embroiled in, and produced by a broader set of governmental techniques that ultimately organize the ‘community’ to produce “community-centric” responsibilities in favor of the Singaporean state’s intentions of inclusive community bonding. Secondly, I contend that community gardening as a governmental project comprises not only “community-centric” responsibilities but “garden-centric” responsibilities as well. The ethos of these two broad categories of responsibilities are sometimes in conflict with each other, which then results in varied forms of spatial exclusions. The thesis concludes by reflecting on the future of community gardening in Singapore, and suggests future research directions to deepen geographical understandings surrounding the socio-spatial (un)makings of ‘community’ and its related in/exclusions through the perspective of governmentality.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CC: Community Centre

CIB: Community in Bloom

HDB: Housing and Development Board

MND: Ministry of National Development

MP: Member of Parliament

NParks: National Parks Board

RC: Residents’ Committee

TC: Town Council

Chapter 1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Preamble: The story of Ali[1]

In August 2014, the National Parks Board[2] (NParks) of Singapore held its bi-annual Community in Bloom Awards (CIB) Ceremony to reward 343 winning CIB gardening groups for their passionate gardening efforts and outstanding contributions in encouraging community bonding. At this ceremony, a coffee-table book entitled *Community in Bloom: My Community, Our Gardens* was also unveiled to commemorate a decade of community gardening in Singapore. The book featured stories of 34 exceptional community gardens and its gardeners, with an overall aim of celebrating how the CIB program had come a long way from its humble beginnings in 2005 to incorporate more than 20,000 gardeners from 700 CIB gardening groups today.

Present at the ceremony was Ali, the chairperson of Starlight Harmony CIB group. Eager and excited, Ali was there to represent his Residents' Committee[3] (RC) to receive the Diamond award. This newly-created highest accolade was reserved specially for only fifteen groups that consistently maintained a high level of excellence primarily by encouraging inclusive community bonding through their self-initiated activities. Ali recounted to me the award comes with hard work – unlike most other CIB gardens, Starlight gardeners' responsibilities go beyond the physical upkeep of their gardens; they also take extra time and effort to regularly play host to foreign and local visitors interested in community gardening. As Ali sums it up, being able to provide a learning journey for residents of the community and promote gardening as an inclusive community activity is immensely rewarding to him and his CIB gardeners. However, despite the commendable efforts shown above, Ali does not deny that not all residents in the Starlight housing estate can enter the community garden as and when they please because a two-meter high fence surrounds the garden. Visitors have to make an appointment via email if they wish to visit the garden within the designated visiting hours from 9 to 11 on Sunday mornings. In light of several theft cases that took place in the garden, Ali rationalized the need for the fence, saying, "They will say but RC is for the residents. But that doesn't mean that they can simply take the plants. Without us, do (*sic*) you think the plants can grow by themselves, no right? That's why we need the fence."

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[1] All gardeners' names have been replaced with pseudonyms for confidentiality purposes.

[2] The National Parks Board (NParks) is the statutory board under the Ministry of National Development (MND) in Singapore responsible for the conservation, creation and enhancement of the city-state's green infrastructure.

[3] As I explicate in Chapter 4, CIB community gardens in Singapore's public housing estates come under the management of 'community' organizations known as Residents' Committees (RCs). Its main objectives are to (1) foster bonding amongst residents in the housing estate, and to (2) serve as an avenue to facilitate dialogue between the Singapore Government and its residents.

Ali's case study illustrates a few points. Firstly, Ali and his team are enthusiastic about NParks's vision of "engaging and inspiring communities to co-create a greener Singapore" (NParks, 2015a), and go to great lengths to co-achieve this vision together with NParks. Secondly, his case study reminds us that however inclusive and celebratory the community garden is purported to be, exclusionary practices (such as fencing, locking and barring “anti-community” individuals) are simultaneously central to its operations. Thirdly, even though many other gardeners follow Ali in agreeing that community gardening is largely an inclusive activity, this opinion is neither representative of all the 20,000 community gardeners in Singapore nor an accurate reflection of the heterogeneous realities of community gardening in practice. In short, although the premise of the CIB is to encourage the ‘community’ in Singapore to become more inclusive through community gardening, it is apparent that the outcomes and practices are more fragmented and messy than what is idealized. In thinking about Ali’s attitude towards community gardening vis-à-vis the three observations I have made, I am prompted by three questions: *What are the mechanisms at work that maintain community gardens? Why are community gardens often assumed to (and ought to) be inclusive? Can we posit community gardens to be necessarily both spaces of inclusions and exclusions, and why?*

Instead of reifying the simple (and almost always celebratory) causal relation between ‘community’ and ‘community bonding’ which hardly explains the complexities and realities of community gardening, this thesis makes use of the CIB project in Singapore to position ‘community bonding’ through community gardens as a project of *government through community* (Rose, 1999). I argue that this political project ultimately conditions community gardens as *necessarily* spaces of inclusion and exclusion. By this, I am not arguing that community gardens should always be inclusive or have to achieve some idealistic (and ambiguous) level of inclusivity to be considered a successful community garden. Instead, this research reveals that it is impossible for community gardens to be fully inclusive. Community gardens are conditioned by responsibilities and practices of *both* in/exclusions that are central to their existence. As a result, I argue that both in/exclusions should be considered integral conditions which contribute to the totality of community gardens in Singapore.

1.2 Research Motivation and Objectives

1.2.1 Research Motivation

At a broad level, this thesis uses Singapore's CIB programme to address the debates surrounding the way in which the 'community' has been theorized and empirically studied with respect to community gardens[4]. The thesis is guided by this research question:

How does a more careful treatment of the concept of 'community' help us understand why CIB community gardens in Singapore are necessarily spaces of inclusions and exclusions?

The motivation for this research question is drawn from recent debates on community gardens as spaces of social benefits, inclusions, exclusions and contestations. In recent years, based largely on North American experiences, research interest on community gardens as spaces of positive outcomes has increased. These come largely under the research ambit of leisure researchers who found that community gardens enable a range of inclusive community benefits such as friendships, crime reduction, social support and life satisfaction (Holland, 2004; Guirtart et al., 2012). Dissatisfied with the reductionist and overly-celebratory perspectives of leisure researchers, some Geographers and Built-Environment scholars have begun to question the uncritical assertion of community gardens as an inclusive space. Turning to socio-spatial explanations to explain the relations of unequal power and heterogeneous distribution of benefits, these scholars assert that community gardens are exclusive and do not necessarily benefit nor involve communities in the ways they are idealized (Schmelzkopf, 1995, 2002; Glover, 2004; Irazbal & Punja, 2009; Wang et al., 2014).

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[4] Community gardens under the CIB project are found in public housing estates, private house estates, schools, hospitals and welfare homes. I choose to only concentrate on CIB gardens in public housing estates in this thesis. See Section 7.2.1 for potentials to incorporate these other gardens spaces in future research.

My thesis intervenes in the extant literature on community gardens as spaces of in/exclusions, by arguing that the two above related strands of scholarship have collectively suffered from an under-theorization of the concept of 'community'. According to Firth et al. (2011), the lack of attention on the 'community' has led to taken-for-granted outcomes of what the 'community' is and ought to be (i.e. community gardens are uncritically asserted as inclusive spaces of community bonding). I argue to designate or idealize community gardening practices as inclusive tends to oversimplify the realities of 'community' in praxis, and hides the processes of disenfranchisements, exclusions and negotiations that constitute the 'community'. In taking on Ernwein's (2014) assertion that there are *different* degrees of inclusions and exclusions in gardens which should not be taken for granted but rather researched, this thesis complements and extends Ernwein's argument by suggesting that both in/exclusions are present and even *necessary* for the community gardens' existence.

To achieve this, I employ the Foucauldian perspective of *government through community* as my conceptual framework. This is a reading of Foucault's concept of governmentality on the 'community', in which the 'community' is studied as the locus of governmental techniques. I argue that the 'community' is a collective category for power to operate at a distance across a diverse range of agencies, people, technologies, such that people are "not necessarily aware of how their conduct is being conducted, as such the question of consent does not arise" (Rose, 1999*:*5). Placing this in the context of in/exclusions in community gardens, I contend that in community gardening, CIB gardeners do not just simply garden – rather, they go beyond the purportedly innocuous act of gardening to co-participate and co-produce certain 'community' outcomes that are aligned with what the Singapore Government[5] desires, or what Foucault famously termed 'governmentality' or 'mentalities of governing' (Foucault, 1980). As I shall demonstrate throughout this thesis, the "inclusive community through community gardening" narrative intended by the Government becomes both a practice and outcome of the governmental techniques embodied by gardeners in community gardening.

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[5] I wish to make clear how I have used some terminologies in this thesis to avoid confusion. Following Rose, I used the term 'government' (uncapitalized g) to refer to Foucault's neologism of governmentality. This is in contrast to the term 'Government' (capitalized G) which I used to refer to the Singaporean state. The term 'governance' is used more broadly to recognize the "political patterns that arise out of complex interactions, negotiations and exchanges between intermediate social actors, groups, forces, organizations and public and semi-public institutions" (Rose, 1999: 168).

The above may seem commonsensical, but has profound consequences when we employ *government through community* to understand why exclusions simultaneously take place, and are even *necessarily* constitutive of community gardens. Following geographer Tim Cresswell (1996), in the same ways which the 'community' offers the space for feelings of "in place" to be circumscribed and engrained, the social and geographic practices of "out of place" are simultaneously constructed and negotiated. For Cresswell, "place reproduces the beliefs that produce it in a way that makes them appear natural, self-evident and commonsense" (*ibid*: 16). In this sense, I argue that community gardens as 'community' spaces are intertwined in a practice of discipline, control and subjectification, which implies community gardeners are subject to "certain socialized norms, and to sanctioned rules appropriate to a particular community" (Del Casino, 2009:137). In the process of creating mechanisms of similarity and singularity that characterize what the 'community' stands for (Welch & Panelli, 2005), a Foucauldian perspective of the 'community' asserts that subjects become excluded because of their incapacity to align themselves with the desired regulatory systems of *government through community.* Exclusion, then, emerges as the "outcome of a mismatch between the norms, aspirations, and communication through threads of social power and control, and the individual's identification with or ability to achieve those expectations” (Taket et al., 2009:31). Additionally, Foucault suggests that exclusions arise not because people are merely excluded – rather, they choose to exclude themselves to varying degrees in that governmental norms may be differently consumed, (re)interpreted or even resisted by gardeners and non-gardeners. Hence, exclusions in community gardens emerge out of capacities of the “excluded”, who are in actual fact vehicles of power (not powerlessness) resisting against the desired techniques and outcomes of *government through community*. Unravelling both in/exclusions in community gardens – in particular by looking at the lived experiences of the community gardeners involved - is then one way of evaluating what happens when these governmental rationalities, as normatively held aspirations, are manifested in reality. My intention is therefore to interrogate the ensemble of “institutions, procedures, analyses and reflections, the calculation and tactics through which governmental interventions were devised” (Foucault, 1991:102 cited in Li, 2007:276) that *enable* the community gardens to *become* both in/exclusive spaces.

While Foucault’s neologism of *government through community* is a productive way to think about how gardening practices are devised, it remains too broad a conceptual framework to specifically reveal what goes on in community gardens. Therefore, I introduce the conceptual device of ‘responsibility’ to provide an added dimension of analysis to this issue. ‘Responsibility’ is used with the key axiom that exclusions occur because there are different kinds of responsibilities under the broad ambit of *government through community* - these can be broadly categorized as “garden-centric” or “community-centric” responsibilities. This nuanced heuristic device aims to reveal the different degrees of alignments gardeners have towards the ideals of a “good community” versus “a good garden”; it also aims to illuminate how and why *different* exclusions are produced.

1.2.2 Research Objectives

This research is exploratory and does not purport to represent the views of all the people who self-identify as community gardeners under the CIB program, nor of those who are non-CIB gardeners. Rather, I seek to interrogate the assumptions of ‘community’ in Singapore through the integrated framework of *government through community* and *responsibility*, so as to generate insights on how spatial production of in/exclusions are integral to the community gardens. The objectives of this thesis are therefore to:

(1) Interrogate how CIB gardeners, together with NParks, co-create governmental techniques, practices and responsibilities of an inclusive ‘community’ through community gardening. The purpose of this is to reflect on the role of NParks as the institutional body (which encourages the development of community gardens) in relation to the self-governmentalizing mechanisms adopted by the community gardeners, which ultimately form the desirable values and outcomes via *government through community*.

(2) Mobilize the conceptual device of ‘responsibility’ and uncover the various types of “garden-centric” and “community-centric” responsibilities under the ambit of *government through community*, and in parallel demonstrate how spatial practices of exclusions emerge when these two sets of responsibilities are ideologically incompatible, and conflict with one another.

(3) Demonstrate how governmentality techniques and responsibilities that condition the inclusionary practices under the rhetoric of ‘community’ bonding simultaneously enact exclusionary spatialities, by examining how gardeners a) create their own norms and procedures that prohibit certain behaviors and people, and how governmental techniques are b) differently consumed, (re)interpreted or even resisted by (non)gardeners.

1.3 Thesis Organization

This thesis has seven chapters. Having provided an overview of the research objectives and motivations of the thesis, **Chapter 2** reviews a selection of the literatures that situate community gardens as inclusive and/or exclusive spaces, as well as how these studies have engaged (or lack thereof) with concepts of ‘community’. I justify why I situate my conceptual framework in Nikolas Rose’s Foucauldian perspective of *government through community* in relation to scholarship on in/exclusions in community gardens. I also introduce *responsibility* as a heuristic device that enables us to develop grounded insights on community gardens’ in/exclusions. The methodological considerations and reflections on fieldwork will be covered in **Chapter 3**. **Chapter 4** provides an overview of urban greening and community gardening policies in Singapore. It traces the emerging importance of the ‘community’ peculiar to the political context of Singapore, with a particular emphasis on how community gardens were chosen by the NParks to be managed by para-political institutions known as the RCs. In **Chapter 5**, I provide an empirical exploration of the ways in which gardeners co-produce inclusive practices and behaviors by looking specifically at their ‘inward’ and ‘outward’ “community-centric” responsibilities. **Chapter 6** builds upon the observations yielded in the previous chapter by scrutinizing the exclusions that arise as a result of the negotiation between “garden-centric” and “community-centric” responsibilities in community gardens. In concluding this thesis**, Chapter 7** offers an account of the conceptual and empirical significances of this study to the discipline as a whole, and considers future research possibilities to scholars working on the sub-disciplines of geographies of in/exclusions, governmentality and community gardens.

Chapter 2 LITERATURE REVIEW AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Preamble

This chapter evaluates the set of concepts that underpin my conceptual framework. I first provide a review of the urban community gardening phenomenon (Section 2.2). I begin by heuristically identifying two broad strands of research on community gardens: The first strand positions community gardens as a celebratory project in which they serve as spaces for community bonding, inclusion and social change. The latter strand, in part a response to the former, considers community gardens as spaces of exclusions. I argue that these two related strands of literature suffer from similar weaknesses in that there is an under-theorization of the concept of ‘community’ that leads to essentialized ideals of the ‘community’ as an inclusive and harmonious category. This thesis is therefore a response to the overtly simplistic understandings of what the ‘community’ stands for; concomitantly, it argues that it is not so much a question of whether community gardens are spaces of in/exclusions, but rather of how the socio-spatial practices of in/exclusions arise, and are integral to the sustaining of the community gardens themselves. To this end, I use Foucauldian scholar Nikolas Rose’s interpretation of *government through community* to understand the ‘community’ as a governmental technology and practice in community gardening. I further show how engaging with the heuristic device of *responsibility* can provide an added dimension of understanding and analyzing the intricate governmental techniques employed, and its implications on in/exclusions in community gardens. Taken together, Section 2.5 presents the conceptual framework of this thesis.

2.2 Urban community gardens as research space

2.2.1 Community gardens: spaces of inclusions and community bonding

There has been a long and rich history of practices associated with urban community gardening since the 1970s. While Follmann and Viehoff (2014) note the plethora of terms describing these gardens in their contemporary representations (from city farms, guerrilla gardening, neighbourhood gardening to urban commons), Guitart et al. (2012) suggest that these gardening spaces are mostly identified and conceived as open spaces, where the cultivation of vegetables, fruits and flowers are managed and operated by members of the local community. In this vein, Longhurst (2006) perceptively notes that gardens, gardening and horticulture are receiving increasing attention from geographers and others interested in spatial disciplines, as they provide a meaningful lens for understanding the complexities and ambiguities of social-cultural life.

Much of the scholarship is drawn from empirical studies in the global North, namely in America (see Schmelzkopf, 1995, 2002; Smith & Kurtz, 2003; Eizenberg, 2012a, 2012b, 2013) and Canada (Irvine et al, 1999; Wakefield et al., 2007 Koright & Wakefield, 2011). Situated largely as part of leisure research, the extant literature explicitly emphasizes the role of urban gardens as collective tools for community bonding, in addition to the range of benefits they provide for both individuals and communities (Firth et al., 2011). Popular themes in community gardens range from its purposes, benefits and organizational patterns. Purported as effective spaces to engender community dynamics, studies have been developed to measure and quantify community gardens as spaces of social capital, (Glover 2004; Glover et al., 2005a,b; Harris, 2009; Saldivar-Tanaka & Kransy, 2004; Firth & Pearson, 2010), trust (Kingsley & Townsend, 2006) and friendship (Landman, 1993). More recently, in the context of neoliberal urban restructuring, the literature continues to label community gardens as platforms for the organization and mobilization of inclusive socio-political arrangements to counteract the ill effects of urban problems ranging from competing land uses (Armstrong, 2000; Baker, 2004; Kurtz, 2001; Schmelzkopf, 1995), economic marginalization (Pudup, 2008), environmental injustices (Eizenberg, 2008), food security (Ghose & Pettygrove, 2014a; Staeheli, 2002) and inadequate social service provisions (Eizenberg, 2012b). For instance, Ghose and Pettygrove (2014a) explore how the Harambee community gardens in Wisconsin, United States emerged as a direct result of citizen activism and strong lobbying from its marginalized Black citizens to provide permits for gardening in unused lots. Community gardens thus become spaces of transformation and action where "participants transform space according to their own interests, claim rights to space, engage in leadership and decision-making activities, contest material deprivation, and articulate collective identities" (*ibid*: 1098). Community gardens are also spaces where racial and class divisions are challenged, and where rights to space for citizens marginalized along other lines of social division are asserted (Schmelzkopf, 2002; Staeheli et al., 2002).

These lead us to question *why* the ‘community’ is able to achieve all of the above goals, as well as what scholars mean by the term ‘inclusion’ in studies of community gardens. To this, Jamison (1985) suggests that the fundamental premise of the community gardens is that they entail the formation of an inclusive social network, where the collective resources of neighbors are voluntarily brought together to address and improve a common host of social issues. Similarly, Linn’s study (1999) points to the communal management of resources that enables a collective self-interest in the gardens. In the same way which Linn attributes ‘commonality’ as a theme accounting for the success for community gardens, Follman and Viehoff (2014) extend the argument by noting that community gardeners are a ‘community’ because they co-operate and collaborate to protect and maintain common resources. According to these writers, the commonality of resources and inclusion of members become both a pre-requisite and outcome in the production of ‘community’.

However, insofar as community gardens are especially lauded for being able to serve as important sites of ‘community’ development and practice, there seems to exist an inherent assumption that the ‘community’ *ought* to be a common, inclusive collective to be strategically mobilized in both policy and academic terms (Welch & Panelli, 2007). Important assumptions about the causal relationships between ‘community’, ‘community bonding’ and ‘inclusions’ need to be scrutinized - an argument I will revisit and explain in greater detail later in Section 2.3. However, I will first elaborate on the literatures that have broadly categorized community gardens as spaces of exclusions before returning to this critique.

2.2.2 Community gardens: spaces of exclusions

Contrary to the inclusionary and celebratory gaze of community gardening, researchers in other fields (especially in Geography and the Built-Environment) have increasingly begun to question the uncritical assertion of community gardens as spaces of inclusion. By turning to socio-spatial explanations that showcase the relations of unequal power and heterogeneous distribution of benefits, some have argued that community gardens are exclusive and do not necessarily benefit nor involve communities in the ways they are idealized (Schmelzkopf 1995; Glover, 2004; Irazbal & Punja, 2009; Wang et al., 2014)[6]. For instance, Eizenberg (2012b) borrows the idea of *actually existing neoliberalism* from urban theorists Brenner and Theodore (2002) in her understanding of community gardens in New York City, and proposes that the ‘commons’ are “actually existing”– that is, the lived experiences of ‘community’ are embedded within multiple and uneven realities that may even contradict the ideal of the ‘commons’. In similar fashion, in her study on the differential uses of Swedish community gardens, Becker (2000, cited in Ernwein,

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[6] Admittedly, the scholarship on community gardens as spaces of exclusion remain limited compared to the breath of studies that examine its inclusionary and positive benefits (Section 2.2.1), but a brief evaluation of such literature remains the aim of this section.

2014) contends that scholars tend to study the mechanisms and processes in the production and maintenance of social inclusion. Her work retells the story by examining the *distribution* of social inclusion among Swedish and non-Swedish members of the garden group, and compels scholars to recognize that the inclusive 'community' garden benefits accrued are unequally distributed based on race, nationality gender and other axes of social identity. Being real places within society and space (Del Casino, 2009), community gardens are not exempt from the "actually existing" realities of the 'community' and do not fulfil its ideals of an inclusionary collective, thus dovetailing with Kurtz's (2001) earlier provocation that multiple meanings and experiences in the gardens create differentiated, and thus exclusive access to community gardens.

Likewise, issues of participation, governance and access among different members are as important as distribution of benefits in the excavation of exclusions in community gardens. Increasingly, a small but growing number of scholars argue that community gardens can perpetuate exclusions in the way gardens are governed, accessed and controlled. For instance, Ghose and Pettygrove (2014b) utilize perspectives from Actor-Network Theory (ANT) and assert the need to study interactions among individual actors and the range of socio-political relations which engender, to demonstrate how community gardening networks consist of unequal power contexts that constrain the activities of community garden groups. Eizenberg (2012b) contrasts two models of community garden management by non-governmental organizations in New York City to determine the relationships between exclusion, ownership and (non) participation. On the one hand, the Trust for Public Land model focuses on community engagement and the creation of autonomous community open space. On the other hand, the New York Restoration model emphasizes the preservation of the gardens by means of professional management – that is, it serves as an 'accumulation strategy' (Katz, 1998) that excludes the local users and does not involve as much community participation compared to the former mode of garden. Following Eizenberg (2012b), I suggest that the ways gardens are managed politically in different ways offer productive interpretations of how the 'community' participates, manages and determines the social relations born out of gardening spaces. As such, community gardeners may be alienated from the spaces that are not only not produced for them, but also do not serve their needs or interests. Another related study by Tan and Neo (2009) on Singapore's community gardens illustrates how community gardens, while purportedly belonging to the 'community', are tended exclusively by the Residents' Committee members (seen as complementary to the ruling political party) who limit access to the gardens using locks and fences. Their study not only reminds us to think about exclusion in community gardens beyond the empiricism of everyday social life, but also urges us to question what the 'community' is and ought to be, in order to scrutinize the political values of 'community' gardening played out materially. Therefore, it is clear that exclusions in community gardens are not merely about the distribution of benefits, but also about whose visions of community gardens are recognized, who participates in community garden decision-making and democracy, and what normative values and ideals of the ‘community’ come to matter (Gibson-Graham, 2006).

To summarize the above discussion, while a body of community gardening scholarship shows how community gardens are socially inclusive spaces that challenge economic hardship, under/unemployment, deprivation of services and political vulnerability, scholars have increasingly highlighted the inability of one to participate equally in community gardens due to unequal socio-economic resources, power and political access (Labonte, 2004). The next section furthers the critique on the infecundities of both bodies of literature and provides a nuanced geographical agenda for researchers to place more critical attention on the ‘community’ in community gardens.

2.3 Critique of literatures on community gardens

2.3.1 The under-conceptualization of ‘community’

Having broadly reviewed the above work on community gardens, I argue that they are of interest here less because of what they reveal about the uneven distributions of in/exclusions and ‘community’ bonding, but more because of what they (do not) say about the assumptions of ‘community’ in community gardens. The key critique I wish to propose draws upon Firth et al.’s (2011) observation that the ‘community’ in both sets of community gardening literatures is woven into narratives with astonishing little attention paid to the complexity of the term. I agree with Firth et al. (2011) that it remains often ambiguous what scholars meant by ‘community’ in community gardens. While the term ‘community’ has been used largely unexamined in the literature, and remains a frustratingly difficult word to define (Williams, 1985), at least three preliminary observations about the literature on community gardens and ‘community’ can still be made for now: Firstly, in the words of Silk, the ‘community’ continues to resonate as an idealized collective in which people are prepared “to put some notion of the common good before individual rights and an individualized conception and practice of the good life” (1990:6). Secondly, the ‘community’ remains a unified and harmonious category on its own. Thirdly, there exists a (problematic) causal relationship between the ‘community’ and its capacities to engender ‘community bonding’, often couched in the positive lexicons of inclusion and social capital. However, as Welch and Panelli perceptively critique, the above observations alone are unable to tell us why such constructions of in/exclusions in community gardens are “repeatedly invoked, nor do they provide a robust theorization of the way difference is managed” (2007:351). Put in another way, the authors’ provocations to us are: *Why and how is the ‘community’ so often assumed as a homogeneous, singular and coherent category? In talking about ‘difference’, who provides the necessary conditions to (re)produce spatialities of in/exclusions in community gardens?* These questions inspired by Welch and Panelli, I argue, must be first addressed through a brief historical inquiry of the ‘community’, before providing productive concepts of the ‘community’ to understand the socio-spatial makings of in/exclusions in community gardens.

To excavate the historical assumptions and epistemological ideals of the 'community' is to recognize that writers' assumptions of the desirable 'community' in community gardening literatures were largely drawn from one of the earliest (yet most enduring) conceptualizations of 'community' by German sociologist Ferdinand Tönnies. Writing in the context of a booming capitalist society in 1887, Tönnies was sharply critical of the vagaries of modern capitalism and conceptualized a dichotomy between two observed types of social bonds emerging out of these capitalist exchange relationships: the *gesellschaft* (translated to 'society') based upon unequal exchange in the capitalist society, and the *gemeinschaft* ('community') premised upon similarity and non-exchange (Hoggett, 1997). According to Dixon (2003), It therefore comes with no surprise that the 'community' studies literature which then flourished in the 19th century were narrowly (and problematically) circumscribed to clear demarcations of non-industrial spaces, characterized by research themes rooted in the moral and authentic existence of place more often than not concerned with defending the "cozy, familiarity of place-based communities and neighborhoods" (Cresswell, 2001:14)[7]. Social geographer Paul Cloke (2003) thus rightly critiques that the

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[7] This becomes both an empirical as well as a conceptual problematic of the 'community'. It is an empirical problematic because 'communities' tended to be only identified as rooted in place (Cresswell, 2001), but studies (see Anderson, 1991; Davies & Herbert, 1993) have demonstrated how communities can exist transnationally and do not need to be physically proximate. I hope it is obvious by now that the conceptual problematic of the 'community' (and its consequent impacts on how community gardens are studied) is the central focus of this thesis.

‘community’ as a research crucible became purported as a suitable safeguard against the more formal, abstract and instrumental relationships of industrial capitalist ‘society’, precisely because it became repeatedly characterized with positive lexicons such as ‘face-to-face interactions’, ‘immediacy’ and ‘familial bonds’.

As such, even though it is implicitly recognized in the literature that not all community gardens are the same, the “differences in the ways these gardens serve as arenas for community-building…tend to be subsumed within a generalized advocacy for community gardening” (Kurtz, 2001: 659). I argue that the homogeneous and inclusive potentials of community gardens as expressed by scholars in Section 2.2.1 are first possible only because of these long-standing, handed down values imposed on the concept of ‘community’. In this sense, I argue that the unproblematic discourse of the ‘community’ in the extant community gardening literature must not only be interrogated but also contested, because it has grossly simplified the multiple, contesting and intricate meanings of the ‘community’ and the ways in/exclusions are imagined and materialized.

This critique is not just reserved for studies done on the inclusive outcomes of community. In the same ways in which discussions on the inclusive characteristics of community gardens (Section 2.2.1) have emerged, studies discussing exclusions in community gardens (Section 2.2.2) have similarly not yet fully engaged with the critical (re)conceptualization of the ‘community’. Often, they also fall into the same trap of empiricism without questioning who defines the meanings of ‘community’ in community gardens (for exceptions see Pudup, 2008; Eizenberg, 2012a, b; Ghose & Pettygrove 2014b). An example of this is Tan and Neo's (2009) study on the exclusionary practices in community gardens in Singapore. They argue that non-governmental organizations should replace the grassroots' committees in order to ensure that community gardens are truly communal and inclusive for the 'community'. However, I want to point out that Tan and Neo's intention to idealize 'community' as an inclusive space oversimplifies the realities of the concept of 'community' in praxis, as it hides the processes of disenfranchisements and negotiations that co-constitute the 'community'. Not only has the under-theorization of the concept of 'community' in their empirical study emerged from *a priori* ideals of what the 'community' is and ought to be, their premise reflects a continuous misconception that 'inclusion' and 'exclusion' are seen as two independent spheres, rather than as integral parts of the totality of community gardening. In doing so, for its empirical rigor, such analyses of 'exclusive' outcomes of community gardening seem to further reinforce certain assumptions about the 'community' and what it means to be 'included'.

2.3.2 Is the 'community' still important?

Thus far, I have argued that a lack of conceptual reflection on the 'community' in relation to the *specific* mechanisms of in/exclusions is in part a result of the conceptual assumptions of the 'community', when viewed especially in the historical context of industrialization. Cast in this context, some scholars such as Pudup contend that it may become difficult to meaningfully assess the community gardens' "strategy or putative success – not to mention their motivations - at producing communities, subjects or spaces" (2008:1231). She goes as far as to reject the term "community garden" and instead prefers ''organized garden project" as a more accurate term to contextualize the organization of San Francisco's gardens in her study, as well as to stay away from the repetitive debates over hoary conceptualizations of the 'community'. However, I would like to propose that the term 'community' still has currency, for the reasons Aitken notes below:

> "The **chimera of how we imagine community politically is precisely its usefulness for geographers**. However vague, the term conveys nurturing meanings of positivity, and is always something both desirable and attainable. It is this **tension between the 'imaginations of community' and its outcomes that sets the most important stage for geographical inquiry**" (Aitken, 2009:225, emphasis mine).

I concur with Aitken that it is precisely the ambiguity that surrounds the 'community' that makes it meaningful for geographical scrutiny. By extension, I am reminded of Kurtz's earlier provocation that the "spatial organization of community gardens and especially their degree of enclosure reveals and influences concepts of 'community' " (2001, cited in Ernwein, 2014:78). More profoundly, I argue that it is possible to unravel new empirical meanings of the 'community' if we understand in/exclusions as necessarily integral to the construction and maintenance of 'community', instead of seeing them as separate, dichotomous spheres incompatible with each other. This is significant for the literature on community gardens because it departs from the normative ideal of what a community garden is and ought to be (i.e. that community gardens ought to be inclusive), and opens up the possibility of developing understandings of how in/exclusions are central to how the ‘community’ is necessarily imagined, maintained and negotiated. The next section introduces the conceptual interventions that hope to address this research agenda, while opening up discussions on the epistemological assumptions of the ‘community’ in community gardens.

2.4 Conceptual interventions

2.4.1 Governmentality/*Government through community*

Here, I propose a Foucauldian reading of the ‘community’ as a productive way to understand the ways in which in/exclusions are central to how ‘community’ and community gardening are necessarily imagined and (re)produced. While the ‘community’ has always been prominent in political thought and has appealed differently to scholars across different times, it has been reinvigorated by broader changes in urban political governance, or what French philosopher Michel Foucault devised as the practice of governmentality in advanced Western liberal societies in the 1970s (Dean, 1996; Cruikshank, 1999; Raco & Imrie, 2000; Lemke, 2001). As delivered in his 1970 lectures at the Collège *de France*, Foucault’s concept of governmentality is the mobilization of technologies of government, used to “shape, normalize and instrumentalize the conduct thought, decisions and aspirations of others in order to achieve the objectives they consider desirable” (Miller and Rose, 1990:8). By viewing political rule less as a formulation of social *control* but more of social *production*, Foucault proposed that governmentality unfolds through the mobilization of the aspirations of the governable and self-governing subjects, in which the production and maintenance of 'community' is contingent on.

My interest in governmentality as a suitable conceptual framing for this thesis stems from its capacity to illuminate the relationship between the 'community' in relation to modalities of social control and government (Rose, 1999), which Foucauldian scholar Nikolas Rose terms *government through community*[8]. In his celebrated book *Powers of Freedom*, Rose presents a compelling critique of the community as a modality of governmentality and the production of active citizen-subjects. For him, the significance of establishing such spaces is its intent to govern the behaviors and aptitudes of individuals *through* community from a distance. Rose most perceptively argues that the

> "community is actually instituted in its contemporary form as a sector for government… deployed in novel programmes and techniques which encourage and harness active participation of self-management and identity construction, or personal ethics and collective allegiances. I term this *government through community*" (1999:176).

From Rose, we understand that the 'community' emerges as an integral apparatus to normalize the conduct specifically through decisions and aspirations of others so as to achieve the governing outcomes considered acceptable and desirable (Miller & Rose, 1990). *Government through community* can be seen as "the emergence of a range of rationalities and techniques that seek to govern without governing society, to govern through regulated choices made by discrete and autonomous actors in the context of their particular commitments to families and communities" (Rose, 1996:330). Consequently, the 'community' also becomes a useful means to organize citizen-subjects to produce obligations that are aligned with the State. Raco and Imre (2000) go further to say that such articulation of new governmentalities will have a particularly integral role in the emergence of new patterns of society-centered patterns of government. In this sense, *government through community* entails a "broader understanding of power as not merely pertaining to the State but also emanating from heterogeneous social formations – or what Certomà terms the "self-government of individual and collective behavior" (2015:29). This provides us with a language and framework to study the constellations of techniques, methods and power in its specificity of 'community', and the effects that are produced on the very subjects involved in community gardening. This perspective on 'community' has profound consequences on the way we excavate in/exclusions as an integral process of 'community', as I seek to elaborate below.

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[8] I will be using the terms 'governmentality' and 'government through community' interchangeably for the rest of the thesis. It will also be made clearer throughout the thesis why *government through community* is an appropriate framework for the CIB community gardens.

2.4.2 *Government through community*: in/exclusions in community gardens

As Pudup (2008) articulates, the act of community gardening as a product of governmentality provides us with the opportunity to explore how community gardening deploys and manages participative community rights, responsibilities and commitments as techniques of government (Linn, 1999; Domene & Sauri, 2007;

Summerville et al., 2008). Community gardens can be veritable spaces for “government political programmes and (serve) as a practical tool for directing citizens’ desires, bodily experience, knowledge and mind-setting” (Certomà, 2015:31) with the aim of creating practices inclusivity, sociability and moral codes aligned towards the ideals of government.

In this context, while there is a small and growing body of scholarship which positions community gardens as a governmentality strategy to cultivate citizen-subjects towards a broader set of ideals such as community bonding (Domene & Sauri, 2007) and responsible citizenship (Pudup, 2008), these studies are not explicitly linked to the production of inclusive spaces even though they remain couched under the umbrella term ‘community’ bonding. An exception to this is Certomà (2015), who utilized a historical planning-governmentality perspective to show how Parisian public gardens (albeit not strictly ‘community gardens’) in the nineteenth century were strategized as harmonious spaces to alleviate social tensions, thus serving as a counterrevolutionary strategy. He makes particularly evident how community gardens serve as a tool in which the ‘community’ can be cultivated and even enforced as part of a ‘‘strategy of moral reform which relies upon the re-introduction of responsibility… through which [exists] attempts to impose and inculcate external and binding moral codes grounded by reference to tradition or theology’’ (Rose, 1999:185). Taking into account that there is scant literature that makes explicit the relationship between *government through community* and inclusion in community gardens, I note that the concept of *government through community* and its attendant moral techniques and practices are useful in revealing the in/exclusive governmental behaviours and techniques for this study on Singapore's community gardens. Also, it needs stating at this point that this thesis does not aim to fix what 'community' is or ought to be in relation to community gardening, but to explore how and why it is used in the minds of its practitioners in the Singapore context, and how it serves as a useful analytical category of political governance and practice to enact realities of in/exclusions.

Emerging from the parent concept of governmentality, too, are the writings by Foucault on exclusion. Foucault had proposed for 'exclusion' as co-constitutive of, and a requirement of outcomes of governmentality. In *The Order of Things* (1970), Foucault suggested an opposition between the 'Other' and the 'Same' which then framed many of his major governmentality studies on mechanisms of exclusions within European society in the 16th century. Exclusion is the condition for the possibility of political order for the 'Same', whereby what is deemed as 'Other' necessitates some form of policing, removal or even eradication (Philo, 2011). In employing the *government through community* framework, I have established earlier that community gardening and the attendant practices of an inclusive 'community' are embedded in a practice of discipline, control and subjectification. Community spaces are therefore subject to pressures to "conform to certain socialized norms, and to sanctioned rules appropriate to a particular community" (Del Casino, 2009:137). In the context of community gardens, the fulfillment of normatively held aspirations cannot be fully attained, because at times (non)community members are unwilling and unable to do so. Therefore, despite the harmonious and celebratory tone surrounding the term ‘community’, exclusions *in and beyond* the ‘community’, then, emerges necessarily as the “outcome of a mismatch between the norms, aspirations, and communication through threads of social power and control, and the individual’s identification with or ability to achieve those expectations” (Taket et al., 2009:31)[9].

Additionally, using *government through community* more explicitly as an analytic to study exclusions in community gardens is important because it provides an alternative to understanding ‘exclusion’. I argue that ‘exclusion’ is not merely as an *outcome* of marginalization; rather, exclusion is also a *process* that creates its own space for claiming alternative understandings of practices beyond what is discursively scripted by the ‘powerful’ versus the ‘marginalized’. Past accounts of exclusions in community gardens have focused mostly on how non-gardeners become excluded due to the actions of the gardeners (Tan & Neo, 2009), without considering the agency of the “excluded”. Understanding exclusion through governmentality opens up new possibilities beyond this argument. We can acknowledge that “excluded” members are not always passive; nor are they constantly deprived of gardening opportunities through mechanisms made through familiar Marxist accounts of ‘exclusions’[10]. Instead, as I will exemplify in my empirical chapters (5 & 6) , exclusion in community gardens also emerges out of capacities of the “excluded”, who are in actual fact vehicles of power (not powerlessness) resisting against the desired techniques and surveillances of *government through community*. This resonates with what Rose argued as one of the key tenets of the concept – that is, the ability to reject the practices of governmentality such that “to the extent that others claim to speak in our name, we have the right thereby to ask them by what right they claim to know us so well, to the extent that others seek to govern us in their own in their own interest” (1999:58).

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[9] While some studies on social exclusions tend not to be discussed in terms of Foucauldian readings of *government through community*, they clearly coincide with aspects of this concept. For example, Iris Marion Young (1990) has urged that the ‘community’ is exclusive precisely because it showcases a fixing of norms legitimized by a collective group of individuals having an intent for fusion of subjects with one another, which in operation excludes those with whom the group does not identify.

To summarize the discussion thus far, a framework which makes explicit the relationship between *government through community* and in/exclusions can inform our understanding of community gardens. However, while a Foucauldian perspective provides us with a lens to study community gardens via the framework of *government through community*, Foucault himself remained rather ambiguous as to how this may specifically unfold in socio-political reality (see Chapter 3). The task, then, is to introduce a more nuanced analytical device that allow us to privy into the governmentalizing processes that produce spatialities of in/exclusions. The next section introduces the heuristic concept of ‘responsibility’ as a way forward.

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[10] While there are varying and complex forms of exclusions, exclusion has been loosely defined by Neo-Marxist scholars as the economic and political inability to “participate in activities and society and connect with many of the jobs, service and facilities” (Hine, 2009: 429). For a strong critique of the Marxist accounts of ‘exclusion’ that have overwhelmingly dominated the literature, see Cameron (2006).

2.4.3 ‘Responsibility’ as analytical device

In the context of community gardens, I propose we need to look at the specific actions of community gardening used to construct and produce ‘community’ spaces. Here, I use ‘responsibility’ as an analytical lens which builds on *government through community* to make sense of the processes of in/exclusions highlighted in Section 2.4.2.

‘Geographies of responsibility’ versus banal responsibilities

To begin with, the geographical literature is replete with rich theorizations of ‘geographies of responsibility’ in ways which are *not* what I aim to pursue here, but still warrant a brief explanation. For example, Massey (1993, 2004) and Popke (2003) have developed the literatures on ‘geographies of responsibility’ with an ethical dimension as a response to studies that privilege particularist and nationalist ways of conceiving space. Massey contends that instead of thinking of places as areas with boundaries around, an “outward lookingness of space requires us to think of spaces as extra-verted, which includes a consciousness of its links with the whole world, which integrates in a positive way the global and the local” (1993:6). Such new theorizations have implicated the epistemology of ‘geographies of responsibility’ in at least two ways: first, on what (ethical) responsibility *is and ought* to be, and secondly, on *where* we are responsible to – that is, “we are ethically responsible to areas beyond the bounds of place not because of what we have done, but because of what we are” (Massey, 2004:16). The proliferation of studies on ‘responsibility’ have therefore unsurprisingly focused on ethical and moral dimensions ranging from Fair Trade (Whatmore & Clarke, 2008; Clarke et al., 2007), sweatshop labour regimes (Allen, 2008) to ethical consumption (Clarke, 2008). Such studies have sought to rethink the intersections between space and responsibility, thus providing a response to geographical works which discussed the notion of responsibility in the context of territorial primacy of politics which envision space as a site of contained and idealized homogeneity (Sibley, 1995).

Situated in the above conceptual development, in tourism studies, Sin (2014) critiques the over-valorization of morality and ethics in the extant ‘geographies of responsibility’ literature. She alerts us to the complexities and plurality of (the practices of) responsibilities, and the need to contextualize these responsibilities. Recognizing Sin’s argument, I want to mobilize ‘responsibility’ in this thesis as a means to highlight the pathways and actions in which community gardeners meet the commonsensical and banal expectations of the activities that they are engaging in. Such responsibilities hardly conform to the terrain of responsibility debates surrounding ethics, morality and compassion as developed by Massey. To illustrate my point, we may conceive how a teacher’s responsibility is to conduct lessons, prepare teaching materials and grade assignments; a chef’s responsibility is to invent new menus, prepare food safely and oversee the general administrations in the kitchen. By the same token, a community gardener’s responsibility may be to prune and grow new fruits, or encourage members of the ‘community’ to participate in gardening. The framing of these sorts of banal, commonsensical responsibilities allows us understand how community gardeners self-governmentalize to develop responsibilities of the 'garden' or/and the 'community'. I argue that the specific *pathways* in which governmentality techniques circulate through these responsibilities may then very well be a reason why in/exclusions matter.

A clarification of terms: 'Responsibilization' versus 'responsibility'

In introducing this banal use of responsibility in my conceptual framing, I am not suggesting that Rose's concept of *government through community* (1999) is devoid of any indication of responsibility – in fact, it is congruent with the concept of responsibility I propose in this thesis. However, a few clarifications over the use of terms are necessary here. Stemming directly from the parent concept of governmentality and extended by secondary Foucauldian scholars in the recent two decades, O'Malley (2009) perceptively notes that the term 'responsibilization' (instead of 'responsibility') has been used in the governmentality literature in the mid-1990s to illustrate how self-governing subjects are rendered individually responsible to co-produce desired outcomes, which previously would have been the duty of another. The use of this term was specifically derived from the surrounding neo-liberal economic climate, and was key to the process in which the Government 'passed back' economic and socio-political responsibilities to individuals and communities, thus representing a "discourse of control that shapes the conduct of conduct within the population" (Raco & Imrie, 2000: 2197). Amidst this very recent neoliberal reading of Foucault's work, scholars working on the nexus of ‘responsibilization’ and governmentality have thus used various contexts such as crime prevention (O’ Malley, 1992; O’ Malley & Palmer, 1996), poverty reduction and homelessness (Whiteford, 2010) and environmental sustainability (Cohen & MacCarthy, 2014) to formulate accounts of how these actions regulate and constitute practices of neoliberal ‘responsibilization’. For instance, Summerville et al. (2008) review the case of sustainable development policies in Queensland, Australia and contend that ‘responsibilization’ is explicit in the language of sustainable development policy insofar as community *participation* is framed as community *responsibilities* at national and regional levels of Government. In doing so, the writers argue that ‘responsibilization’ works in concert as techniques of government and is moderated by the “ultimate responsibility to participate in a manner that contributes to achieving pre-defined economic and environmental objectives such as environmental conservation, water-use efficiency and sustainable farming” (*ibid*:11). Similarly, the process of ‘responsibilization’ as fundamental to the government of community is echoed by Whiteford (2010) in his study on homeless migrants in London, who contends that responsibility is orientated to involve processes of local engagement and empowerment, which fundamentally transforms what it means to be a responsible citizen amidst new neoliberal imperatives.

Against the overtly neoliberal backdrop in which ‘responsibilization’ has been conceptually and empirically developed, O’Malley (2009) critiques the literature by noting how the scholarship has too readily assumed how in almost all examples where a) policies have changed b) and when individuals and communities at a local level emerge as active agents, these become scholarly examples of 'responsibilization'. Following O'Malley, I note that we are increasingly confronted with variegated processes of 'responsibilization' that bring forth diverse socio-political conditions, institutional frames and cultural formations that cannot be adequately attributed to the umbrella term of neoliberalism. In other words, it is problematic to emplace all cases of 'responsibilizations' as artefacts and outcomes of the neoliberal agenda because this ignores particular socio-political specificities that give rise to practices of 'responsibilizations' in specific socio-political spaces. In part, this critique stems from a broader assertion made by urban theorists who have launched trenchant critiques against representing the 'neoliberal' as a monolithic, catch-all agenda (Brenner & Theodore, 2002). Against this background, community gardening in Singapore then presents us with one of many available context-specific expressions to renew existing approaches towards understanding processes of 'responsibilization' which I put forth as the conceptual agenda for my study. Therefore, I want to clarify that instead of using the term 'responsibilization', I prefer to use its variant, 'responsibility' to more clearly articulate the key axioms of how this heuristic device is used in this thesis, while still retaining the conceptual rigour of what 'responsibilization' means (Axiom 1).

Key Axioms of 'Responsibility'

Pertinently, the use of 'responsibility' signifies an extension from the Foucauldian understanding of 'responsibilization' to produce a device that is specific to understanding why in/exclusions are necessarily found in community gardens. In this third and last section, I elaborate on the three key axioms of ‘responsibility’ used in this thesis.

Axiom 1: Governmental practices and techniques as acts of responsibility

‘Responsibility’ offers an analytical basis for deciphering the governmental processes, performances and conditions that give rise to community gardens as necessarily in/exclusive spaces. In line with the conceptual value of ‘responsibilization’ as I have demonstrated earlier, the first axiom posits that mentalities of ‘community-bonding’ and inclusion are demonstrated through commonsensical, banal and everyday practices that maintain the community garden. These can be collectively termed as ‘responsibility’ (or ‘responsibilities’ in its plural form). Community gardeners, through the demonstration of their responsibilities, employ techniques of surveillance and self-governance in line with the state’s intention of producing outcomes such as the production of green spaces, community bonding and inclusivity. Some responsibilities are seen as more legitimate (and thus included) while others are rejected (and thus excluded) if they do not fit into a predefined set of ‘responsible’ gardening behavior.

Axiom 2: “Garden-centric” versus “community-centric” responsibilities

I propose that under the broad umbrella of *government through community* in community gardening, responsibilities can be broadly classified as either more or less “garden-centric” or “community-centric”, which has serious implications on the ways community garden spaces become necessarily in/exclusive. Drawing from Kurtz (2001) who notes that scholars have not given due attention to how the terms ‘garden’ and ‘community’ connote different and perhaps conflicting agendas, I argue that “garden-centric” and “community-centric” responsibilities can be seen as the most legible and tangible configurations of community gardening as governmental practice. While “garden-centric” responsibilities involve mundane acts of weeding, pruning, watering and tending to the plants as well as maintaining the garden physically, “community-centric” responsibilities can be conceived as responsibilities more attuned towards governmentalized or “responsibilized” form of state-informed gardening goals surrounding the discourse of inclusive community bonding. This categorization is important because exclusions emerge often when the responsibilities towards the ‘garden’ do not gel neatly with the responsibilities of the ‘community’, or are even in conflict in one another[11]. At the same time, this typology provides us with a crucial window for a more nuanced reflection on how not all responsibilities result in the same form and type of exclusion[12].

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[11] However, does not mean that *government through community* has failed, but illuminates the instance when conflicting responsibilities found within the practice of community gardening may account for the exclusions present.

[12] As a clarification, this is not to say that “garden-centric” responsibilities are outside the governmental process; instead as I will demonstrate most explicitly in Sections 5.2, 5.5 and 6.3, “garden-centric” responsibilities in fact are central to the

Axiom 3: Individual intentions of community gardeners

The plurality of responsibilities directs attention to the third axiom of this concept - the practice of *government through community* is subject to the individual intentions of community gardeners. ‘Responsibility’ serves as a frame to understand how programs of governmentality are not the product of a single intention, but a heterogeneous assemblage of individual intentions combining various “forms of practical knowledge with modes of perception, practices of calculation, vocabularies, types of authority, forms of judgments, and so forth” (Foucault, 1980:194). Taking on Young’s (1990) critique that the ideal of the ‘community’ represses and denies differences amongst subjects, using ‘responsibility’ to conceptualize the relationship amongst all actors provides room to show how such governmentality practices cannot be reconfigured according to plan especially when they are individually consumed, (re)interpreted or even resisted by (non)community gardeners. Following Summerville et al. (2008), I contend that *government through community* is never complete; these “garden-centric” and “community-centric” responsibilities are often carried out tenuously and incompletely, often subject to negotiations and/or rejections by those individually involved. Interrogating the individual gardeners’ canvass of

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overall development of *government through community* and its attendant in/exclusions.

in/exclusions becomes one way to capture these variegated, incomplete and complex processes of *government through community*[13].

To summarize the above discussion, the heuristic device of responsibility is useful to determine how and why exclusions specific to community gardens take place, despite the invention of the 'community' as a (oft-assumed) program that inculcates multiform techniques of cohesion, harmony and inclusion. The next section concludes the chapter by showcasing my conceptual framework.

2.5 Conceptual Framework: Responsibilities, government through community, in/exclusions in community gardens

This thesis utilizes the practices of community gardening and the behavior of community gardeners as the starting point to interrogate the rationalities and practices espoused by the gardeners, and how they are integral to the production of community gardens as necessarily in/exclusionary spaces. I contend that a more detailed reappraisal of the concept of 'community', and the political and discursive contexts in which the term is articulated, negotiated and even rejected in the literature on in/exclusions in community gardens is sorely lacking. To address this gap, the conceptual framework (Figure 2.1) integrates understandings of my two key concepts to satisfy how we not only need an analysis of the 'community' discourse itself, but also probe into how responsibilities are central to spatialities of in/exclusions integral to the maintenance of the community gardens.:

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[13] As an extension, combining this axiom with perspectives from the second axiom, individual gardeners are most likely to exhibit a negotiation of both "garden-centric" and "community-centric" responsibilities; however, one of the two categories will feature more significantly than the other in most individual accounts of the community gardeners, albeit to different degrees.

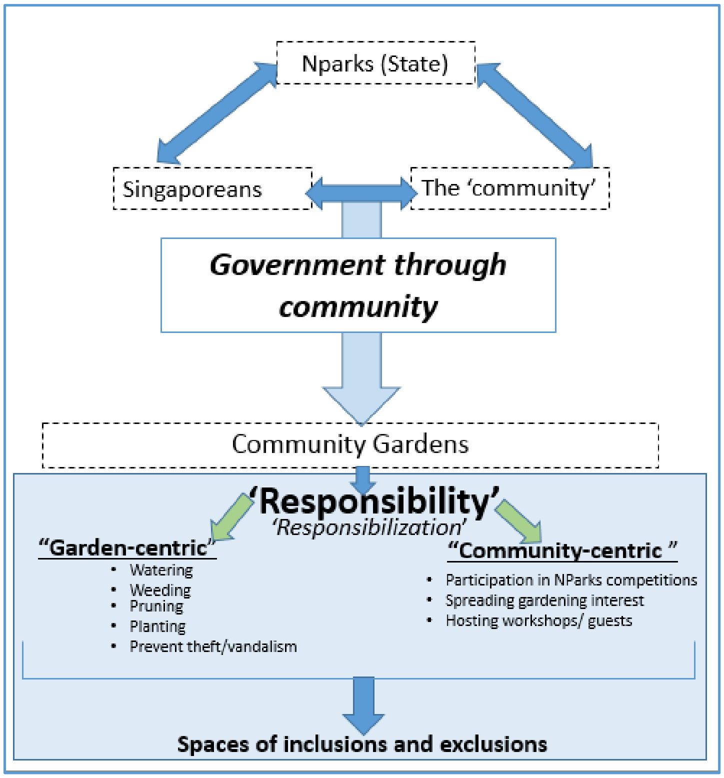
Nparks (State)
Singaporeans
The 'community'
Government through community
Community Gardens
'Responsibility'
'Responsibilization'
"Garden-centric"
Watering
Weeding
Pruning
Planting
Prevent theft/vandalism
"Community-centric "
Participation in NParks competitions
Spreading gardening interest
Hosting workshops/ guests
Spaces of inclusions and exclusions

Figure 2.1Conceptual Framework

Two key aims are satisfied. Firstly, the conceptual framework allows us to uncover political dimensions of rule particularly through the 'community'– in other words, we are alerted to how the 'community' becomes an important political category for governmentalizing processes in community gardens to engender. This is represented in the conceptual framework by the three two-way arrows joining the State (NParks), Singaporeans, and the 'community'. The two-way arrows represent how all three actors are actively involved in the production and co-constitution of such knowledge makings which ultimately constitute the process of *government through community*. In doing so, it challenges us to interrogate community gardening in Singapore via three ways: first, where appeals for gardening, community bonding and inclusion come from and how they are articulated and expressed; second, how community gardeners are actively constituted and refigured through ideal outcomes as active citizen-subjects; and third, to examine the techniques in which the community gardeners whose responses towards governmental ideals of ‘community’ are deeply variegated, which ultimately produce community gardens as necessarily spaces of in/exclusions.

Secondly, the conceptual framework fulfils the argument that the study of community gardens as *necessarily* in/exclusive must be situated in relation to broader understandings of everyday, banal responsibilities in the community garden. I have intentionally subsumed the conceptual tenets of ‘responsibilization’ under the heuristic device of ‘responsibility’. Through this, we are alerted to how there exists a range of “garden-centric” and “community-centric” responsibilities as represented by the two green arrows in the conceptual framework. In particular, by analyzing these different forms of responsibilities, we are able to understand why inasmuch as community gardens are places around which collective meaning, solidarity and identity are constructed in relation to governmentalizing ideals of the state, they are simultaneously spaces which co-constitute exclusions which maintain the ‘community’.

How then, do we go about the lived experiences and responsibilities of community gardeners? What are some of the methodological challenges and considerations involved in trying to apprehend these realities of ‘community’ through in/exclusions?

The next chapter moves on to reflect upon such questions.

Chapter 3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGIES

3.1 Preamble

This chapter discusses the methodology and methods used to study the governmentalizing techniques of community gardeners integral to spatialities of in/exclusions. Section 3.2 evaluates my methodology with the key aim of justifying the integration of Foucauldian methodology (namely genealogy) with the calls of feminist ethnography to recognize research as constitutive of subjective, unexpected and situated practices. This not only points towards the messiness and 'interpretive' nature of knowledge-making, but also forces us to consider the assumptions we as researchers bring to the process of data collection. Section 3.3 discusses the methods employed in the field – namely semi-structured interviews, participant observation and discourse analysis.

3.2 Integrating Genealogy with Ethnography

3.2.1 Foucault's toolbox: governmentality, geneaology and the 'subject'

The previous chapter has outlined my intention to use the broad Foucauldian concept of governmentality to discuss how community gardeners produce both narratives of in/exclusions in Singapore's community gardens. How then, did Foucault conduct empirical research to showcase these realities of governmental prescriptions and programs? As Tamboukou (1999) notes, to say that Foucault's methodology is post-structural is not a stretch at all, because it is both difficult and frustrating if one seeks to apply a "check-list" of Foucauldian methodology. According to MacLaren (2009), most Foucauldian scholars would not disagree that Foucault himself had never articulated a clear precept of what his methodologies were with regards to empirical data. Furthermore, even though Foucault had developed robust theoretical interconnections between power, knowledge and discourse, he remained unapologetically ambiguous on the "how" of doing research, instead preferring his books to be seen as a "tool box which others can rummage through to find a tool which they can use however they wish in their own area" (Foucault, 1974, cited in O'Farrell, 2005:50).

Inasmuch as the spirit of post-structuralism remains (in that scholars recognize the plurality and versatility of approaches in which knowledge can be made), it must be recognized that Foucault's methodology emerged from very specific historical situations in which they were explored in. In search for a specific source of methodological inspiration to study governmentality, scholars have appealed to his well-known *The Archaeology of Knowledge* (2000 [1972]) as an important reference for key principles to uncover the "series of particular mechanisms, definable and defined, that seem capable of inducing behaviors and discourses" (Foucault, 1996:394). In the book, Foucault drew upon Nietzsche's genealogy of morals and introduced the term 'genealogy' as a way to explore "specific political rationalizations emerging in precise sites and at specific historical moments, and underpinned by coherent systems of thought, and show how different kinds of calculations, strategies and tactics were linked to each" (Rose, 1999:24). One key axiom was to study how systems of political thought existed beyond the subjectivities of those ruled. Foucault himself proposed:

> "one has to dispense of the subject, get rid of the subject itself that's to say, arrive at an analysis which can account for the constitution of the subject within a historical framework. And this is what I would call genealogy… without having to make reference to a subject which is either transcendental in relation to the field of events or run in its empty sameness throughout the course of history" (Foucault, 1980: 117).

In the above, Foucault seems to suggest that the *subject* in question need not remain within the confines of research when one is studying governmentality – to "get rid" of the subject is apparently acceptable when one studies the course of history. Instead, Foucault turned to archives consisting of European doctrines of politics and documents, and argued that these texts were integral to the range of regulatory practices. While Foucault's disposal of the subject has shed light on how human conduct is shaped by calculated means and techniques, scholars have criticized he elides how practices of governmentality are experienced and negotiated by those subjects enmeshed in such governing modalities, or how governmentality as a political process is expressed as lived practices and experiences on the governed (Hartstock, 1990; Still, 1994). In stopping short of inquiring the subjectivities of governmentalizing techniques in his methodology, the subject is thus seen as a mere outcome of governmentalizing techniques, where they “become obliterated or are recreated as passive objects” (Hartstock, 1990:167). While I do not think that this is necessarily Foucault’s mistake for dispensing the subject since his focus was firmly on the interpretations of archived data and political documents, I recognize that governmentalizing practices are far from what political documents may capture – instead, they are manifested in “contradictory, contested, and influenced by the actions of subjects who respond to government agendas in a variety of ways” (Raco, 2003:91). In doing so, writers who separate governmental rationalities from the study of situated practices - or what Lillis (2008) refers to as ‘texts’ versus ‘contexts’ - have problematically missed out on how governmental programs are configured by the very subjects they purport to control (Li, 2007).

How, then, does a Foucauldian scholar resolve the quandaries over the limitations of genealogy empirically? The answer, I think, is to take on Foucault’s suggestion – to use his work as a ‘toolbox’ and to “draw on his theories and to use it however it best suits our thematic research schema” (McLaren, 2009:1). Simply put, the methodology of this research encompasses not only the genealogy as Foucault proposes, but also consists of its effects, messiness and realities best informed through ethnography - two realms in which Tania Li, a feminist ethnographer, reckons Foucault and other secondary scholars have keep apart (2009)[14]. I express caution in trying to understand the social-political context of community gardening context solely by reference to the political documents that are produced surrounding the topic. I wish to orientate my methodology as an inquiry into governmentality that combines an analysis of analyzing governmental rationalities (their genealogy, prescriptions and interventions), with an evaluation of what happens when these rationalities become part of the processes they would regulate. In this context, I follow Tania Li (2007) who used feminist ethnography with genealogy in her study on Indonesian politics, to look at the subjectivities and lived experiences of the community gardeners in the context of this thesis. This not only bridges the ontological divide between 'text' and 'context' (Lillis, 2008), but more profoundly alerts us to study the constellations of power in its specificity of time and place, in relation to the effects that are produced on the subjects which governmentality was meant to target. This is the methodology I wish to argue for in this thesis, in simultaneity with its broader ethical-political implications and reflections on positionality I cover in the ensuing section.

3.2.2 Beyond 'addition' of Genealogy to Ethnography

My methodological engagement with genealogy and ethnography answers the questions of what do people connected with governmental programs actually do, in addition to how these practices are interpreted differently by subjects. I wish to emphasize that the combination of genealogy and ethnography is not just a matter of ‘adding and stirring’ both methodologies together so as to satisfy the requirements of the research question. Beyond that, we are encouraged to engage with a host of considerations raised by ethnographers with regards to the issues of power/control which saturate the researcher-researched relationship (Still, 1994). The calls for methodological reflexivity and an awareness of one’s multiple positionalities are most explicitly found in the works of feminists who have called for researchers to “make visible our own critical positioning within the structure of power” (McDowell, 1992:413) in engaging with ethnographic inquiry. Drawing upon reflections in my field journal, I am simultaneously reminded of feminist geographers’ call for researchers to ‘write’ and evaluate our own positionalities and the assumptions we bring to the process of research (Rose, 1997). To illustrate this, I briefly reflect on some encounters during my research process. Following Punch (2012) who encourages ethnographers to incorporate our diary extracts into methodological accounts, Table 3.1 shows the first encounter at JK3 community garden recorded in my field diary that exemplifies the (political) discussion and the power relations between me and my respondent, in relation to my research assumptions and positionality:

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[14] For an extended critique on Foucault's rejection of ethnography, see Li (2007).

Transcribed Interview Excerpt	**Field diary Reflections**
Date: 29 June 2014 (First meeting with Mr. Bala, Chairman of the Jalan Kayu Zone 3 Garden)	This was my first meeting with Mr. Bala. I had entered the field with the

N: So what is your **research question and what are the assumptions you have**? Are you doing Masters by coursework or research? CY: Oh, put simply, I am trying to find our why there are problems and potential exclusions in the garden even though community is often seen as cohesive. N: You know why I ask you, it's **because I have done my Masters before also… maybe you can make it not so much like research**, like in a sense sitting down and interviewing. You can just chat with the gardeners. You will be able to find everything you want – inclusion, exclusion… Also **have to be careful on how you are quoting us**. CY: Yes, sure, the University has a policy to protect respondents too.	assumption that community gardeners would be very keen to freely share their experiences with me. Mr. Bala seemed experienced in academic research and started off by asking me about my research assumptions. He also expressed caution with regards to the explicit use of interviews in my research, and negotiated with me to utilize a more covert and "participant observation-like" methodology. In keeping with the "friendly ethnographer" virtue, I tried to conduct research in ways which he suggested. Towards the end of the research process then did I manage to conduct sit-down interviews with him and the gardeners. However, this situation was something that I did not expect beforehand. Most importantly, I felt intimidated to be questioned about my research assumptions.

Table 3.1Transcript Excerpt and Field Diary (emphasis mine)

In the above encounter, I found my research capability as a student researcher questioned and challenged when I interacted with Bala, the JK3 garden chairperson. This was because his previous experiences in conducting academic research seemed to make him more experienced (and therefore seemingly more authoritative) than I was. The encounter reminded me that positionalities goes beyond who we are and what we feel, but is also largely dependent on how others see us (Cupples, 2002) - in this situation, I could have been viewed as a less experienced researcher compared to my respondent, who was able to assume knowledge and authority over how I conducted my research. However, apart from this above incident, the rest of the gardeners at JK3 were exceedingly welcoming and gracious, to the point that I would feel slightly embarrassed and unworthy of their generous hospitality towards me. As the gardeners often jokingly quipped, I was the "*small girl, very poor thing, with the broken wrist doing research*". In retrospect, my broken wrist at the time of the visit and my consequent positionalities as an "injured researcher" became more of a strength than a vulnerability as the gardeners often asked me what happened to me when they saw my bandaged arm in a splint (which became a perfect conversation starter!), and why I was conducting research despite my injury.

In the second encounter, an enthusiastic community gardener from Tampines Starlight Harmony Garden uploaded a few photographs of gardeners and me on their Facebook Group Page, a popular social media website used by interest groups and communities to share their garden activities. This Facebook post was made available for public view and was accompanied with my entire research agenda, which I had sent via email earlier as part of my research proposal. While initially surprised and even taken aback at the over-enthusiasm of the gardener, I later learnt that it was not uncommon for some community gardens to engage with social media platforms actively to showcase the wide range visitors they host, to keep in contact with visitors, as well as to boost the publicity of their gardens (see Section 5.5 for the reasons why this is done). On one hand, while I did not mind that my picture was posted on their public social media site since it was unlikely that it would result in any grievous harm or distress, I questioned on the other hand if the anonymity and safety of the researcher (myself) would be compromised in the process of conducting research. Reflecting on this encounter after my fieldwork, I contend that this problematic on researcher's safety is perhaps a less explored problem in the geographical literature on research ethics. While most literature on research ethics rightly discusses the safety risks for respondents involved in a study due to possible exploitations and oppressions (and remains firm on the need to minimize these risks), less has been discussed on how researchers themselves may be placed in a state of precariousness by their respondents (Davidson, 2004). This second encounter with my respondents, while neither an entirely harmful nor negative experience, hints at the need to grapple with less familiar debates concerning the potential for personal distress for researchers imposed by the respondents.

Having reflected on these two encounters, it is clear that while ethnography provides space to understand subjects' production of situated knowledges, an ethnographic method more profoundly awards us the lens to acknowledge the messiness of positionalities and their attendant political relationships that emerge as part of the research process. In what follows, I document the methods used to study the lived practices and experiences of my respondents.

3.3 Field Techniques

3.3.1 Semi-structured Interviews

Semi-structured interviews are widely recognized as a useful method to discern the multiplicity of meanings and practices (Bennett, 2003a) experienced by the research subjects. This method is adopted so as to recognize the diversity of experiences, in order to gain deeper insights into the processes shaping the gardeners' social worlds. Additionally, it allows respondents to produce stories from their own encounters (Revill & Seymour, 2001). A total of 15 qualitative interviews from four community gardens were conducted between June 2014 and November 2014 (Table 3.2). Three of the gardens are under the ambit of the CIB (with varying extent of participation in the CIB Awards; see Section 5.5), while the fourth characterize themselves as "autonomous gardeners" and are not under the CIB program. In most cases, prior email contact was established before a recce visit to the garden. In the interviews, apart from finding out how gardening responsibilities enable and sustain 'community' bonding, the gardeners were also asked to share some of their problems or challenges faced during the gardening process (Appendix A).

Working on the premise that the physical location of interviews affects the way information is revealed, Elwood and Martin (2000) remind researchers that interviews are best held in places familiar to interviewees. As a result, I had deliberately asked my respondents to select the venue they wished to be interviewed at so that they would be comfortable to share their gardening experiences. In most circumstances, the interviews were conducted in or near the vicinity of the community gardens (public spaces such as such as benches and void decks). One of my respondents termed these spaces "focal points" – for them, the benches, within and outside the garden to facilitate chit-chatting and the building of 'community'. However, the openness and laid-back nature of the interviews meant that a few respondents left the interview as and when they pleased - which meant that a few of the interview sessions were left incomplete and had to be conducted again, or that the respondents fleeted in and out of the interviews to attend to their gardening. While this may have negatively affected the rigor of the interviews in one way or another, I seek comfort from Laurie et al., who perceptively note that these moments I experienced in the field should not be seen as 'failures' or weaknesses but "research moments which, in their very disruptions, offer productive ways to understand the research process" (1999: 65).

Tampines Starlight Harmony Garden (CIB) *Platinum Award in CIB Awards 2014 [highest accolade]*	
Mr. Ali	Garden Chairperson + RC Member + CIB ambassador
Mr. Zach	Gardener
Ms. Sue	Gardener
Ms Habibah Awang	Chief Gardener
Jalan Kayu Zone 3 Garden (JK3) (CIB) *Silver Award in CIB Awards 2014*	
Mr. Bala	Residents Committee Chairperson
Mr. Gerald	Garden Chairperson
Ms. Shan	Gardener + RC Member
Mr. Eddie	Gardener + RC Member
Mr. Kalai	Chief Gardener
Tampines Courtview Garden (CIB) *Did not participate in CIB Awards 2014*	
Mr. Siva	Residents Committee Chairperson

Mr. Lim	Chief Gardener (only gardener)
731 Green Fingers Autonomous Garden (non-CIB)	
Mr. Hung	Four families of neighbors on the ground floor of Block 731, Tampines Street 71, who decided to come together to start a garden. They stay in close proximity to the Tampines Courtview Garden.
Ms. Lilian	
Mr. Mark	
Mr. Vernon	

Table 3.2 List of interview respondents

I also contacted the CIB Assistant Director from NParks for an interview with the purpose of understanding more fully the prescriptions of community gardening as a governmental intervention. Due to her busy schedule, she was unable to meet me but acceded to an email interview instead (Appendix B). Even so, this did not mean that I was able to access exclusive information unavailable on the public domain because almost all the information from the email interview were paraphrases of the information on the NParks website. Clearly, as Yap (2012) reminds us, the reality of engaging with Government officials in Singapore still remains frustratingly challenging especially for student researchers, despite the increasingly optimistic opinion held by some scholars that we need to re-examine new, progressive theorizations of power relations in interviewing political elites (Smith, 2006).

3.3.2 Participant Observation

Participation Observation is a method drawn from ethnography and dedicates itself to understanding the everyday lives and experiences of the researched (Bennett, 2003b). As Crang (2002) notes, this can be done by aligning participation observation with the lives of the subjects when community gardening is time and place specific. In my case, considerable time was spent observing the gardeners and participating in the gardening activities at JK3 and Tampines Starlight Harmony. As per the opening hours at the JK3 garden, I participated in the activities every Sunday morning from July to September 2014. I was also invited by the Starlight Harmony gardeners to the Gardeners' Cup 2014 plot set-up preparations, which was a bi-annual competition where community gardens come together to collaborate and showcase their garden displays at the Singapore Garden Festival.

In participant observation, the research process does not end when the researcher leaves the field, because the researcher may continue to stay in touch with the respondents (Bennett, 2003b). Indeed, I am reminded of what Gillian Rose (1997) suggested - that we as researchers may not (be able to) fully detach ourselves from lives of our research subjects even though we may be *outside* the field. To instantiate, I had assured my respondent subjects at Tampines Starlight Harmony that I was not dashing in and out of the field to collect interviews as Shurmer-Smith (2002) had cautioned geographers against; rather, I wanted to develop more nuanced observations through regular participation, and even contribute something to the gardeners because they had refused to accept my token of appreciation. I found myself becoming increasingly involved in a ground-up project organized by Starlight Harmony community gardeners in recognition of the nation's upcoming 50th birthday in August 2015. The community garden chairman had expressed his hope that I could take part as a writer for a coffee-table book exploring the different herbs residents grew along their corridors. While my initial interest to the event was only lukewarm due to the uncertainty of what was expected out of me, I was reminded of Nagar and Ali's (2003) methodological call to "help respondents" in a participative approach. This was, however, more often than not, self-driven by a guilt that saw myself (the researcher) as a free-rider who had entered the field to exploit my respondents of information; this guilt was also further compounded during the writing process itself as I often felt troubled and morally responsible for the quotes I chose to include in this thesis, in relation to how I crafted arguments from the interviews with my respondents.

3.3.3 Discourse Analysis

According to Sharp and Richardson (2001), a Foucauldian discourse analysis refers to the interpretation of the sum of communicative ideas used in the construction and maintenance of social norms, in which discourse itself serves particular goals - specifically, the exercise of power through regulating what is (not) being said, what is (not) being done, and what is (not) being thought. These communicative ideas can come in the form of actions, practices and texts. The job of researchers is then to uncover "the specific ensemble of ideas, concepts and categorizations that are produced, reproduced and transformed in a particular set of practices, through which meaning is given to physical and social realities (Hajer, 1995:44). The previous discussion on tracing the genealogy (Section 3.2.1) is made possible with the discourse analysis of newspaper reports, social media updates, ministerial speeches, policy documents and website content surrounding the 'community' and 'community gardens' in Singapore. I also performed a discourse analysis on the interviews collected from the community gardeners and CIB NParks team.

3.4 Chapter summary

This chapter has emphasized that my methodology is an inquiry into *government through community* that combines an analysis of analyzing governmental rationalities (their genealogy, prescriptions and interventions) with an evaluation of what happens when these rationalities become part of the processes they would regulate via ethnography. In reflecting on this process of collecting fieldwork, I am also reminded by Jäger and Maier (2009) that on one hand, this thesis itself is discursively constructed and the results of discursive practices; on the other hand, the performance of ethnography in the field is also fragmented by situated, messy and political practices that may be both a bane and a boon for researchers. In the next chapter, I introduce the emerging role of the 'community' in Singapore, and interrogate how the CIB serves as an empirical context to study the governmental relationships involved in my inquiry of in/exclusions of 'community' gardening.

Chapter 4 ‘COMMUNITY’ & COMMUNITY GARDENING: SINGAPORE IN CONTEXT

4.1 Preamble

This chapter foregrounds the role of the ‘community’ in relation to the social-political governing history of Singapore. Section 4.2 argues that the tracing of the ‘community’ in political discourse, or what Foucault calls genealogy, requires us to examine the softening of state power in Singaporean politics as the Government shifts from a “bigger” Government mentality often characterized by its interventionist, pragmatic and authoritarian policies, towards a “smaller” Government mentality with an explicit emphasis on the ‘community’ to boost bottom-up public participation and community decision making. Section 4.3 then provides a focused exposition of the “community-led” Community in Bloom (CIB) gardening project in Singapore, and reinforces the argument why *government through community* is a productive framework for this thesis. The four case studies are introduced in Section 4.4. In summarizing this chapter (Section 4.5), I suggest that the CIB provides a sharp analytical context to understanding a Foucauldian perspective of ‘community’, and the in/exclusive processes integral to it.

4.2 Greening the city-state: from authoritarian state to 'community' engagement

4.2.1 Singapore, the pragmatic authoritarian state: "big government", "small" citizen

An inquiry into Singapore as a pragmatic, authoritarian state requires one to firstly consider the ways in which Singapore was conceived as a nation-state under the auspices of the Peoples' Action Party (PAP), the political party that had assumed power after the British withdrew from Singapore in 1959. At the point of leaving the Malaysian Federation in 1965, Singapore was a newly-independent, non-industrial entrepot facing high rates of unemployment, a rapidly growing population and a severe strain on public services. In light of these conditions, the PAP was quick to employ the framework of economic pragmatism as the *Modus Operandi* for Singapore – that is, a vigorous orientation towards economic development strategies that could improve the material lives of the population, to provide employment, and to attract foreign investments and businesses in the name of economic survival. Such instrumental rationalities towards these clear-cut aims to achieve rapid economic growth during the early days of post-independence formed the cornerstone of the PAP's ethos of political pragmatism.

Subsequently, in light of the rapid economic development and material improvements attained, the rhetoric developed was that the Singapore government "has consistently been able to fulfil their promise of economic growth… (which) gave the PAP the moral authority to lead the citizenry with their vision of development" (Neo, 2007:189). Under the oft-mobilized trope that the Government has successfully delivered its economic promises to the nation, the state has hitherto adopted a paternalistic "father-knows-best" framework to its policies and regular citizens are discouraged from being involved in the political discourse of Singapore. As Ho (2000) surmises, the PAP government saw the citizenry populace lacking the skills – experiences, information and resources - to make "correct" political decisions for the good of the country. Thus, the job was best left to the astute political leaders, who in all certainty, are able to make the resolute decisions to ensure the country's continual economic prosperity. More profoundly, this "big-government" governing ethos across almost all aspects of social life gave rise to a politically circumscribed environment in which political dissension and diverse opinions were frowned upon.

Yuen (1996a) posits that in the same ways in which the spatial limitations of Singapore as a city-state have led to tight public control over land and spatial development, the task of greening Singapore also fell strictly under the responsibility of the state. As a result, a good portion of the literature on urban greening in Singapore has documented how the early years were characterized by the 'Brown Agenda' in which the state expressed little interest in urban greening; instead, that socio-economic prosperity was prioritized meant that the spatial provision of housing and factories took precedence over greenery on the government's agenda. It was only in the late 1960s that then Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew started to propose the importance of green spaces (albeit for the same economic reasons that spurred the ‘Brown’ development previously) amidst mounting concerns of Singapore becoming an unattractive concretized jungle (Yuen, 1996b). With the establishment of the Garden City Action Committee, the plan was for Singapore to be a ‘Garden City’ underpinned by an economic logic of providing a clean, green environment to further support the urban and economic goals of the developmental state. As Yuen further contends, these green spaces were to further reinforce the legitimacy of the ruling party as they served as “powerful symbolic monuments to a government’s efficacy and its ability to fulfil its promises to improve the living conditions of the entire nation” (1996a:969). Subsequently, the Parks and Recreation Department (the predecessor of the NParks) was formed to oversee all garden city policies and directives (Yuen, Kong & Briffett, 1999)[15]. Following what Stubbs (2001) terms the “performance legitimacy” of the Singaporean state, urban greening efforts as part of a broader urban planning agenda solely remained within Government institutions and directives while the hitherto “small citizen” remained subdued and remained outside the confines of political planning. As a result, public participation in Singapore’s urban planning continued to remain minimal amidst the broader “big Government” mentality, in which the state had thus far been able to meet the political demands and expectations of its populace.

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[15] For further discussion on Singapore’s Garden City history, see Yuen (1996a).

4.2.2 The emerging role of the ‘community’: “smaller government”, “bigger community”

It was obvious by the late 1980s that the pragmatic logic of economic necessity and survival used to legitimize the Singaporean state’s authoritarian interventions while rejecting alternative political opinions became increasingly untenable, in light of a populace demanding for greater freedom and more say in the decision-making processes of state policies (Chua, 1997). Amidst an increasingly educated populace and globalization, it became gradually clear that the populace was expressing a desire for greater political participation and stake holding in policy debates (Soh & Yuen, 2006). It was in this particular socio-political milieu that the lexicon of ‘community engagement’ became used more frequently as the way forward for Singapore’s political landscape. As Chua suggests, calls for a “smaller Government” emerged in that the state was increasingly asked to

> forge a new consensus with the electorate, through its greater participation in the decision-making processes in the national forum and its greater freedom in personal affairs…the explicit orientation of greater consultation and participation appeared to be steps towards the development of a democratic culture beyond the mechanics of election” (1997:77).

This entrance of the ‘community’ into the realms of Singaporean society, however, cannot be said to be novel. In fact, the ‘community’ was long acknowledged and found within state rhetoric even before the opening up of political participation was nascent. What remains most interesting to analyze here is how the ‘community’ was mobilized *differently* by the state previously (in the 1970s-80s), compared to today as I briefly argue below.

Borrowing from the viewpoint of sociologist Amitai Etzioni (2003), 'Communitarianism'[16] as a political philosophy proposes that society should maintain and practise what is 'good' such that in order to uphold social and communal harmony, individual rights should be constrained. Cast in this context, I suggest that it is precisely this broad framework of 'Communitarianism' the PAP government had latched on such that many of the features of 'Communitarianism' were used to legitimize the government's materialization of the economic pragmatism and developmental state ideologies. As expressed through the Shared Values of Singapore initiated in 1988 by then Prime Minister Goh Chok Tong, the focus then was to get the populace to place the "*nation beyond community and society above self*". In line with this 'Communitarian' framework, the ideological needs of the elusive 'community' are purported to be more important than the individual, such that "no individual or group can assert its own right as a basic condition of existence lest the assertion by read as unacceptable, self-interest, potentially detrimental to the whole” (Chua, 1997:197). The role of the ‘community’, I argue, was to remain unassertive in ways such that to simply agree and passively support the nation’s economic goals (as scripted by the political elites) would already constitute obedience to the elusive ‘Communitarian’ good. The emphasis on consensus, not conflict of opinions within the ‘Communitarianism’ philosophy further gave rise to a sentiment that one’s participation in the ‘community’ required neither outward debate nor explicit objections towards the ‘common goals’.

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[16] Pertinently, I do not use the two terms 'communitarianism' and 'community' interchangeably even though there are intersections between these two terms, both normatively and sociologically (Hughes, 2008). I refer to Communitarianism as the broad body of political, sociological philosophies that are critical of individual, liberal, rational choice theories of social behavior, favoring instead a political-moral stance that sees the self as relational such that it becomes more meaningful to position some notion of the "common good" before individual rights (Silk, 1999) . Made popular by Etzioni (1994) and Putnam (2000) in its more contemporary forms through the American context, I position Communitarianism as a philosophy that undergirds and prefigures the realizations and materializations of 'community' in practice.

In contrast, the use of the lexicon ‘community’ by the Singapore government in more contemporary times incorporates not only this sentiment of *society before self*, but also superimposes spontaneous acts of responsibility and initiatives on the previous role of ‘community’. Some scholars had attributed this growing importance of the ‘community’ as both a reflection and a consequence of the new political and economic conditions following the 2011 Singapore General Elections (see Ortmann, 2011; Tan & Lee, 2011). According to these scholars, the lackluster election results of the ruling political party Government, accompanied with mounting dissensions against the PAP’s regime ultimately threw the PAP Government off track in search of softer, and more appealing political lexicons to engage with its the electoral population, in which the ‘community’ is well-placed to achieve. This is clearly observed in recent political speeches where Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong explicitly mobilized the ‘community’ as a crucial vehicle for the way forward in politics in his 2013 National Day Rally Speech:

> "Singapore has been built on three pillars - the individual, the community and the state and each has played a role complementing one another… The community getting together to help different groups of people… The community and the Government will have to do more to support individuals. **The community can and must take more initiative, organising and mobilising ourselves, solving problems, getting things done.**"
>
> (Lee, 2013, emphasis mine)

Echoing the Prime Minister, the quote below by Member of Parliament (MP)[17] Seah Kian Peng further reinforces the 'bigger' role of the community and the 'smaller' role of the government:

> "But Government also needs to be smaller **-- we cannot make all the decisions, we should not make so many plans. We ought to let people and the community step up and decide what they want for themselves**. We must say, "Hey, look, we may not know everything... We may not know which the best model is (*sic*)." We should become smaller because we need to see that today, we are a country where the **community itself is rich - rich in ideas, in expertise, in heart.**"
>
> (Seah, 2014, emphasis mine)

From the above two quotes, it is clear that 'community' participation is now conceived as a critical intervention to socio-political life in Singapore, by primarily allowing citizens to take advantage in the openness of decision making and administrative reforms. The above quotes, however, have two deeper consequence which I wish to reflect on: The first is the growing realization by the

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[17] A Member of Parliament (MP) in Singapore is elected based on the first-past-the-post electoral system. Upon being elected, he/she has the key obligation of "acting as a 'bridge' between the 'community' and the Government by ensuring that the concerns of their constituents are heard in Parliament" (Singapore Parliament, 2011).

Singapore Government that it is now unable to ride high on the success and delivery of its economic and social policies. Rather, they increasingly find the need to seek alternative spaces and a greater range of stakeholders (such as the 'community') in policy making. What is clear from such elaborations of 'community' by the Government is that their values system, which emphasizes a normative ideal of what the community *is* and *ought* to be, is used adroitly as a way to "share" its responsibilities of ruling the nation. In this context, the importance of the 'community' as a target of governmental intervention in the Foucauldian sense is productive for this thesis as it alerts us to "recognize the political importance of the patterns that arise out of complex interactions, negotiations, and exchanges between intermediate social actors, groups, forces, organizations and public and semi-public institutions" (Rose,1999:168). Cast against this background, various 'community' groups now serve as a critical governmental intervention to satisfy the demands and expectations of its citizens; in this way, the empowerment of communities becomes a process through which active citizen-subjects take responsibility for social and political provision (Herbert-Cheschire & Higgins, 2004).

The second consequence of this shift towards the 'community' as a crucial political intervention lies with the ambiguity of the term 'community' – through Government speeches and political rhetoric more broadly, it can be seen that the state often does not specify the kinds of community involved, what constitutes a community, and who is excluded from the typology of 'community'.

In this sense, it leaves much ambiguity as to what the ‘community’ means, and what/who a community is (not). This decentralization of autonomy to ‘community’ levels without drawing strict boundaries as to who the ‘community’ is (not) deliberately expands the imagination of the ‘community’. I argue that the ‘community’ is thus able to serve as a useful political category mobilized across various circumstances, all comfortably fitted within the same political trope for new attitudes towards citizens’ involvement in planning and civil engagement. Thus, precisely because it remains ambiguous who or where this ‘community’ refers to, a medley of ‘community’ based efforts ranging from community police watch groups, community self-help, community consultation groups are have emerged and becoming all too familiar vocabularies in the Singaporean context. The constellation of these various different and fragmented ‘community’ organizations, when articulated together as the ‘community’, further legitimize the new rhetoric of inclusive politics set up by the Government.

To summarize, I have thus far traced the context in which the ‘community’ has emerged in Singaporean politics. In tandem with the gradual loss in dominance of the Singapore Government in policy-making (and more specifically in the context of urban planning and urban greening), the ‘community’ has become “bigger” to occupy new political space that is often conceived as separate, yet complementary to the “smaller” Government to provide alternative voices and stakeholdership in policy making. The next section of this chapter introduces the CIB community gardening movement as the empirical context in studying the ‘community’ as an important category in the networks and constellations of governmental relations.

4.3 Community Gardening in Singapore

4.3.1 Community in Bloom (CIB)

The CIB was set up in 2005 by the NParks. With the core intention of engaging and inspiring communities to realize Singapore's 'City in a Garden' vision by 2016, gardeners are encouraged to set up plots where they can gather to plant and care for their plants including flowers, herbs, spices, vegetables and fruit trees (NParks, 2015a). As there was hitherto no blueprint to engage the public and encourage responsible participation through urban greening, the CIB was seen as a program the first of its kind. During its inception, start-up guides were distributed via Community Clubs (CCs), Residents' Committees (RCs), and public libraries (NParks and NLB, 2014). The CIB encourages the RCs to come together to beautify the urban environment by sharing their gardening expertise with other community gardens, in addition to participating actively in gardening workshops to upkeep and improve their gardening skills.

In the context of this deliberate shift of responsibility to the 'community' on hitherto state-held policies in the urban greening of Singapore, the Assistant Director of CIB was quick to demarcate the responsibilities of community gardeners and NParks in that community gardens should be

> "**initiated and managed by community groups**… [it] is a **collective effort by the community** to cultivate plants and gardens on common green areas for everyone to enjoy. The **responsibility of NParks is thus to facilitate the process** of garden set-up and rejuvenation… What the CIB team usually [will] do is to help gardeners identify

> suitable plots they can set-up gardens on, assist gardeners with garden designing, provide plant cuttings and seeds, and direct gardeners to the appropriate administrative bodies such as the Town Council, Residents Committee."
>
> (Loh, Personal Communication, October 2014, emphasis mine).

By emphasizing how community gardeners *take charge* of gardening responsibilities and how NParks *facilitates* these decisions, I argue that the CIB is purported as an important governmentality strategy to empower community gardeners, and encourage inclusive community-driven initiatives. At the same time, such demarcation of responsibilities lead us to understand that NParks is careful to identify itself as separate from the 'community', its relationship with the community and what it can (not) do for the 'community'.

4.3.2 Who is the 'community'? Residents' Committees (RCs) as apparatus of governmentality

Following from the previous section (4.3.1) which has briefly introduced the context of community gardens in Singapore, this section will focus on explaining who exactly constitutes the community gardens in neighbourhood estates in Singapore, by exploring the political management and ownership of these gardens.

Community gardens in neighborhood public housing estates are placed under the remit of RCs, in which an existing member of the RC is appointed as a garden chairperson. In most cases, each RC establishes one garden but may choose to have set up a second or third garden if they have the necessary resources and manpower.

The horticultural department of the Town Council (TC)[18] serves as an agency overseeing all the RCs in a particular estate – together with NParks, the TC is responsible for providing landscaping and horticultural assistance to the RCs whenever possible through the garden chairperson. My personal communication with an official from the Housing and Development Board (HDB) also revealed that any non-RC resident who wishes to spearhead a CIB community garden is put into contact with the RC so as to ensure that there is proper communication and management in terms of accountability. Additionally, NParks does not insist that each RC must have a community garden as some of them undeniably face resource constraints in terms of manpower or time. According to a garden chairman I interviewed, "gardening is merely one of the ten things a RC has to do"[19] (Personal Communication, July 2014). Therefore, there are some neighborhood precincts which do not wish to operate community gardens and thus do not have gardens.

In teasing out the interconnections between RCs and community gardens in terms of its political management, I find it important to explicate briefly the history of RCs in Singapore in relation to the broader political responsibilities they perform. This sets the context for community gardens to be further understood in the next two chapters. RCs have had a long history in Singapore since its inception in 1977. In the light of the widespread adoption of the housing estate model in Singapore[20], each neighbourhood estate was divided into 'zones' consisting of 500 to 2000 housing units (Hill & Lian, 1995). To this end, RCs were specifically devised as apparatuses used by the state to consolidate their influence politically by providing a space of democracy, and to re-create this sense of community among the residents in high-rise blocks (Lee, 2014; also see Section 5.2.2). As Quah and Quah perceptively note, it was the RC which provided the "best training ground for people to acquire the skills necessary for a participatory democracy… of providing a better channel for communication between residents and the various authorities to obtain feedback information and find solutions to the problems of the residents" (1989:12, cited in Hill & Lian, 1995). Most recently, in line with the rhetoric of involving 'communities' in policy making and implementation, the Prime Minister specifically identifies RCs as a crucial 'community' group as seen from this quote:

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[18] Town Councils (TCs) are autonomous institutions in charge of the neighbourhood estates. Led by the Member of Parliament (MP), they work hand in hand with the RCs on day-to-day estate matters such as estate hygiene, management and improvement works (Town Council SG, 2015).

[19] See Section 6.3.4 for a range of other RC-related activities and the possible spatialities of exclusion that emerge.

> "(what) RCs have to do is to connect residents with one another because in this new age, there are too many things, the Government cannot know everything. The community has to work together, support one another and get things done. And so that is the RCs' role." (Lee, 2014)

Premised upon the new political norm that governing should be built on consent and co-operation, RCs therefore serve as important grassroots support and para-political institutions, largely to transmit knowledge, information and recommendations about people's needs to the Government (Ho, 2003).

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[20] For an extended review of public housing in Singapore, see Chua (1991).

In this context and as highlighted in Section 2.3, a useful starting point in this thesis is to consider how Tan and Neo (2009) find it puzzling why the CIB, touted as a ‘community’-based gardening project, has to be initiated by the Government. The writers alert us to the use of ‘community gardens’ as a misnomer in Singapore because while it purports itself to be by the ‘community’, regulatory and management decisions of these gardens are essentially under the RC’s remit, which may be seen as an extension of the Government. This dovetails with the work of Hill and Lian (1995) who go as far as to call them ‘government-sponsored grassroots organizations’, as RCs come under the Prime Minister’s Office in Singapore. The argument herein is that the RCs, in maintaining close relationships with the Government, may defy the idea of ‘community’ as a ground-up initiative and challenge the integral spirit of the spontaneous and arguably non-state led ‘community’ groups.

However, I want to argue that even though there is an inevitable impression of association of the RCs with the state, it is precisely this uncertainty of whether the RCs come under the banner of the ‘people’ and/or the state that opens up *government through community* as a productive framework (Section 2.4.1) for this thesis. I argue that is precisely the state’s identification of the RCs as the most suitable ‘community’ group – on one hand, being able to identify and direct the ‘community’, and on the other hand able to adroitly retract itself at suitable times from the decision-powers and political logics of the ‘community - that provides us with empirical space to question the concept and practice of ‘community’ and its in/exclusions. This thesis acknowledges the viewpoint that the ‘community’ can be seen as “outside” of the Singaporean state’s influence, but extends the conversation by viewing the RCs as precisely the platforms which the Singaporean state is able to use by ‘governing from a distance’ (Rose & Miller, 1990). Cast in this light, the inculcation of ‘good’ behaviours of responsibility, community spirit and love for nature cannot be separated from the in/exclusions that arise (which are central to this thesis), which then further complicates our understanding of ‘community’ as a technique of governmentality.

4.4 Introducing my research sites

4.4.1 The four community gardens

In what follows, I introduce my research sites and elaborate on some of their common characteristics before considering how the 'community' is made visible through a Foucauldian perspective, by primarily identifying the roles and responsibilities found in the gardens[21]. My research sites consist of three CIB gardens, in addition to one garden that does not belong to the CIB. All the gardens with the exception of JK3 are located in Tampines residential estate in Eastern Singapore. Set up in April 2005, Starlight Harmony was a recipient of the Silver, Gold and Platinum awards in previous years before receiving the highest accolade of 'Diamond' in the most recent 2014 CIB Competition[22]. JK3, in the Serangoon residential estate, was set up in June 2008 and was awarded the 'Silver' award aforementioned competition. Courtview garden, in contrast to the other two, has not participated in the CIB competition at all since its inception in November 2005.

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[21] As Kurtz (2001) reminds us, how community gardeners structure access and manifest a sense of in/exclusion are negotiated in the context of *individual* gardens. Therefore, the four case studies are not meant to be a general representation of the 700 community gardens under the CIB; instead I want to emphasize how the marked heterogeneities are themselves a microcosm of the complex realities of community gardens.

[22] See Section 5.5 for a discussion of the CIB Competition.

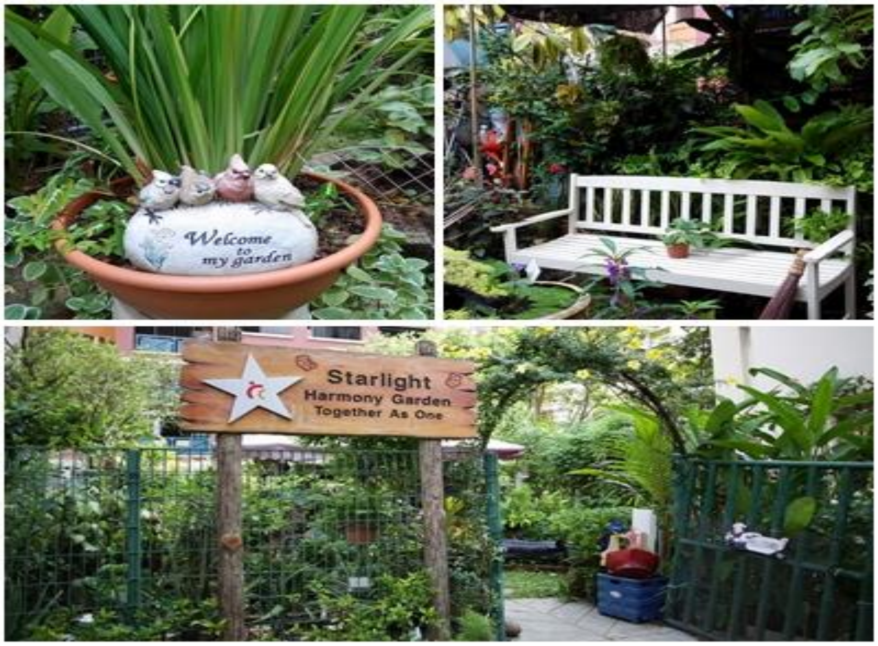
Welcome to my garden
Starlight
Harmony Garden
Together As One

Figure 4.1Tampines Starlight Harmony Garden (CIB)

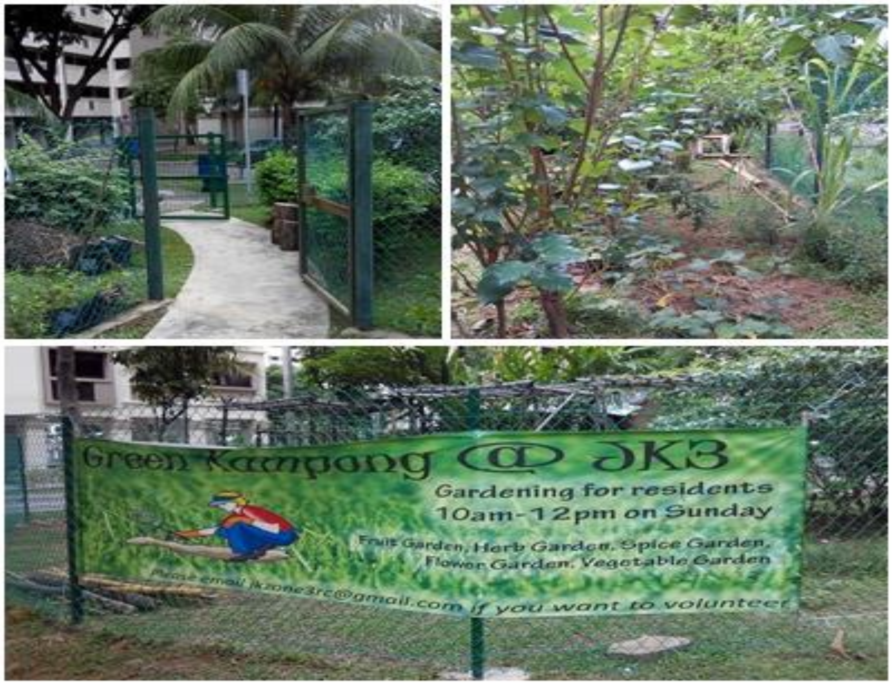
Green Kampong @ JK3
Gardening for residents
10am-12pm on Sunday
Fruit Garden, Herb Garden, Spice Garden,
Flower Garden, Vegetable Garden
Please email jkzone3rc@gmail.com if you want to volunteer

Figure 4.2 Jalan Kayu Zone 3 (JK3) Garden (CIB)

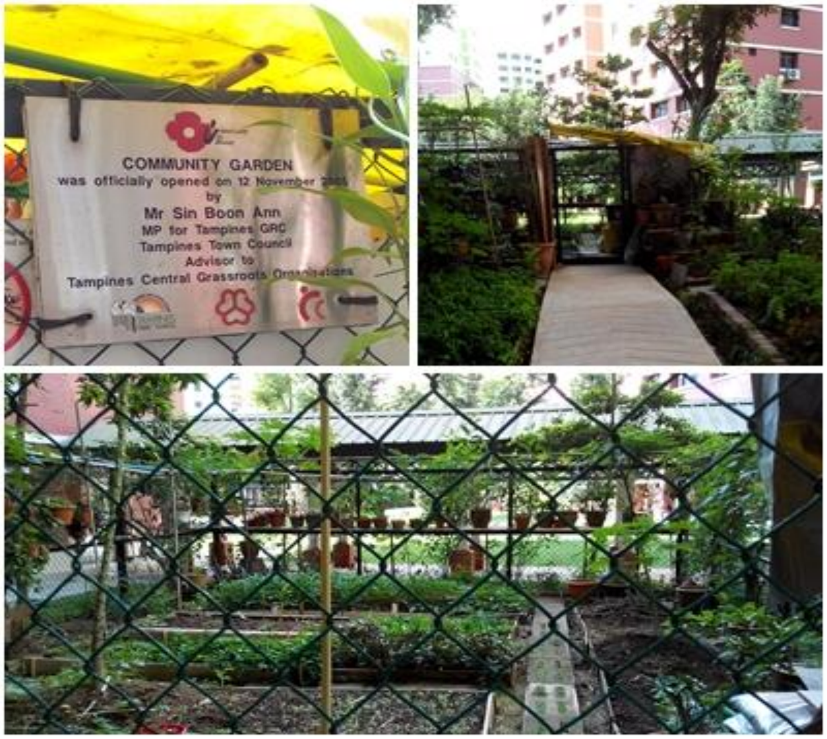
COMMUNITY GARDEN
was officially opened on 12 November
by
Mr Sin Boon Ann
MP for Tampines GRC
Tampines Town Council
Advisor to
Tampines Central Grassroots Organisations

Figure 4.3Courtview Garden (CIB)

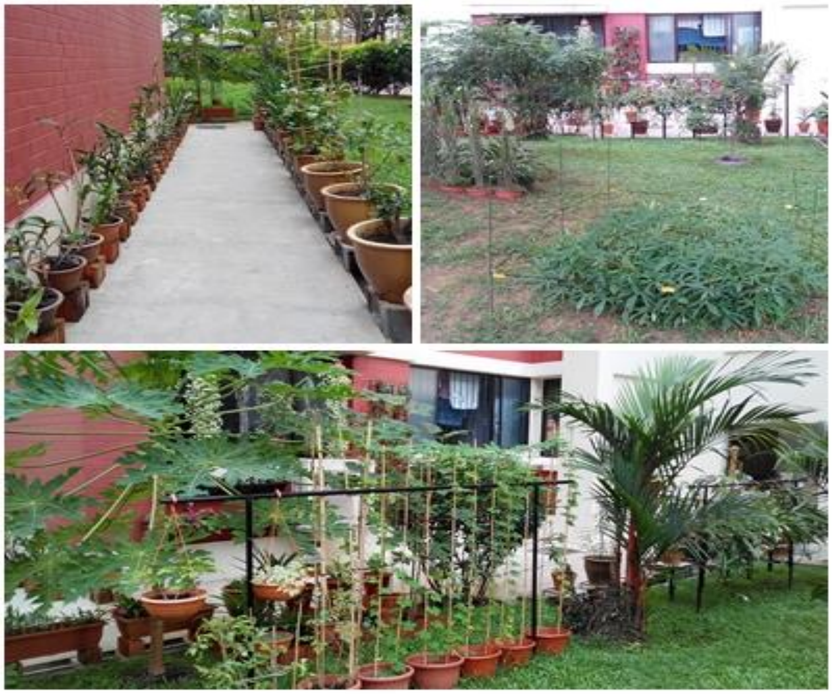

Figure 4.4 731 Green Fingers (non-CIB)

All three CIB gardens follow several core characteristics. First, the initial establishment of the gardens was as a result of an invitation from NParks to apply for a garden. The gardening plans must be endorsed and approved by the TC; subsequently, gardeners either choose to hire a contractor or prepare the ground themselves before they purchase plants, gardening materials and tools. Secondly, as Section 4.3.1 had earlier highlighted, NParks is a *facilitator* of the CIB and does not provide financial support to these gardens. The form of help NParks renders is in non-monetary forms such as providing top soil, providing gardeners with ideas, and conducting workshops to improve the skills of the gardeners. The funding for the maintenance and upkeep of the garden is allocated from the TC's and/or the RC's internal financial budget(s). Gardeners also benefit from the prize money awarded in the biennial CIB Competition (Section 5.5). Thirdly, according to my respondents, there were instances where community gardens had to cease its operations and the gardening space returned to the TC. This measure is employed should the gardens fall into disrepair and if the RC is unable to find sufficient manpower to maintain the gardens, or if other land uses prove to be more important. However, in an email interview, the NParks official was cautious to not mention this and instead provided a more-than-optimistic opinion that effort and resources would be put together to re-establish the gardens, without the slightest mention of the relinquishment of garden spaces.

In contrast, the non-CIB gardeners called themselves the 731 Green Fingers. Set up in March 2014, special concessions were given to the four families who were initially asked by the TC to remove their garden for their “illegal” planting of crops. However, after some discussion with the constituency MP, the families managed to continue maintaining the garden without interference from the TC. This non-CIB garden will be mostly used to showcase the divergences and convergences between CIB and non-CIB gardens, as well as the *different* spatialities of exclusions that arise in community gardens in Chapter 6.

4.4.2 Rendering the ‘community’ visible

In the analysis of community gardens, there is a need to distinguish amongst the different roles and responsibilities undertaken by the gardeners. I have identified three key roles. However, these roles are not exclusive to one another for gardeners who embody all three roles to varying degrees.

The chief gardener

My research reveals that all three gardens have chief gardener(s) who tend(s) to the garden almost always alone on a daily basis. Mr. Kalai, the ‘star gardener’ at JK3, makes it a point to water the plants every evening. He revealed that there are weekends where he has to apply for leave from his shift-based job just to make sure that he is here every Sunday to facilitate the weekend group gardening, and to do most of the gardening work. Similarly, Mdm. Habibah, a housewife, played this crucial role of gardening every day at Starlight Harmony garden since the garden’s inception until she had to go on a hiatus due to health concerns. The Courtview garden is solely taken care of by Mr. Lim who tends to the garden every Saturday on his own - this is because there are no other interested parties to assist him.

The helpers

All the CIB gardens with the exception of Courtview have at least eight other "helper" gardeners who assist the chief gardener. Ranging from weekly participations to sporadic visits to the gardens, they come to the garden as and when they are able to. There is no fixed schedule for them to adhere to because they know the numerical lock code to enter the gardens, or help out when the chief gardener is around. As Shan from JK3 noted, the chief gardener usually does bulk of the work and is understanding towards other helpers who have work and family commitments.

Distinctions can also be made of these helpers' affiliation to the RCs. In Starlight Harmony, half of these members are non-RC members, or what I call 'residents' in the context of this thesis; in contrast at JK3, all the "helper" gardeners are RC members. Distinctions can also be made of the gardeners' ability to garden (and their time spent) in relation to other RC related activities such as 'Kopi-chat'[23], 'Kids' enrichment', or other RC-related commitments. For instance, Shan notes that because there is usually not much for them to do, she helps out with the occasional plucking of weeds and watering of plants, or the distribution of crops when there is a harvest. Another helper, Sue from Starlight Harmony, notes how she only comes when the garden is preparing for competitions and she would come to help remove slugs from the garden at night with the rest of the "helper" gardeners.

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[23] 'Kopi' refers to coffee in the Malay/Hokkien language in Singapore. The RC members provide coffee and biscuits for the residents who gather to mingle at the void decks of the flats.

__The 'spokesperson'__

As the name suggests, the 'spokesperson' is the gardener who not only provided me with the most information, but also facilitated my participant observation and interviews with other gardeners. Ali from Starlight Harmony, for instance, even invited me to the gardening competitions they participated in and quipped that it "was important that I got my hands dirty so as to experience what gardening is like" (Personal communication, August 2014). As self-governing agents who were already receptive and responsive to the purpose of community gardening, these spokespersons were generally enthusiastic and positive about their motivations for community gardening.

Having identified these above roles in the gardens, it is clear that CIB gardeners participate for a variety of reasons – for some who have vested interests and responsibilities in the RC, gardening is an extension of their fulfillment of responsibilities as a RC member. Some gardeners take part in the CIB simply because they enjoy gardening. The 'chief gardeners' (Kalai from JK3 and Lim from Courtview) fall into this latter category of gardeners and often reminisce their previous experiences of gardening during the interviews. In contrast, some others are more likely to take on the roles of 'spokespersons' to actively promote the CIB values and visions to non-gardeners and visitors. As the next chapter will also show, these 'spokespersons' construct their "community-centric" motivations for community gardening very intimately in line with the state’s intentions of ‘building’ an inclusive community spirit and co-creating a greener Singapore. I argue that these ‘spokespersons’ are a powerful demonstration of what Ward and McNicholas (1998) call ‘rendering governmentality visible’– that is, the Government identifies self-governing individuals as leaders who have the (highest) capacity to govern. To summarize, they not only develop knowledges about the ‘community’, but also propagate it by making it known to others. In the case of CIB, it can be argued that these ‘spokespersons’ are purposefully utilized to perform outreach movements to non-gardeners precisely because they are the ones who are most likely to consent to these projects by the Singaporean state.

4.5 Chapter Summary

In this chapter, I have attempted to discuss Singapore’s socio-political landscape in a particular juxtaposition to show the stark difference between how greening initiatives were carried out previously vis-à-vis today. I introduced community gardening in neighbourhood public housing estates as a recent initiative where the ‘community’ is employed to co-constitute greening practices in Singapore. I argue that community garden spaces provide exciting opportunities to advance our knowledge of community gardening as a discourse which deploys participative community responsibilities and commitments as techniques of governmentality. Having identified and explored how specific individuals within each RC are chosen and equipped with the qualities of self-help, the next chapter proceeds to showcase the political rationalities used by advocates of the CIB to justify new notions of inclusive community empowerment through community gardening. I also analyse practices of *government through community* through the “community-centric” responsibilities that undergird spatialities of inclusion in the community gardens.

Chapter 5 GROWING ‘COMMUNITY’: PRODUCING INCLUSIVE COMMUNITY GARDENS

5.1 Preamble

Drawing on my conceptual framework (Section 2.5), this chapter harnesses a Foucauldian perspective to unravel the socio-spatial practices of inclusion in community gardens. In Section 5.2, I introduce the rationalities used by advocates of the CIB to justify new notions of self-help and inclusive community-bonding through urban greening. Section 5.3 and 5.4 explore ‘inward’ (i.e. within the spaces of the gardens) and ‘outward’ (i.e. beyond the confines of the gardens) dimensions of “community- centric” responsibilities in relation to geographies of inclusions in the CIB program. These two sections aim to demonstrate how community gardening in Singapore is undergirded by a broader set of governmental projects that organize community gardeners to produce responsibilities in favor of the state’s agenda of inclusive ‘community’ bonding, even though its realities are more heterogeneous and fragmented than assumed.

5.2 Motivations and rationalities: justifying community gardening

5.2.1 Co-creating the City in a Garden vision

In uncovering the rationalities and motivations of *government through community*, Raco and Imrie (2002) remind us of the need to uncover *justifications* provided by the state that ultimately create responsible gardeners to take up the CIB. As I have alluded to in Section 4.3.1, the CIB serves as a powerful explication of the NParks' CIAG vision, in which particular focus is now placed on the active citizen in the 'community' (as amorphous as it may sound) to sustain Singapore's greening efforts. Recent government speeches have also made the relationship between the CIAG vision and the 'community' increasingly clear. To instantiate and as Minister of State Desmond Lee demonstrates in this quote,

> "What makes Singapore different from many other big cities is our greenery, which enhances our quality of life and makes our small island beautiful and highly livable… we are committed to transform Singapore into a *City in a Garden*, and the community has an important role to play as we work towards that vision." (Lee, 2014).

There are some ideas in the above quote that deserve some scrutiny here. I argue that in providing motivations for *government through community* to take place, the state hinges upon the environmental value of community gardening to galvanize the 'community' together, with the ultimate aim of providing a highly livable and inclusive environment. Placing this in the context of gardens elsewhere in the world, scholars have similarly emphasized the positive environmental effects of community gardening that eventually contribute to the utopian potential of gardens to realize new visions for cities (Follman & Viehoff, 2014). However, the point of divergence that makes the CIB unique to Singapore is how it not only creates opportunities for citizens to enhance the living environment; more peculiarly, we are reminded by Conceicao (2014) that such distinctive government-community partnerships are key to making Singapore's gardening project politically unique from other garden cities. By increasing the role of the 'community' from that of passive policy recipients to (active) initiators of such initiatives, such new articulations of state-society relations situate the active citizen as critical in the "constitution and governance of society… and contribute to broader transformations in the rationalities and techniques of government" (Raco & Imrie, 2000: 2188). The optimistic power of community gardening and the benefits it invokes in local state-community politics is indeed peculiar to Singapore, and forms the basis of the governmentalizing process to be further explored in the thesis.

5.2.2 Rekindling the inclusive 'kampong' spirit

Specific to Singapore's community gardens, also, is a constant allusion to gardening as an antidote to the negative externalities of solitary urban living. The CIB is purported to rekindle a lost "kampong spirit" that was characteristic of Singapore's "kampong" residential living prior to the mass construction of high-rise flats in Singapore. This reference to the "kampong" was also raised up several times by my respondents, whom one of them noted that the “kampong” (which means ‘village’ in the Malay language) could be defined as a “warm gathering of neighbours and friends centered on a no-closed door policy… where neighbours could just go to your house any moment and be welcomed unlike now, where people just shut their doors” (Zach, Personal Communication, August 2014). Such an intention to get gardeners to rekindle this elusive “kampong spirit” is also explicitly elaborated by the Deputy Chief of NParks, who claims that

> “the true value of community gardening lies in the “kampong” spirit it nurtures – the bonds it builds, the friendships it fosters, and the camaraderie it cultivates…[it] is a wonderful platform for fellow community gardeners from all walks of life to meet each other, expand their network, and share the latest happenings in their garden.” (Leong, 2014).

Cast against this background of this quote, I reiterate that the state’s intention of using community gardens to build the inclusive ‘community’ cannot be underestimated - I am simultaneously reminded of Miller and Rose’s assertion that governmentality entails devising a range of “problems that can and should be addressed by various authorities” (1990:2). In arguing how the ‘community’ is casted as “an imagined past to be recovered, so that intervention merely restores community to its natural state” (Li, 2007:233), I further contemplate *government through community* as a “problematizing activity” which seeks to reconcile the difficulties that arise out of problems that need to be solved. In other words, a problem – in this case, the loss of the “kampong spirit” - is identified before it is “solved” via particular techniques that are deemed to be panacea to the problems identified. Some may argue that this can hardly be considered as a novelty as the Singapore Government has constantly reiterated the importance of maintaining good, neighbourly, community relations and to care for one another. However, I argue the CIB represents a more powerful expression of this intention by mobilizing the “kampong spirit” to bring residents out of their homes to a common space, to participate in an activity undergirded by personal ownership and responsible citizenship. While this seems to dovetail with earlier studies of community garden scholarship that has suggested how community gardens serve as spaces of cohesion amongst people from different races, genders and age groups (Glover, 2004), what remains unique to Singapore’s context is the constant (and elusive) referent to the inclusive neighbourliness experienced in the past that could be only located in the “kampong”.

To summarise the above discussion, I argue that community gardens have dual-functions: to achieve the visions of co-creating the CIAG, and to restore the lost “kampong” spirit. The rest of the chapter builds upon and extends these rationalities of community gardening by providing an analysis of the “community-centric” responsibilities and its production of inclusive spaces.

5.3 ‘Inward’ “community-centric” responsibilities and inclusive garden spaces

5.3.1 Creating common space: Bridging the RC and non-RC divide

Community gardeners I spoke to expressed that it is their responsibility to ensure that community gardens hinge upon mechanisms of commonality and sharing. More specifically, sharing is expressed in terms of how the garden has to be a common space for RC and non-RC residents. Even though the community gardens are initiated and maintained by the RCs (Section 4.3), respondents took effort to put across the view that community gardens belong to *all* residents with no explicit acknowledgement of the RC as the main body ruling over the rest. One of my respondents, Habibah, noted repeatedly that the “RC does not own the gardens but are managers of them” (Personal Communication, July 2014). With the clear understanding that community gardens as common spaces for residents have to ideally include both RC and non-RC residents, Ali from Starlight Harmony recounted that they had previously encouraged non-RC residents to participate in the garden by allocating individual plots at the back-end of the garden for them, while the RC members would help to take care of the crops:

> “Well basically, I never talk about the RC. You see the **word ‘community’ is not reserved (*sic*) for the RC. The idea is to promote gardening through community. So the community is actually the residents**. It cannot be owned by a resident or it will become a private land. The rule is so called stated that, **okay, the RC will be the one taking charge**… So when I started, I said this

> front area, we (RC) will keep them. But it does not mean that we own it, **but we said that it will be maintained by the RC. So for the other part, behind the L Shape, it belongs to the residents and we (RC) will help to water their plants**." (Personal Communication, July 2014, emphasis mine).

With the above mechanism in place, Starlight Harmony prides itself as a garden where RC and non-RC members mingle. Another gardener, Sue, calls it a 'Mini United Nations' as there are residents in the area from India, Malaysia, China and Singapore who help out in the garden at an ad-hoc basis.

In contrast, the JK3 garden did not have any non-RC members in their midst. Arguing against the possibility of having gardeners from owning their individual plots as practised in Starlight Harmony, Eddie from JK3 notes that the residents "cannot have this kind of thinking because this is a community" (Personal Communication, August 2014). Yet, he has strategies in mind to encourage non-RC residents to join the community garden:

> "I believe there are certain ways to make the resident come down. Last few weeks I was thinking that the residents are not involved in the garden. **So I was thinking of giving (*sic*) them some corner to own by themselves, and let them own it, just a small piece**. Then later, when the resident plants one flower here, the next one plants another thing here, **you must tell them that when the flowers start to grow, we will be combining this whole stretch - this is no more your own garden.** If not how do we get them in? If we don't give them some **sweet treats to taste first, nobody will come down!**" (Personal Communication, August 2014, emphasis mine).

Eddie's proposed strategy to attract residents to the garden is firstly premised upon individuality (one's own plot), before galvanizing the gardeners together as an inclusive ‘community’. This can be read as a specific technique of governmentality mobilized by him to develop ‘community’ and the “kampong spirit” in its broadest sense. Incidentally, at the point of time of my research, JK3 was just about to set up another new garden. This strategy which Eddie brought up was materialized by enticing non-RC residents to garden by registering for “a plot” via email (see Figure 5.1), thus giving the impression that individual plots would be given to them insofar as the responsibility of sharing is not explicitly made clear in the poster. When asked to clarify this, Bala, the chairperson responded:

> Well, it is not individual plots, but we say that probably they can come down and plant, and then we give them some ownership there. But we also institute some rules that they cannot say it is “my plot, my fruit, my stuff”, it has to be sharing…. The thing is that that then becomes easier for us to manage folks. **Anyway the term “registering a plot” is a misnomer… I know you said about the banner to register a plot, but actually a plot is not so big. So it is just a way to get people to come on board.**” (Personal Communication, August 2014, emphasis mine).

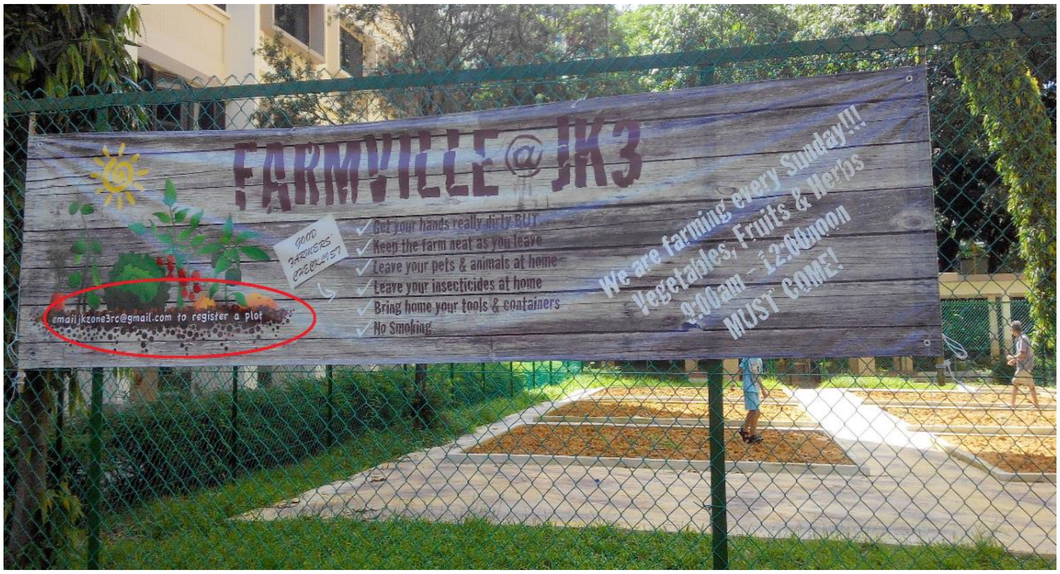
FARMVILLE @ JK3
GOOD FARMERS' CHECKLIST
✓ Get your hands really dirty BUT
✓ Keep the farm neat as you leave
✓ Leave your pets & animals at home
✓ Leave your insecticides at home
✓ Bring home your tools & containers
✓ No Smoking
We are farming every Sunday!!!
Vegetables, Fruits & Herbs
9:00am - 12:00noon
MUST COME!
email jkzone3rc@gmail.com to register a plot

Figure 5.1 Banner to entice residents to "register for a plot" at the new JK3 garden

The ethos of commonality and its associated governmentality strategies to engender the "inclusive community" does not stop at the community gardens as common spaces for RC and non-RC residents – as what Eddie implied, the act of *being* in the community gardens necessarily connotes partaking in responsibilities of sharing that are specific to an inclusive community in line with the interests of NParks, as I elaborate in the next section.

5.3.2 Sowing responsibility: Sharing harvests, upgrading skills and mediating contestations

Sharing the fruits of the harvest

A major event in the community gardens was the sharing of fruit harvests. Shan from JK3 was very quick to send me photographs of previous mango harvests (Figure 5.2), even though the mango tree was admittedly outside the confines of the community garden and remains more accurately a mango tree by the roadside taken care of by the gardeners hired by the TC. Major fruit-sharing sessions such as these when the harvests are plenty, are central to the "inclusive community bonding" narrative of the garden, since more non-gardener residents would be involved.

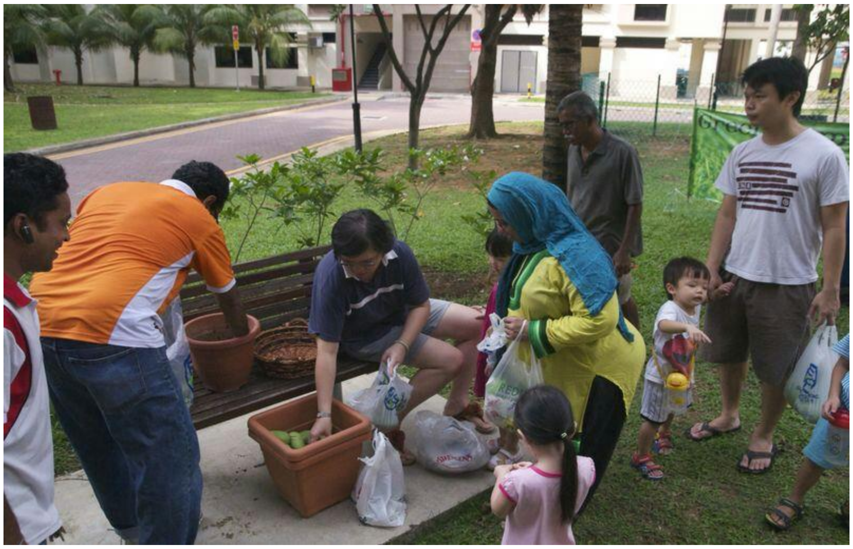

Figure 5.2 Sharing of the mango harvest at JK 3 (Source: Shan, JK3)

However, what is grown in JK3 garden itself is often of very limited quantity and it is apparent that not all community gardeners feel the same way about sharing other crops from the garden, especially because the quantity of the crops yielded is less than that of the mango harvest. Bala, for instance, recounted that he had to remind his gardeners that the harvest had to be shared with the non-RC residents:

> "We need to educate the gardeners because (they may say) "I am putting my heart and soul into this, so who do the fruits belong to (*sic*)?" I will say: the fruits still belong to the residents. So therefore it took me some time to send this message to the RC members, because some of them think they may be the ones who

> are the owners, but no, they are not." (Personal Communication, July 2014).

For Bala, the concept of sharing falls upon the normative ideals of what an 'community' is and ought to be: to enhance social capital, to promote interactions and social inclusions (Glover, 2004). In turn, the community garden serves as an inclusive space filled by communal activities such as fruit sharing that further echoes my assertion that the 'community' often uncritically remains the inclusive, harmonious and desirable term that is never used unfavorably.

Sustaining the garden: Upgrading skills together

Based on the rhetoric that is the gardeners' responsibility to constantly upgrade their skills and knowledge to maintain interest in their community gardens (NParks, 2015b), more than 40 online tutorials and videos are available on the CIB NParks Website. These videos range from teaching gardeners how to plant specific vegetables, manage soil drainage to making one's own pesticides. Additionally, on a quarterly basis, the CIB NParks Team organizes a 'Gardeners' Day Out' at the Hort Park for gardeners to attend various gardening talks organized by the NParks. A section of this event also involves a 'Barter Trade' where gardeners are encouraged to share their knowledge and trade tips in the process. To complement this range of skills improvisation, an NParks official revealed that it would be ideal if gardeners visit nurseries and other community gardens to see how new plants are grown so as to add to the variety of plants they have (Personal Communication, July 2014).

In turning towards these steps to foster and sustain interest in the gardens, it becomes clear that NParks' intention of improving gardener's skills and knowledge implies more than just maintaining individuals' interest in the community gardens; indeed as Cruikshank argues, such responsibilities constitute techniques of self-government that "do not merely seek to increase the capacity for action…but rather to *fundamentally transform* that capacity in the process" (1994:32). By ultimately transforming gardeners' capacities to *collectively* feel empowered to operate to their maximum potential through skills and knowledge building, community gardeners increasingly take on the role as 'enabler' and 'partner' in Singapore's urban greening alongside with the state that is neither transient nor ad-hoc. Instead, it is one that echoes a long-term commitment to their community gardens as a collective, inclusive activity in the long run (Solas, 1996). This necessity to constantly upgrade and refresh one's gardening skills as a team was not surprisingly expressed by my respondent, Bala, who constantly challenges his team of gardeners to think out of the box as part of the discovery process in gardening. He notes that

> "in order for us to have a sustainability of the garden we need to conduct courses regularly and learns skills... I am also thinking of having a wormery there, because worms add to the fertility of the soil. I even brought a butterfly expert to come and talk during the RC meetings, and that created a lot of interest in the garden." (Personal Communication, August 2014).

For Bala, the 'community' bonds when the garden is sustained through workshops that engender new creative ideas and imaginative possibilities, but on the basis that the team performs these tasks together. Concomitantly, it is evidently that the concept of 'community' as a collective category of interests and needs in the context of a governmentality approach features explicitly through these innovative improvisations and collective brainstorming of new ideas.

However, it remains important to consider how community gardens do not always conform to these practices of responsibility-building embedded within the governmentality project. As Li most astutely points out, there are "processes and interactions…that cannot be reconfigured to plan" (2007:279); that is, it remains productive to investigate the gaps that arise between a governmental program and its realizations. The upgrading of skills and knowledge as a governmental intention can be interrupted by the individual conditions of gardeners, as demonstrated in the case of Courtview garden. As the only gardener at Courtview, Mr. Lim is unable to share his gardening skills to anyone because there are no other interested parties who wish to tend the garden. Concomitantly, the constant upgrade of skills is not of importance for Mr. Lim because he is still able to sustain the garden on his own. This reinforces the third axiom of the conceptual device of 'responsibility' in that responsibilities are often carried out tenuously and incompletely, often subject to negotiations and/or rejections by the community gardeners themselves.

Solving contestations harmoniously

As part of ‘community’ bonding rhetoric, it is also the responsibility of the gardeners to mediate potential problems and contestations. According to JK3 chairperson Bala, contestations and tensions have arisen because of the community garden. He posits that it is his responsibility as the chairperson to mediate these issues amicably, in ways that are befitting of his behavior as a community leader as shown from the excerpt below:

CY: What kinds of complaints have you received?

N: Oh there are many. For example, there are some people who don’t like to have the garden here. The reason is because for them it is not clean and it doesn’t look neat, it looks a little messy. Also, as a result of the unique composting method the community garden is experimenting with, some residents have complained about the stench that has emerged. So that’s one group of people. Another group of people I have – Kalai had a visit from someone on the twelfth floor he found that the pathway it looked like a cross. Saying that, how come your garden looks like a cross?

CY: Isn’t that a bit ridiculous?

N: Ah. So as a community leader, there is a difference between you and me. I have to accept all feedback, so I have to say that, why it is not a cross? And I have to “bring them over”. And that is one of the challenges we are facing. The challenges that we are facing is the feedback that we receive - how can we make it win-win? That’s why the garden requires us to have a skillful approach... Whatever we do, we are open for criticism. And we are quite open. We leave our emails there, so therefore we are open for feedback.

N: Bala; CY: Author

Table 5.1 Interview Excerpt with Bala

Through this excerpt, it is clear that underlying assumption of the “inclusive ‘community” for Bala mean that residents and gardeners have to work together to solve any problems. As asserted in the thesis thus far, *government through community* operates through the community by firstly mobilizing the ideal of ‘community’ to configure beliefs, values and aspirations. This is mostly propagated through community leaders who have the (highest) capacity to govern. To this end, Bala harnesses his role as a community leader and frequently turned to the definition of ‘community’ to rationalize his leadership responsibilities, in which it is necessary for a community leader in the community garden more than a layperson to accept all feedback and mediate conflicts that may arise.

5.4 ‘Outward’ “community-centric” responsibilities and inclusive garden spaces

This section on the ‘outward’ “community-centric” responsibilities shifts attention away from the confined space of the community gardens as inclusive spaces, to showcase how the wider, more ambiguous spatial webs of ‘community’ (beyond the gardeners and their gardens) are also invoked in the CIB to reinforce how spatialities of inclusion are invoked in the discourse of ‘community’ through a governmentality perspective. I explore this using the case of Starlight Harmony, the garden which has demonstrated the greatest emphasis on these ‘outward’ forms of “community-centric” responsibilities.

5.4.1 Creating learning journeys: Hosting visitors

In the spirit of sharing knowledge and skills to maintain a successful garden, I have demonstrated in Section 5.3.2 how gardeners are encouraged to visit other community gardens to pick up best practices so as to expand their body of gardening knowledge, which can then be experimented with and applied to their own gardens. In this context, Starlight Harmony frequently receives visitors from other community gardens and other countries. According to Ali, his garden focuses strongly on “providing learning journeys not only for community gardeners and residents, but also for foreign visitors who want to know about community gardening in Singapore” (Personal Communication, July 2014). Drawing upon Ali’s comment that aesthetically pleasing gardens are desirable spaces to create learning journeys for others, ‘model’ gardens such as Starlight Harmony are not only visited by Singaporean community gardeners, but are also used by NParks to showcase Singapore’s community gardening culture to the international audience. For instance, the gardeners proudly tell me that they have received visitors from countries such as Poland, Australia and Malaysia. However, what is most peculiar here is the “selection process” on which garden these local and overseas visitors should visit involves a specific surveillance mechanism, as recounted by Ali below:

I: Because if they bring in foreign visitors or overseas visitors, they don't want to bring to those poorly maintained (*sic*) gardens. They have to bring to the nice gardens, the well-maintained gardens. From day one when I took over as RC Chairman, we must make sure that the garden retains the high standard because we wouldn't know when NParks will bring in the foreign visitors. Even if they are local we have to be careful. We don't want them to say, "Oh this garden! I thought it is Diamond standard but when I visit, it is like a jungle."

CY: Wow, so this seems like a model garden and they (Nparks) would like to bring them here.

I: Ah, yes! Quietly, last time in NParks, Mr. Azmi, Head of the Community in Bloom, (will) **quietly do surveillance** on our gardens. Then he will call and say, "Wow your garden looks nice!" Then we were like, "Huh, how you know"? **Sometimes in the morning before he goes to work, he will have a look… He will do the recce, and then he will bring the visitors**. So that's why when NParks wants to bring the visitors they like to bring, and **they will observe first**. This is also maybe they don't want some visitors to say, "Hey you bring me into this kind of lousy garden?" People will feel irritated (*sic*). But if you bring them into a well-maintained garden, of course they will see it is a successful garden.

I: Ali; CY: Author

Table 5.2 Interview Excerpt with Ali, emphasis mine

Surveillance techniques employed by the NParks here are meant neither in a negative nor positive manner; instead I want to reinforce how Foucault's earlier work on surveillance in governmentality can stimulate fruitful empirical observations of contemporary surveillance in the context of community gardens. Foucault himself discusses this mode of 'governing from a distance' through the Panopticon, in which perpetual surveillance in the context of "panoptic techniques and disciplinary norms was to be the real foundation of the political liberties of the community” (Rose, 1999:187). In similar fashion, the showcasing of successful communities to others is preceded by surveillance mechanisms on the community gardens by NParks officials. As noted from the quote, it involves unannounced visits by the officials to determine the state of the community gardens, before they decide whether to bring the visitors to the gardens. However innocuous these surveillance techniques may be, they further enable the community gardeners’ motivations to keep their community gardens presentable, which are central to and necessary for responsible self-government and urban greening to proceed.

5.4.2 Streetscaping and workshop ideas: collaborating with other gardens

The idea of the ‘inclusive community space’ extending beyond the geographical area of the garden in the form of ‘outward’ community-centric responsibilities is most explicitly found in the collaborations between NParks and Starlight Harmony gardeners. The initiative to develop vibrant streetscapes on the main roads of the housing estate (what gardeners termed ‘streetscaping’) - despite it not being a key responsibility of the gardeners - was proposed and executed by the gardeners in early 2014, as seen in Figure 5.3:

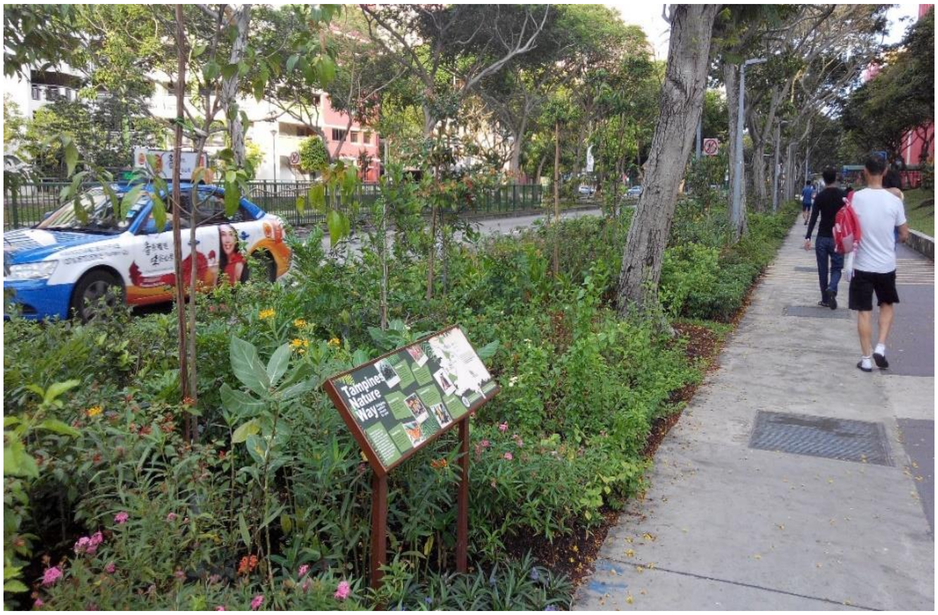

Figure 5.3 Latest Streetscaping efforts by Starlight Harmony Garden outside the community garden

Sue recalls this transition from 'inward' gardening in the garden to 'outward' responsibilities in the following quote:

> "You see the streetscapes around the kerb? Last time it was all grass… Now you see nice plants outside nearest to the roadside, by the road kerb. Yes we worked together to beautify the place. Last time it was all grass, it is only our place, these two blocks over here… If you walk around now, the central division, you will hardly see these because it is all grass." (Personal Communication, September 2014).

Sue further discusses this production of responsibilities outside of the garden as a process of building the wider webs of an inclusive 'community', through which gardeners and residents realize their common responsibility to the urban environment. Significant to this thesis, then, is how such responsibilities are realized amidst ambiguous definitions of where the 'community' is, since the responsibility of community gardeners is no longer be restricted to the confines of the community garden itself. Thus, in being ambiguous with where the ‘community’ starts and ends, the equally amorphous rhetoric of the community as an ‘inclusive space’ is achieved. To instantiate, Starlight Harmony gardeners revealed that as a result of this successful project, they were further approached by the MP to develop the streetscape beyond the territorial confines of the existing streetscape to other sections of the neighbourhood. Additionally, members of the public have also become enthused with these streetscaping features and have even alerted gardeners to “botak” (Malay word for ‘bald’ or ‘empty’) patches that require further maintenance. In utilizing a *government through community* perspective, what remains worthy of scrutiny is the ways in which community gardening internalizes a culture that preaches the responsibility of the ‘community’ (amidst equally ambiguous definitions of where the gardeners are responsible towards) to complicate our understandings of how the inclusive ‘community’ and its spatialities emerge.

5.5 Community in Bloom Awards

5.5.1 CIB Awards as the pinnacle of a disciplining mechanism

The expression of the above-elaborated “community-centric” responsibilities culminates in a biennial competition called the “CIB Awards”, which I argue serves as the pinnacle of the techniques of *government through community*. With its highest record of 343 applications in 2014 since its inception, the awards not only recognizes excellent gardening efforts to motivate existing gardeners to continue the CIB, but also applauds outstanding individuals who have devised inclusive gardening programs so that others could learn from their exemplary examples (Conceicao, 2014). According to CIB Manager Mr. Azmi, the competition’s goal is to “promote the good examples and potential gardening… (and) was better than the CIB Team telling or even showing them what to do” (cited in Conceicao, 2014:11). Cast in this context, that community gardening is more inclusive when it is initiated by the community and for the community further reinforces the rationale for analyzing community gardening in Singapore through the governmentality perspective – this is because gardeners are not governed explicit rules or conducts by NParks; rather, they are governed through the values and the virtues of gardeners’ themselves, who are then rewarded for their ability to align their community gardening goals with those of NParks.

Judging Criteria for Community in Bloom Competition 2014	
Community Involvement (40%)	- Number of participants - Number and frequency of gardening-related activities organized - Garden activities for youth - Initiative to help other gardening groups - Collaboration with other organizations
Garden Quality (45%)	- Garden presentation and colours - Special and innovative features - Appropriate choice of plants - Safety, cleanliness, maintenance and tidiness
Environmental quality and diversity (15%)	- Reduce, Reuse, Recycle - Creation of an ecologically-balanced environment - Evidence of habitat creations
Note: This is an abridged version of the judging criteria. For a full description of the criteria, see Appendix C.	

Table 5.3 Judging Criteria for Community in Bloom Competition 2014 (Source: NParks, 2015c).

Awards for Community in Bloom Competition 2014			
1. Achievement Bands	**Prize**	**2. 'Excellence' Awards**	**Prize**
Platinum	$800	Diamond award^	$2000
Gold	$500	Best community garden	$1000
Silver	$200*	Best new community gardens (less than 2 years)	$1000
Bronze	$100*	Environment & Biodiversity Award	$1000
*Worth of gardening products, not in cash ^ Initially, judging for the CIB Awards was based on photographs and only the top 20 gardens were visited by the judges (NParks & NLB, 2014). The prizes were restructured in 2008 to include the Platinum, Gold, Silver and Bronze awards. In the most recent 2014 CIB Awards, a new 'Diamond' category was created to celebrate community gardens that have consistently maintained a high level of excellence and encouraged community bonding (The Straits Times, 2014).			

Table 5.4 Awards for Community In Bloom Competition 2014 (Source: NParks, 2015c).

In order to participate, gardeners are asked to document the range of 'outward' and 'inward' "community-centric" responsibilities[24] through photographs, videos, testimonials and press clippings (NParks, 2014c). This is purported to be able to measure the level of community involvement in the garden, and occupies a substantial 40% of the award criteria [25](Table 5.3). Award-winning gardens are given prize money in cash or in vouchers for gardening products (Table 5.4), and are featured on the Facebook page of NParks with the hope that other gardeners and members of the public could consider visiting them.

5.5.2 Heterogeneous responses to the CIB Awards

Cast against this background of the CIB competition, there is, with no surprise, an explicit incorporation by community gardeners what NParks hopes the gardens to be(come) according to the judging criteria laid out for the CIB Awards. This is showcased most elaborately by Starlight Harmony's efforts, as demonstrated in Sections 5.4.1 and 5.4.2. Starlight also took extensive efforts to document all relevant visitations and workshops on their Facebook page; they also leave a guest book for visitors to pen down their feedback. These coalesce to showcase Starlight Harmony as a community garden that is inclusive to not only its own gardeners, but also to members of the public - locally and internationally - who had the chance to learn, visit and experience the gardening movement in Singapore. Admittedly, the desire to perform well in the CIB

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[24] To clarify, the terms 'outward' and 'inward' responsibilities are the author's own categorization and not the terms used by NParks.

[25] The inherent tensions in this award criteria will be covered later in Section 6.3.

Awards was tied to his responsibilities which he felt made him answerable to the former MP. As Ali recalled, there was a strong desire to meet his own expectations as the then-RC chairperson[26]:

> "I told Mr Sin, my former Minister of Parliament - I *promised* (sic), in the 2010 competition, we will deliver you a Platinum. We will jump from a Silver, to a Gold, to a Platinum. To grow that something, we don't just deliver words. We just have to deliver results." (Personal Communication, August 2014).

However, I note that the reality amongst these three gardens are far from homogeneous; neither do all community gardeners practise the same degree of adherence to the responsibilities that contribute to the standard of the "ideal garden". As the quote below from Bala (JK3) suggests, he have a clear calculation and rationality for not desiring a higher accolade:

> "We have not yet done it, that's why we only get the silver... As a chairman I took a decision that whether I should go all out for a gold – I could have done it… So for me, I am a chairman who will not go for awards for the sake of getting awards. Actually, I had the opportunity to get Gold. The CIB for me, for now it is just a guide it is just a milestone check to say we are on the right track. I am quite confident to say that I can get Platinum quite easily if I do certain things. I just have to put in more money, more financial resources, and of course, get consultants and experts." (Personal Communication, August 2014).

Bala further notes that coping with failures and challenges are what makes gardens 'good' in his opinion:

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[26] See Sections 6.3.3 and 6.3.4 for an elaboration of RC-led expectations in community gardens and its attendant spatial exclusions.

> "But for me, I enjoy this exploratory process so that anything that comes out from exploration is unique for CIB, if you get a 'Gold', does it mean you are a good garden? Yes you can get Gold…But for me, that is not critical. My (preferred) outcome is more of community participation, and values that come through community gardening. For example, the propensity to accept failure." (Personal Communication, August 2014).

For Bala, the extent to which community gardens are considered successful was very clearly less a matter of appropriating "best practices" (as what Starlight Harmony does) than residents experimenting and experiencing gardening themselves. In similar fashion, Siva from Courtview Garden emphasized it was not important for them to participate in the competition because they

> "focus more on the kopichat here. It is more important that the residents enjoy themselves and we also don't want them to force them to garden." (Personal Communication, September 2014).

Arguably, Siva's garden may not be considered a "good garden" based on NParks' criteria, but this does not compromise the level of inclusion amongst the residents due to the other activities hosted by the RC. For Bala and Siva, the extent in which gardens become inclusive was very clearly more of developing their sense of community camaraderie than of exhibiting excellent landscaping techniques, which they argued seemed more important in the CIB grading criteria. In this vein, as an indirect means of regulating behavior, *government through community* constitutes *choice* of community gardeners such as Bala and Siva, which in turn suggests the "possibility of rejecting norms and everyday practices associated with normalization" (Ettlinger, 2008: 549). The 'community' is therefore replete with alternative processes that may work for or against the broader aim of NParks. As such, even though the ‘community’ emerges as an important technology of government to “shape, normalize, and instrumentalize conduct through decisions and aspirations of others in order to achieve the objectives considered desirable” (Miller & Rose, 1999:8), the outcomes may be far from desirable as observed from the responses of Bala and Siva. This leads us to think about how community gardens as spaces of governmentality engenders productive analyses to challenges against broader ideals and intentions, which I shall explore further through the context of exclusion in the next chapter.

5.6 Chapter Summary

In exploring the ways in which community gardeners operationalize their “community-centric” responsibilities, this chapter has attempted to provide an empirical analysis of the practices and outcomes of ‘community’ gardening as a governmental project that ultimately produces community gardens as spaces of inclusion. In highlighting the range of responsibilities performed by “citizens, individually, and collectively as ideally and potentially ‘active’ in their own government” (Rose, 1996:32), I contend that gardening in Singapore can be increasingly characterized by governmental techniques based on a model of consensual ‘community’ politics that are not detrimental to the existing rule of the state because it does not alter political outcomes or decisions; rather, it strengthens what has already been set in place. My aim in the next empirical chapter is to build upon what I have thus far established to interrogate how spatialities of exclusions are also integral to community gardens. This is achieved by primarily focusing on the divide between “garden-centric” and “community-centric” responsibilities, and the negotiation between these two sets of responsibilities.

Chapter 6 “GARDEN-CENTRIC” AND “COMMUNITY-CENTRIC” RESPONSIBILITIES: EXCLUSIONS IN THE COMMUNITY GARDENS

6.1 Preamble

Behaviors and responsibilities held towards community gardening, as exemplified in the previous chapter, are closely intertwined with techniques of *government through community* to produce community gardens as inclusive spaces. This chapter continues to use the conceptual device of ‘responsibility’ to evaluate these governmental rationalities by scrutinizing how exclusionary spatialities are also central to community gardening. While the previous chapter focused mainly on responsibilities in the production of an inclusive ‘community’, Section 6.2 extends the analysis by examining the range of responsibilities in a community garden. I argue that responsibilities featured can be either more or less “garden-centric” or “community-centric”; these responsibilities may not necessarily gel neatly with one another, and may even be in conflict to result in plural forms of exclusions. Using this heuristic device, I examine in Section 6.3 four different cases of exclusions in community gardens.

6.2 Responsibilities as heuristic concept to explore exclusions

6.2.1 Responsibilities in a community garden: “garden-centric” or “community-centric”?

The previous chapter has shown that analyses of *government through community* enable us to explore the various mentalities of rules developed by and for the community gardeners. I have done this by specifically examining the “community-centric” responsibilities focused on making the community gardens inclusive spaces. It fulfils my intention set out earlier in Section 2.3.2, where I urged scholars to pay attention to the conceptual nexus between governmentality and ‘community’ so as to better examine why the community garden is often imagined and practised as an inclusive space. Here, I complicate the picture by scrutinizing beyond the “community-centric” responsibilities laid out in Chapter 5 to invoke an analysis of “garden-centric” responsibilities highlighted in my conceptual framework (Section 2.5). Following Kurtz (2001), I assert how the term ‘community garden’ is constituted by the terms ‘garden’ and ‘community’ which poses broadly different responsibilities either in terms of the ‘community’ or the ‘garden’. I present a heuristic way (Table 6.1) of looking at responsibilities in community gardens as either *more or less* aligned to the ideal of a “good garden” versus a “good community”:

• **Higher "garden-centric" responsibility** • **Producing a "good garden"** ***Government through community in community gardens***	a) Maintain division of labor for watering, weeding, compost making, planting and harvesting **[Section 6.3.1]** b) Maintain garden security and prevent theft **[Section 6.3.2]** c) Maintain garden cleanliness d) Upgrade gardening skills and expertise
• **Higher "community-centric" responsibility** • **Producing a "good community"**	e) Create common gardening space f) Sharing harvests g) Maintain harmony and solve contestations harmoniously h) Create learning journeys (host local and foreigner visitors) i) Participate in gardening workshops **[Sections 6.3.3 & 6.3.4]** j) Participate in streetscaping efforts

Table 6.1Heuristic scale of responsibilities that are more or less "garden-centric" or "community-centric" and its attendant exclusions

Responsibilities that range higher on the scale of contributing to what a "good community" (e to j in Table 6.1) is and ought to be have been explained in Sections 5.3 and 5.4 - in particular, the various types of governmental responsibilities and techniques as explained in these two sections have provided us with an understanding of how community gardens *become* spaces of inclusion, even though different gardeners within and among gardens employ the range of techniques in different degrees to foster an inclusive 'community'. However, what that has been less explored thus far is the range of mundane ‘garden’ responsibilities[27] (a and b in Table 6.1) that less explicitly engage with outward forms of ‘community’, but are paramount to the physical survival and existence of the community garden. I have categorized these heuristically as “garden-centric” responsibilities that help to maintain a “good garden”.

Another useful way to conceptualize how these “garden-centric” responsibilities differ from “community-centric” responsibilities is to consider how even in the absence of ‘community’ activities and techniques, the physical garden can still be maintained as long as these ‘garden’ responsibilities are performed (for instance, if there is at least one gardener, as demonstrated in the case of Courtview garden). However, in reality, dimensions of the “community” and the “garden” within the broad ambit of *government through community* are in constant negotiation because gardeners have multiple intentions and interpretations of both terms (Kurtz, 2001). This is most clearly showcased through the performance of different responsibilities by individual gardeners (Axiom 3 of the conceptual device of ‘responsibility’). Even though all community gardeners broadly respond to the overarching ideal of *government through community* in the upkeep of their community gardens, my fieldwork has shown how most individual gardeners are more inclined to participate in one particular dimension (either the “garden” or “community”) more than the other (Section 4.4.2). In this sense, we need to consider at how the ‘garden’ and ‘community’ impose different and perhaps even conflicting responsibilities of what the ‘community garden’ entails (Kurtz, 2001) to explain plural practices of exclusions. However, before I delve into the empirical accounts of the differing exclusions in Section 6.3, I consider very briefly the question of *who excludes whom* below (Section 6.2.2).

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[27] As a point of clarification, I consider both categories of ‘garden’ and ‘community’ responsibilities under the over-arching ambit of *Government through community*.

6.2.2 From responsibilities to exclusions: who excludes whom?

Admittedly, it is difficult to prove empirically that garden spaces are “spaces of exclusion” solely through interactions and interviews with the CIB gardeners, because CIB gardeners arguably wish to paint a positive, inclusive image of the gardens in keeping with the broad governmentality ideal of the inclusive ‘community’. This was evident in my fieldwork as CIB gardeners responded slightly alarmed and shocked at the use of the word ‘exclusion’ in my interviews. Also, none of them employed the word ‘exclusion’ in their responses. It then becomes more useful to ask the question of “*who excludes whom?”* in considering community gardens as *necessarily* spaces of exclusion in addition to its inclusionary socio-spatial practices.

As indicated in Sections 2.3.1 and 2.3.2, exclusion may be enacted by two broad categories of agents: Firstly, exclusion can be enacted by the CIB gardeners who wish to maintain a regulatory order of the inclusive ‘community’ but find a “mismatch between the norms, aspirations, and communication through threads of social power and control (Taket et al., 2009:31), thus necessitating some response of policing, removal or even eradication of individuals. Therefore, CIB gardeners, in response to the *government through community,* impose strict norms and procedures that exclude the possibility of other behaviours. Secondly, exclusions can be enacted by non-gardeners who choose to self-exclude themselves because of an individual's lack of intention and/or ability to achieve those governmental techniques set out by the CIB gardeners (Section 2.4.2). To illustrate this latter point, I deploy the 731 Green Fingers, the non-CIB gardening group as a contrast against the CIB gardens to develop this argument. The 731 Green Fingers is an excellent example to show how there are cases where gardening enthusiasts reject the governmentality techniques employed by the CIB teams in engaging an "inclusive community", and set up their own gardens unrelated to the CIB. Responses from the non-CIB gardening group 731 Green Fingers provide us with possibilities to understand why and how exclusions emerge from their resistance against the norms of the 'community' practised by the NParks and CIB gardeners. Therefore, the case of the 731 Green Fingers demonstrates it is certainly not my intention to suggest that exclusions in community gardens are wholly the result of the CIB gardeners' actions as Tan and Neo (2009) seemingly imply; rather, the "excluded" encompasses self-excluding agents who actively shape their realities and outcomes in response to the governmentality techniques. Concomitantly, this further fulfills my intention of using analyzing governmental rationalities (their techniques, prescriptions and interventions) with an ethnographic evaluation of the subjectivities and lived experiences of the CIB and non-CIB gardeners involved as I have suggested in my methodology (Chapter 3).

6.3 Responsibilities and exclusions

In this section, I mobilize Table 6.1 to explain the four instances of exclusions in community gardens. Two out of the four exclusions emerge out of a misalignment between "garden-centric" and "community-centric" responsibilities in which there is the need for optimal labour division in the community gardens (Section 6.3.1) and a need to protect garden crops by erecting fences (Section 6.3.2). The last two cases of exclusion, arguably more characteristic of "community-centric responsibilities" specific to the political condition in Singapore, are resultant of the perceptions of rules, expectations and norms of the 'community' by (non) CIB gardeners (Sections 6.3.3 and 6.3.4).

6.3.1 "Garden-centric" responsibility I: Optimal Division of Labour and exclusions

In the context of community gardening, one must be careful to note that "garden-centric" responsibilities do not just consist of the *individual* acts of pruning, watering and weeding. I argue that these individual responsibilities coalesce to reflect a *collective* set of garden management abilities that ultimately maintain the community garden. Gardeners not only have to be individually equipped with the correct gardening skills demonstrated in Section 5.3.2; more pertinently, for a garden to flourish, there must be an effective division of labour to ensure that the responsibilities (such as weeding, watering and planting) are performed *optimally* - that is, that they are neither excessively nor inadequately done. Bala from JK3 puts it most straightforwardly that division (and optimal amount) of labour is central to the physical maintenance of the garden:

> "The one thing I am looking out for is that **people should be very clear what they should do when they go in**. For that, we need a **good division of labor**. For example if everybody wants to water a plant, you will kill the plant! If you want to do weeding, you also cannot pluck out everything… We need to show evidence of what has been done, and what has not been done. **So for that to happen we have to be very clear that a core group will always be the ones behind**." (Personal Communication, July 2014, emphasis mine).

As Bala reveals, a good community garden does not require many gardeners and it is better to have a "core group" involved (undeniably the RC members in this case). Most of the tasks can be simply performed by a few gardeners, in which in most cases the chief gardener (Section 4.4.2) does the work on a daily basis. The exclusion becomes more pronounced when interested residents who wish to garden are subtly rejected because the required division of labour is already fulfilled and performed by the core group of CIB members themselves. Shan from JK3 recounts that a resident once approached her to participate in the gardening, but she had to kindly tell the resident that "they can try to help, but there really isn't much to do and we can't give him anything concrete to do." (Personal Communication, July 2014). The resident subsequently left and never appeared again, indicating that even though interested residents may wish to garden, the nature of work and (optimal) amount of labour required in the garden does not lend itself to doing so.

Similarly, Hung from 731 Green Fingers perceptively notes that one of the reasons why he did not join the CIB was because the amount of permissible and available land for gardening in the context of housing estates in Singapore remains extremely constrained as compared to other countries, which meant that the gardens tend to be physically small with a limited range of responsibilities. As such, his reason for setting up his own garden was because “one small garden doesn’t need twenty gardeners, and it is better to manage and feel your own.” (Personal Communication, September 2014).

Community gardens then become necessarily exclusive spaces because even though gardeners know it is their responsibility to ensure that there is a mechanism of commonality and sharing, a “good” garden is arguably less about the number of community gardeners than the skill and optimal level of gardening. In this vein, I critique that the NParks perspective on community gardening unproblematically implies that a ‘community’ garden is more inclusive (and thus successful) when it is tended by more gardeners (see Table 5.3 and Appendix C). This is clearly expressed in the judging criteria for CIB Awards elaborated earlier on (Section 5.5) which shows the “number of gardeners” as a criteria for community bonding. However, the physical size and nature of work in the gardens simply do not require many gardeners, thus pointing us to the observation that there may be an inherent problematic in the criteria to measure a good “community-garden”.

6.3.2 “Garden-centric” responsibility II: Fencing and exclusion

According to the community gardeners, it is their utmost responsibility to ensure the survival of the crops, as well as to protect the crops from theft. A common way used in the CIB gardens (and also reflected in the broader literature; see Kurtz, 2001) to ameliorate the common problems of crop stealing and destroying is to install fences and locks. Fenced and gated, the three CIB gardens become accessible visually but not physically for the community at large. All the three CIB gardens I visited were fenced at various points of their garden’s history.

While gardeners were cognizant that the fence is not at all favorable for ‘community’ bonding, they were quick to provide rationalizations for the installation of fences. As Sue from Starlight Harmony recalled, their MP had suggested the installation of circuit cameras instead of fences, but in her opinion it was “not nice to put the camera as though we are surveillancing them… we don’t want to persecute residents just because they steal plants since the garden is supposed to build bonding” (Personal Communication, July 2014). Starlight Harmony gardeners then decided to install a two-metre high fence around their community garden to ameliorate the problem of theft.

In the case of JK3, the first fence was installed in 2009. Three years later, a second and much wider gate was built because some residents were unwittingly trampling on the sweet potato crops grown by Kalai, the chief gardener. Similar to Sue, Eddie from JK3 rationalizes the installation of the fence even though he makes reference to the concept of a "true" community garden, which he believes should be unfenced:

> "…**The concept of a community garden is "no fencing"** but the problem is, this kind of thing requires some understanding. For the moment it is like that, but if you ask me, in the next five years will there be permanent fencing? **We cannot have permanent fencing because the concept of the community gardening is that it must be for the community, so people can just come in. But if you ask me for a start, let us make this work**." (Personal Communication, August 2014, emphasis mine).

Both Eddie and Sue make reference to, and demonstrate some form of negotiation between their "garden-centric" and "community-centric" responsibility in rationalizing why a fence is required. The fencing is ultimately legitimized because they prioritize the physical space and existence of the community garden, which is fundamental to even why community gardening can occur in the first place. This dovetails with what Tan and Neo (2009) recognize as outward forms of exclusionary practices in community gardens in that inasmuch as security measures such as fences arguably protect the crops and contribute to the making of a "good garden", there are implications on who may access the community gardens at what timings. I further argue that even though gardens may not be tightly policed or economically exclusive in the ways which other scholars studying exclusion have looked at it, community gardens with fences do convey both a symbolic and material message of a seemingly public, but actually private and exclusive space.

Fences and garden visitation hours

As JK3's case study demonstrates, even though community gardeners acknowledge the decreased potential of 'community' bonding as a result of the fence, they make it a point to make known their "official" gardening hours. The garden is open for gardening every Sunday from 10am to 12 noon for all residents. However, Starlight Harmony does it differently by requiring visitors to make an appointment via email before they visit. Courtview receives neither external visitors nor interested residents; the chief gardener simply attends to the garden every Saturday morning on his own. In this sense, while it is impossible for us to explore all the reasons that result in residents' non-involvement and exclusion from the garden, a main reason for the lack of residents' participation has to be the unfriendly and restrictive gardening (arguably at the convenience of the RC members) that do not fit their schedules. Furthermore, that the strict visitation hours further implies a system of surveillance means that visitors to the garden are placed in a "field of visibility" (Foucault, 1980) constantly under the patrol of the CIB gardeners themselves. This seemingly innocuous disciplinary technology, as part of the governing mechanisms which CIB gardeners enact on visitors, may have further foreclosed any potential participants who wish to have their own freedom and enjoyment in the community gardens.

"Don't fence up, it must be open! Open concept"

Exclusion in gardens as a result of fencing does not only arise from the restrictive gardening timings. The case of 731 Green Fingers (the non-CIB gardening group) demonstrates an outward self-exclusion because the fencing undermines their fundamental belief of what a garden is and ought to be. Drawing upon his Buddhist philosophy that 'no one owns nature', Mark from 731 Green Fingers explains how the fencing up of CIB gardens deterred him from joining the CIB:

> CY: So what if people take your plants?
>
> J: Take! We are Buddhists, there is no attachment. Plants are very different. If you can take it and grow it better than us, go ahead it doesn't really matter. But if you can't and you kill it, then it is back to square one. So just bring it back and we will try to rescue. Of course we would rather everybody enjoys it**. That's why it is put up and not kept within a fence - that is ridiculous. If you feel that nature, or the plant is yours, then okay – but it is never yours! So if we put it up and people say it is very nice, take!**
>
> So you see, there are many fruits and then people start to pluck. Do I get angry? I say, I don't. Can I eat fifty calamansi? I can't eat that much. But perhaps, they don't break the branch. Even if they break the branch, at most I will put a sign there and say "please take the fruits but don't take the branch". I don't believe in enforcement. I think we should cultivate and educate [people] but enforcement is no point la. **There are people who ask us to fence up like the garden there*, or else people will steal your plants. Put a little small fence. But then you are trying to 'own' something. Fence it up and it won't look like a garden already.** We put it open so that the children can see, can feel and touch, and it is open, so that the children come over and the students will read the tags. So you see there is a certain openness to this place.

CY: Is that also part of the reason why you all don't want to join the garden there*?

J: Yes, sort of. I don't like fenced up areas. My parents also don't like it.

J: Mark CY: Author
Note(*): 'garden there' refers to CIB Courtview

Table 6.2 Interview Excerpt with Mark on his decision to be excluded from the CIB garden, emphasis mine.

The 731 Green Fingers assert that the fenced garden evokes a private space when it should be meant for the public, and are strong adherents of an "open concept" even though their crops are sometimes stolen. Vernon from the 731 gardening group further reinforces by noting that

> "So the thing is that when you grow (a garden), anything damaged is your own risk. And if it bears fruit and people take it, you cannot go to the police station and say, hey my fruits got stolen. It **should be public, isn't it**? But you see, we say that everyone can and should come here and admire the plants. I **lost a few plants and I say it's okay, if you want my plant, just take it and go and grow… Don't fence up, it must be open! Open concept**!" (Personal Communication, September 2014, emphasis mine).

Both Mark and Vernon acknowledge that the openness of a community garden implies the possibility of fruit-stealers or crop destroyers, but they insist on not fencing so that members of the community may enjoy the fruits and scenery. This particular example shows how a negotiation between "garden-centric" and "community-centric" responsibilities imposes different and perhaps conflicting outcomes that results in different forms of exclusions - both by the CIB gardeners and non-CIB gardeners themselves. It also brings forth the argument that inclusion and exclusion are perhaps both integral parts to the totality of the community gardens, when we consider how the community gardeners negotiate their “garden-centric” and “community-centric” responsibilities. The next section deals with a slightly different variation of exclusion in community gardens - specifically that of ‘community-centric’ responsibilities in the political context of Singapore.

6.3.3 “Community-centric” responsibility I: Norms of a ‘community’ and (self) exclusions

As Section 4.4.2 previously noted, the imbuement of responsibility on CIB garden leaders makes them appropriate “representatives” in the transmission and production of governmental techniques of ‘community’ (Raco & Imrie, 2000). Furthermore, the conceptual framework reminds us that characters and beliefs of these garden community leaders are “profoundly shaped by the social and institutional settings in which they find themselves, turning them into thoroughly disciplined citizens” (Philo, 2011:163) who fulfil their “community-centric” responsibilities by imposing norms in the garden.

A key example to illustrate this is how JK3 community gardeners prohibit residents from owning their individual gardening plots (Section 5.3.1). JK3’s Bala was unapologetically insistent that the ethos of the ‘community‘ implies rules of co-operation and sharing. He firmly responded that

> “The word ‘community’ means that there is an assumption that you have to co-operate with one another. The reason is that when your plants die, you cannot say that it is my plot. We cannot have

> gardeners here wanting to do their own stuff only." (Personal Communication, August 2014).

Above, Bala no doubt demonstrates his strong "community-centric" responsibility through his lack of tolerance of individualism, which he views as antithetical to the ethos of 'community'. This has serious consequences on the ways we understand the relationship between "community-centric" responsibility and exclusions in the garden. This is because JK3 not only excludes its potential gardeners because there is nothing much for them to do (Section 6.3.1), but no less also because "anti-community" individuals who do not wish to co-operate with one other are systematically barred and spatially excluded from the community garden.

"Why make life so difficult?"

Concomitantly, I have also noted earlier that CIB gardeners have a strong obligation to participate in the RC community-bonding activities and CIB Awards to become an "inclusive community" (Sections 5.3 and 5.4). These form part of the regulatory mechanisms established by the NParks to foster a sense of inclusion under the broad framework of *government through community*. Yet, my fieldwork reveals it is precisely these inclusive 'community' regulatory mechanisms that results in the "self-exclusion" of individuals such as 731 Green Fingers member, Lilian, who noted that

> "We also don't want to be so serious and join those competitions and RC activities. Why make life so *kang kor* (local Hokkien dialect for 'difficult') when the whole point is for us to enjoy ourselves through gardening?" (Personal Communication, September 2014).

Lilian's response demonstrates that participation as a CIB imposes RC "community-centric" expectations. Such "community-centric responsibilities" performed under the ambit of CIB (as espoused by Bala in the preceding quote) is precisely what deters her because they are too much of a hassle for gardeners who simply wish to garden. By scrutinizing the obligations of the CIB gardeners *vis-a-vis* the non-CIB 731 Green Fingers gardeners, my field observations not only reflect Tan and Neo's (2009) argument that community gardens exclude residents who do not wish to be involved with perceived government-linked programmes such as the RC, but further extend the authors' analysis by noting how it is precisely because people do not wish to be too involved in the rules and norms imposed to foster a inclusive community garden (as per what the governmentalizing responsibilities constitute) that results in their self-exclusion.

"Too many ideas are not good"

Even though I have demonstrated that non-CIB gardeners do not wish to be too involved in the "community-centric" responsibilities involved in fostering a "good" community garden, the meanings non-CIB gardeners themselves have on the 'community' direct us to other dimensions of their self-exclusion. A specific dimension I explore is the self-exclusion born out of the 731 Green Fingers' reading of what the 'community' ought to be. Even though the previous section (*"why make life so difficult"*) showcased how CIB and non-CIB gardeners do not fully agree with the range of "community-centric" responsibilities that need to be performed, almost everyone shared a consensus that a community garden should be a convivial space absent of conflicts and negotiations. Mr. Hung from 731 Green Fingers cites this as a reason why he refuses to join the CIB Program, noting that

> "If we go over there, there will be too many people and too many conflict of ideas. We won't really have a say on what goes on in the garden. That's one of the reasons, it is very difficult. So it's better to keep it separate to prevent any unhappiness." (Personal Communication, November 2014).

In similar fashion, Vernon from 731 Green Fingers responded,

> "We don't want to be tied down. Cos once you want to start to join them, a lot of people will want to put their hand in it and it will get difficult. Because I would like to do my way, and he would like to do his way. A lot of ideas are not good in the community garden." (Personal Communication, November 2014).

Mr. Hung and Vernon reveal that they chose to employ self-exclusionary mechanisms because they felt too many people participating in a community garden would engender too many ideas unnecessarily, and potentially destabilize what an inclusive 'community' ought to be. This thus adds another dimension of analysis to this thesis - I contend that the non-CIB gardeners themselves also practise their own perception of "community-centric responsibility" by choosing to self-exclude and *not* participate in CIB, as they do not wish to destabilize the harmony found in the 'community'. Simultaneously, this reinforces my argument that practices of inclusive 'community' formation also constitutes processes of exclusions and are subject to the constant reshaping of values, perceptions and practices of 'community' by different members involved. The last section extends the analysis on the production of exclusion in community gardens, by further contemplating how RC members script their understandings of their "community-centric" responsibilities in the context of residents' demands, complaints and expectations of the residents.

6.3.4 "Community-centric" responsibility II: RC Expectations and exclusions

The second aspect of "community-centric" responsibility and its exclusions in community gardens emerges as a result of the gardening groups' close affiliation with the Singapore Government. If we take our cue from Tan and Neo (2009), non-CIB gardeners (or residents in general) tend to stay away from the RC-led community gardens as they are viewed suspiciously as extensions of the Government's arm. However, as an extension and departure from their argument, I note that peculiar to the political context of Singapore is how CIB gardeners who belong to the RCs employ calculated, rationalized means to exclude residents from the gardens because of the high standards and expectations residents purportedly impose on the RCs. As developed in Section 4.3, community gardens in Singapore are placed under the management of the RC, a para-political institution with arguably intimate linkages with the Singapore Government. As with other RC-related operations such as kids' enrichment classes, 'Kopichat' and the residents' Crime Watch community group, community gardening becomes a locus where residents may voice their expectations, demands and complaints. The ways in which RC members deal with the demands and expectations of residents in the community garden, I argue, can be seen as a microcosm of the broader dynamics between the RC, Singapore Government and its residents, and more profoundly informs us of how non-RC residents become excluded from the community garden.

For instance, Bala from JK3 points out the similarities between the expectations residents have of him as a RC leader and as a community gardener, and contends that they cannot have too many residents in the garden because

> "Our residents all have high expectations of the RC... So for us, publicity (of the garden) will only come, after we have made it work… I find that **too many is also not easy to maintain**. So frankly speaking, we are not ready yet for explicit publicity because we have not yet built the capacity of our RC members**... It is easy to extend (the outreach) but can we fulfil the expectations of these people**?" (Personal Communication, September 2014, emphasis mine).

Even though Bala wishes to increase the number of community gardeners in time to come, he is cognizant that too many non-RC gardeners would make it difficult to maintain the garden. Additionally, it can be seen that community gardening, while purported as a harmonious and inclusive activity, has to be developed through very cautious and calculated means that aim to incorporate the non-RC gardeners slowly in the future. Similarly, Ali from Starlight Harmony displays signs of exclusions when he makes a distinction between the RC and non-RC (residents) members in the community gardens, and notes membership to the garden has to be controlled because

> "If you depend too much on residents, you must be able to trust them because residents do not totally understand. I do not want when something bad happens, I have to solve it." (Personal Communication, August 2014).

From these above quotes, that Singapore’s community gardens are managed by the RCs implies a host of expectations from the residents which RC members need to meet. As such, the CIB gardeners, as implicitly as it may seem, reckon that that it is better for the garden to be managed mostly by the RC members so as to prevent any potential problems when non-RC gardeners join the garden. By extension, this limits and excludes the participation of non-RC residents who wish to participate in the community gardens. By bringing to the forefront the importance of how the ‘community’ in community gardening is undergirded by expectations of the RCs specific to Singapore’s context, we are reminded of Liepin’s assertion that the study of community gardening requires us to be more sensitive to the “specific terrains of power and socio-cultural discourses that shape any understanding of ‘community’” (2000:29). I argue that the “community-centric” responsibilities and its exclusions listed here are often taken-for-granted and masked by the celebratory characteristics of the ‘community’ in Singapore’s community gardening project. In this manner, community gardens must therefore be analyzed for spatial exclusions that occur even when the overarching ideal of *government through community* posits that community gardeners may imbibe in, and be conditioned by behaviours and practices that condition community gardens as inclusive spaces.

6.4 Chapter Summary

This chapter fulfills my intention of continuing the narrative from Chapter 5 to evaluate how community gardens are *necessarily* both inclusive and exclusive.

Rather than simply stopping at ‘what’ kinds of exclusions are produced, I use the framework of *government through community* and responsibility in community gardening to discuss ‘how’ exclusions are conditioned by both governmental “garden-centric” and “community-centric” responsibilities (that are at times in conflict with one another). Pertinently, while this means that CIB gardeners produce their own exclusions, it also allows for spaces of resistances as non-CIB gardeners who choose to reject the norms and everyday practices to produce alternative forms of subjectivities. In the concluding chapter, I offer a summary and review of the analysis of community gardens in Singapore presented in this thesis. Additionally, I throw light on the possibility of research opportunities aimed at engendering a more comprehensive understanding of the practices of ‘community’, before speculating on the future of community gardening in Singapore.

Chapter 7 CONCLUSION

7.1 Summary of Key Significances

In this section, I reiterate the key discussions of the thesis and highlight its conceptual and empirical significances. Fundamentally, this thesis has sought to uncover why community gardens are necessarily spaces of in/exclusions through the synergistic deployment of the concepts of *government through community* and *responsibility*. It derives from dissatisfaction with the analysis of the ‘community’ in academic debates and the in/exclusion literature on community gardens. In Chapter 2, I argued that conventional studies on community gardens have done little to engage with conceptual debates on the ‘community’ - in turn, they are inadequate in explaining how and why community gardens, as apparently desirable and inclusive spaces, are in reality also necessarily exclusionary. In redressing the above lacuna in the existing research, this thesis serves to reinforce Ernwein’s (2014) conviction that there are *different* spatialities of inclusions and exclusions which are part of the totality of community gardens which should not be taken for granted but rather researched. This is achieved by focusing more keenly on a Foucauldian reading of the concept of ‘community’ through the empirical crucible of community gardens. In using *government through community* (Rose, 1999) in my conceptual framework, I argue for the need to understand the governmental imperatives that drive the mechanisms and practices that condition community gardens as necessarily spaces of in/exclusions.

In addition to that, I have sought to use the concept of ‘responsibility’ to distinguish between “garden-centric” and “community-centric” responsibilities to more adequately capture the conditions, processes and outcomes that cannot be solely answered through the broad concept of *government through community.* In all, the conceptual framework developed an understanding of how complex layers of governmental practice and techniques, through the optic of ‘responsibility’, point to intersecting and layered spatialities of in/exclusions in community gardens.

Having established the rationale for my conceptual framework, Chapter 4 introduced the empirical case of Singapore which this thesis is based upon, by placing specific attention on how Resident Committees (RCs) in Singapore are selected as what a ‘community’ *is and ought* to be, in line with broader city greening agendas. I proceeded to explore the specific techniques of surveillance and norms that inculcate desirable behaviors of inclusion and community spiritedness (Chapter 5). This is demonstrated most clearly through the discussions on ‘inward’ and ‘outward’ “community-centric” responsibilities central to techniques of *government through community*. Admittedly, despite the observation that these all gardeners (both CIB and non-CIB) broadly possess broadly similar ideals as to what a good community garden *should* be (i.e. all could not escape from the statement that the community garden *should* be a place of harmonious and inclusive conviviality), my fieldwork revealed that the realities amongst these four gardens are far from homogeneous. Pertinently, I have also noted that the three CIB gardens are clearly interested in different criteria (to different extents) in the good community garden “checklist” used for the CIB Awards (Section 5.4). Cast in this context, it reinforces my argument that technologies of *government through community* are never homogenously applied across the gardens; the community gardeners’ attitudes and actions towards inclusionary practices are thus never possibly choreographed by the state because the individual community gardeners retain their agencies and create their alternatives in everyday gardening responsibilities.

Chapter 6 extended the discussion by highlighting the potential gaps between “garden-centric” and “community-centric” responsibilities in the community gardens. In demonstrating how the ethos of two sets of responsibilities may not coincide neatly through the discussion on optimal labour (6.3.1) and fencing (6.3.2), it reinforces the key argument in this thesis that community gardens become *necessarily* exclusive and inclusive. In deepening the analysis of my empirical findings, I also wish to highlight how all community gardeners respond differently to the negotiations between their “garden-centric” and “community-centric” responsibilities - this negotiation is of course not observed only by CIB gardeners, but by non-CIB gardeners too (however, the latter is not the empirical focus of my thesis). Going by my argument that the negotiation between these two sets of responsibilities perpetuate different dimensions of inclusions and exclusions, it becomes clear that perhaps the non-CIB 731 Green Fingers is also exclusive to some extent. However, what differentiates the CIB groups from the non-CIB counterpart is the former groups' more explicit (and perhaps overly narrowed) adherence to the overall ethos of community gardening set out by NParks in comparison to the latter. I have tried to develop this in Section 6.3.3 by interrogating the exclusions that arise out of adherence to the governmental ideals of what the community gardeners' community-centric responsibilities ought to be, and also more broadly in terms of how RCs within Singapore's political context are subject to much scrutiny by residents (6.3.4). By extension, RC gardeners tend to be suspicious of non-RC residents to some extent, therefore necessitating some form of exclusion as I have demonstrated. In concluding the empirical findings of this study, I further speculate that the tensions between "garden-centric" and "community-centric" responsibilities are more pronounced for the CIB gardeners compared to the non-CIB gardeners, thus resulting in more outward, explicit forms of exclusions against non-CIB residents.

7.2 Potentials for future research: (In)applicability of *government through community* to other case studies

How can this thesis provide future research directions to deepen geographical understandings surrounding the (un)makings and contradictions of 'community' identities, and further debates on community gardening, governmentality and in/exclusions? The research here can depart in several directions, but I choose to reflect on just one strand regarding the applicability of my conceptual framework onto other case studies.

Following Aitken (2009), I have shown that the negotiation between the imaginations of 'community' and its outcomes have been demonstrated through this case study of community gardening in Singapore, thus making community gardens exciting spaces for geographical inquiry. However, while the use of a governmentality perspective contributes to a more rigorous understanding of the nature of political relationships involved in the regulation of a 'community' (Summerville et al, 2008), it may not be applicable to all community gardens, both in Singapore and in other countries.

Given that my thesis only focuses on public housing CIB gardens in Singapore (Section 1.2.), the (in)applicability of the conceptual framework may be investigated through a comparison study of CIB gardens in public housing estates with the CIB gardens found in hospitals, welfare homes and schools. Cast against this context, a potential question that may be considered is: *In what ways do the* *political management of community gardens in public housing and schools converge/diverge; in turn, how does this complicate our understandings of the spatial (un)makings of 'community'?*

I speculate that the concept of *government through community* may not be as productive in uncovering the community gardening landscape in these different spaces due to the different nature of political management of the gardens. In recognizing that this Foucauldian perspective I have utilized here is but only one particular conceptual reading of 'community' that may not be readily mapped onto other community gardening spaces, I urge scholars to continue using the empirical context of community gardens, in search of critical and productive concepts that can contribute to exploring the socio-political mechanisms that sustain the the 'community' and its associated spatialities.

7.3 The future of community gardening in Singapore

To close, I would like to return to the introduction of my thesis and offer some reflections on the future of community gardening in Singapore. I began this thesis by arguing how it is almost impossible to conceive of community gardens as fully inclusive spaces; in fact, it has been my intention throughout to demonstrate how inclusions and exclusions are both necessary for community gardens. The thesis has also demonstrated how these socio-spatial practices of in/exclusions that arise are themselves integral to the process of 'community'.

However, does this mean that status quo is best, and that nothing should be done about the current state of affairs?

Consider this proposition in relation to my question above: While it is impossible to make community-gardens all-inclusive, some exclusions are *less* necessary than others. A way to illustrate this argument requires us to return to Section 6.3.1, where I demonstrated the exclusions which fencing produces. In this context, I contend that we can encouraging non-fencing as a way forward for community gardens as 731 Green Fingers has demonstrated; additionally, NParks may wish to borrow from the example of 731 Green Fingers to more explicitly promote and encourage Singaporeans to participate in the “blooming” of organic, non-CIB community gardens such that they do not only come under the ambit of para-political institutions such as the RCs.

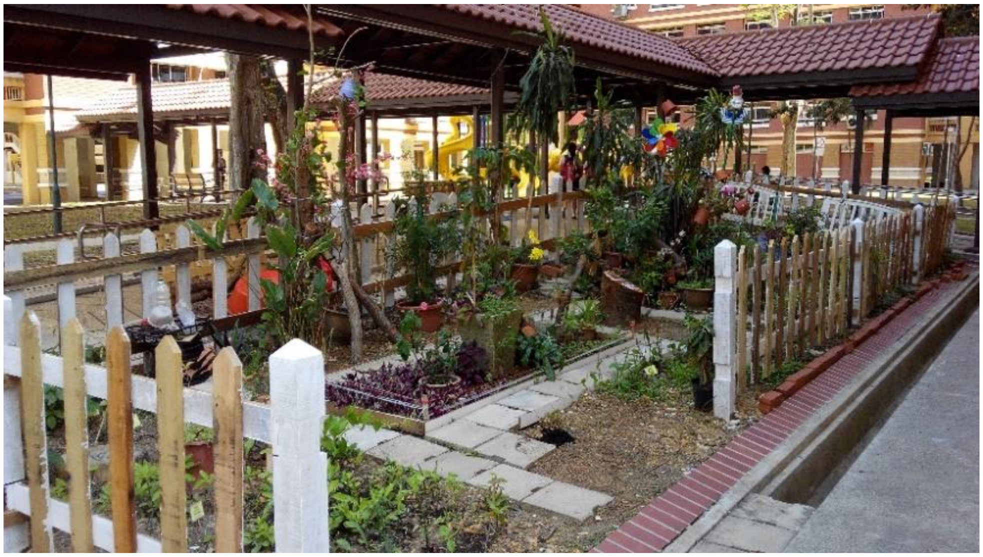

Figure 7.1 Open access to the new Tampines Arcadia community garden, while remaining fenced at a low height.

Incidentally, a new community garden has recently started to “bloom” near the writer’s residential area in Tampines (Figure 7.1) at the point of time which the conclusion is being written. There are a few observations worthy of reflection here: Even though the garden comes under the management of the Tampines Arcadia RC, the new gardeners I spoke to have made deliberate, engaged efforts to encourage residents in the area gardeners to participate through newsletters and word-of-mouth. Furthermore, while a fence waist-high in height is installed to prevent to prevent unobservant residents from trampling on the crops, a section of the perimeter is deliberately left unfenced so as to allow residents to enter the garden.

This new community garden seems to signal a novel way forward for understanding how some exclusions (such as high fences and limited membership) are less necessary than others, and may potentially involve residents to different extents even though residents themselves may not wish to garden or tend to the crops (as per the self-exclusionary tactics espoused in this thesis). As the example of this nascent community garden has demonstrated, imagining such new possibilities while paying attention to the delicate politics and spatialities of ‘community’ mark humble, small but critical starting points to make community gardens less exclusive than they currently are, despite my over-arching argument that they are impossibly wholly inclusive.

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APPENDIXES

Appendix A - Interview question with CIB gardeners and non-CIB gardeners

A1) Questions for in-depth interview [CIB gardeners]

General

1. Please share with me your name and age, and how long you been gardening.
2. Has it always been at this very community garden?
3. How frequent do you garden?
4. Who do you usually garden with?

Responsibilities in the Community Garden

1. What prompted you to join the Community in Bloom? What about your friends? What will you be doing if you were not gardening?
2. Why did you all decide on this particular kind of garden (horticultural, vegetables, ornamental)? Why not the other types of gardens – is it owing to time constraints, financial constraints etc?
3. Would you have still known this group of people you are gardening with, if you were not in the Community in Bloom program?
4. How many new friends have you met through this program?
5. If there was no program by NParks (Community in Bloom), would you have joined any other gardening clubs/ programs for the love of gardening?
6. Can you share with me some of your roles and responsibilities?
7. How do you structure access to the garden? Do you think it is your responsibility to keep gardens well-maintained, free from pests/ theft?
8. How do gardeners grapple with their multiple responsibilities? For instance, does it cause you "trouble"? Is there a lot of administrative work to do? Does the gardening then take up more time than what you expect?

Participation in the Garden

1. Can you share with me about **who** comes to garden usually/ how often?
2. Are there ad-hoc members who come as and when they come/ members who come every day? Community gardens may work with an idealism and homogeneity that gardeners are "free" and always able to tend to the gardens, do ad-hoc gardeners also work well?
3. What are the conditions required for a resident to become a community gardener? For instance, is there a minimal number of hours to work before one can become a community gardener?

Residents' thoughts on community building

1. Do you think community gardening helps us to achieve community spirit? Do you think it is your responsibility to get more people to come together to garden together?
2. What makes a good community garden in your opinion?
3. What do you think 'community' means? Who constitutes the 'community' in your opinion?

Involvement with NParks

1. In your own words, what do you think are the most important "goals" of the NParks in allowing citizens to set up these community gardens?
2. Do you think the community gardens have fulfilled what it has set out to achieve?
3. In your opinion, does your community garden fulfil/ realize what you think should be a good community garden?
4. Can you share with me more about the involvement of NParks in this community garden?
5. Do you think it is good that they offer these forms of help? Will you prefer they provide less help, or more help? Or do you think the level of help/ intervention they provide is just right?
6. I understand that there is a *Community in Bloom Awards* Competition organized by the NParks, what are your thoughts about this competition? Do you all actively participate and try to win this competition? Why/ Why not?

Exclusions in the gardens

1. Do you know of anyone who likes gardening in the estate, but ***does not*** participate in the garden?

2. Are there some gardeners who do not participate so much because they think the 'community' garden is exclusive? What do you think might be reasons for this?

A2) Questions for in-depth interview [non-CIB gardeners]

General

1. How long have you been gardening? Has it always been at this very community garden?
2. How frequent do you garden?
3. Who do you usually garden with?

Responsibilities in the Community Garden

1. What prompted you to join this garden? Why not the other gardens such as the CIB garden?
2. Can you share with me some of your roles and responsibilities?
3. How do you structure access to the garden? Do you think it is your responsibility to keep gardens well-maintained, free from pests/ theft?
4. How do gardeners grapple with their multiple responsibilities? For instance, does it cause you "trouble"? Is there a lot of administrative work to do? Does the gardening then take up more time than what you expect?

Residents' thoughts on community building

1. Do you think community gardening helps us to achieve community spirit

2. Do you think it is your responsibility to get more people to come together to garden together?

3. What makes a good community garden in your opinion?

4. What do you think ‘community’ means? Who constitutes the ‘community’ in your opinion?

Appendix B - Interview with NParks Community in Bloom Assistant Director, Ms Loh Chay Hwee

General

1) What were the initial inspirations/ motivations/ reasons for a CIB project in Singapore?
2) How does the **CIB differ** from other urban greening initiative NParks traditionally takes charge of (eg: parks and gardens, tree planting)?
3) How does community gardening fit into Singapore's 'City in a Garden' vision?
4) How does Singapore's CIB compare with other cities which also have such urban gardening projects?

Roles and responsibilities of NParks

1) What are the roles, functions and duties of NParks officers in charge of CIB?
2) What are some of the common problems encountered by gardeners that Nparks has to deal with?

Competitions organized

1) I understand that there is a CIB Awards and through my interviews with the gardeners, they do take great pride in their gardens. **How** was the judging criteria for the CIB Awards devised?

Community Garden specific

1) Can you share with me some of the **"**triumphs" of this program?
2) I noticed that the gardens in HDB estates are mostly developed by the **RC**s.
    a) In thinking about who is the 'community', were there other groups that NParks had previously considered before finally liaising with Town Councils and RCs to develop these gardens?
    b) Were there instances where 'non-RC' members propose their own gardening initiatives?
    c) Case of 731 Green Fingers: they are a group of neighbours in Tampines who managed to get Mr. Hung Swee Keat's permission to garden outside their homes, but they do not want to join the nearby CIB garden – how does NParks see these cases?
3) Can you share with me what are some of the common **problems** faced by community gardeners?

4) One of the common grouses of community gardens is that they are fenced up, making it difficult for the public to access them. What are your sentiments on this?
5) What happens to those gardens that “fail” (due to lack of maintenance, disrepair)?

Looking forward

1) What is your hope for the CIB in the next 10 years to come?

Appendix C - Full criteria description for CIB Awards 2014

(Source: NParks, 2015c)

Community Involvement (40%)	
Criteria	Description
1 Number of participants involved	The level of interest of the community in gardening
2 Number of gardening-related activities organized and their frequency	Evidence of gardening/plant-related activities that engage the community throughout the year (e.g. gatherings, garden parties, plant exchanges, visits)
3 Ways to sustain the garden	Support in the form of manpower volunteers, funds, sponsorships, donations through local grassroots, commercial and corporate sectors, schools and the general public, which helps sustain the garden
4 Gardening initiatives conducted for youth	The active involvement of youth helps sustain the garden in the long term. Initiatives such as mentoring, sharing of information and guiding help raise awareness and develop their interest in plants, gardening and nature appreciation.
5 Initiative in helping new gardening groups/communities	Collaborations and activities which have resulted in the direct or indirect creation of new community gardening groups
6 Frequency in volunteering for gardening events	Active participation in outreach activities to promote gardening at a district and/or national level (e.g. Garden Open Day, gatherings, roadshows, participation at Singapore Garden Festival)
7 Collaboration with other organizations	Promote interactions among communities and organizations through initiatives such as sharing plant cuttings, plant exchanges to help build up a network among gardening groups
Garden Quality (45%)	
1 Garden Presentation and Colours	A garden that is well-planned adds value to the community, enhancing the estate's character and surrounding neighbourhood. Planting shrubs around fences, using natural materials and using shorter fences can help integrate gardens with their surroundings.
2 Special Features	Uniqueness of the garden (e.g. having a focal point, impressive floral display)
3 Innovative Elements	New/creative ideas to improve gardening (e.g. new gardening tools, gardening techniques)
4 Presence of essential garden items	Essential tools/items (e.g. proper edging, a garden shed, pavers) help enhance the garden aesthetics and increase the overall level of enjoyment among participants.
5 Appropriate choice of plants	Plants which are suitable for the garden environment
6 Quality of the plants	Plants should be of a natural, healthy colour without

	obvious signs of pest infestation, plant diseases and nutrient deficiencies such as yellowing , curling and wilting leaves, stunted and deformed plant growth, etc.
7 Proper maintenance and tidiness of garden	Good garden management includes regular trimming of overgrown plants, clearing of rubbish, regular sweeping of external areas, ensuring the garden remains within its boundaries etc.
8 Cleanliness	The garden should be checked regularly to prevent water stagnation in planting areas, garden structures, drains, washing areas, etc. There should not be litter in the area and all tools should be kept clean.
9 Safety	The garden does not put the health and safety of the surrounding community at risk, e.g. plants on roadside verges are trimmed to prevent obstruction to pedestrians and motorists, unused tools are properly kept.
Environmental Quality and Biodiversity (15%)	
1 Reduce, Reuse & Recycle	Minimizes the need to purchase new resources to sustain the garden. (e.g. use of recycled bottles and styrofoam boxes as planters, discarded slabs for pathways, old timber for edging and plant signage)
2 Environmentally friendly practices	Use of natural methods to control pests and diseases in the community garden helps create an ecologically-balanced environment (e.g. use of coffee grounds as fertilizers, composting, using recycled water for watering, etc)
3 Habitat creation and biodiversity enhancement	The use of different species of plants and garden features to attract fauna (such as sunbirds, butterflies, dragonflies, ladybirds) helps create a diverse and healthy ecosystem.