**Narratives of a 'Lived' Urban Space:
An Investigation of Community Gardens in the City of Ottawa**

By

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Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Master of Arts
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ABSTRACT

This thesis explores the hybridity of public space. I focus my study on the spaces of community gardens, sites that are featured increasingly across many urban landscapes. I examine how community gardeners perceive, comprehend, and use these sites as ambiguous spaces that are always in a process of 'becoming'. The theoretical ideas, analytic framework, and empirical research presented in this thesis attend to how urban neoliberalism's spatial processes affect urban forms. Specifically, this research is informed by and intends to inform land use debates and competing visions for public space. Today, public spaces are contested urban sites in many city centres. These sites are used in increasingly private ways by those 'squeezed out of or evicted from private spaces'. Concurrently, public spaces are surveilled, controlled, and designed to ensure that they remain 'open' for 'public' use. My thesis is situated at this political juncture where private space meets public space, where private uses are pitted against public uses. I question 'what is a public space', showing that private uses, or privacy, is a constitutive part of public space. I also demonstrate that public spaces are perceived as 'lived' spaces and used in 'third' ways. The arguments and evidence put forward in this thesis seek to contribute to debates over 'appropriate' uses of public space and to the fields of critical geography, urban planning, and Canadian Studies.

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What is a Public Space?

Introduction

In many North American cities the social spaces that people engage with and use are shifting. Where the city square, town market, or public park once stood, semi-private, semi-public spaces loom imposingly. This urban form is expressed through: “investments in libraries, waterfront developments, sports complexes and convention centres”; the emergence of middle-class residential investment and repopulation in downtown cores (Blomley, 2004:30); and numerous proposals for luxury condominiums, shopping malls and theatres. These spatial developments are neither random nor benign (Smith, 2002). They are carefully prescribed by dominant economic, political, and social forces of globalization and the inception of urban neoliberalism. While urban neoliberalism entails a set of ideologically based processes¹ (Blomley, 2004), this thesis is concerned with its spatial strategies in the urban centre and how they shape, mediate, and restrict public space. Specifically, this thesis considers how a diverse group of urban citizens comprehend and utilize public space within these new urban contexts. Focusing on community gardeners and their ‘public’ gardens, I document their spatial imaginaries in order to propose strategies for justly reconciling increasing and imminent struggles over public space. To contextualize this focus, I now briefly consider how public spaces are changing in many urban centres.

To consider how urban neoliberalism affects *public* space it is first necessary to understand its effects upon *private* space. Urban housing markets are crucial sites for the enactment of neoliberal spatial processes. These processes are manifest through: removals of rent controls; retrenchment of governmental support for housing provision; and the encroachment of speculative development companies (Blomley, 2004). These trends are

apparent in many Canadian cities and impact public spaces in particular ways. As housing becomes unaffordable, as boarding rooms are shut down, and as low-income housing is converted into retail space, public spaces such as “the streets and parks...become occupied by those evicted or squeezed from urban private space” (Blomley, 2004:31). Concurrently, neoliberal spatial processes affect public space in more direct ways. Increasingly, public spaces are subject to surveillance and policing to ensure that associated uses and behaviours do not compromise the goals of neoliberalism. A “tactical cleansing of public space” is enacted to attract global investment, capital, tourism, and wealth (Blomley, 2004).

Such spatial processes present complex and precarious challenges. Public spaces are transformed into private spaces for some individuals and communities, while the state polices these sites to ensure they remain ‘public’. In many city centres, public spaces are contested sites where various groups and individuals often struggle between competing visions for social space. Smith and Light explain that conventional rights of access to, and uses of, public spaces are not absolute; they are “normally limited to the right to [be occupied]... for a finite time and to engage in certain unavoidable exchanges with the environment” (1998:3). It is for this reason that “much contemporary conflict over public space...is directed at individuals who live in spaces such as sidewalks or parks, which others occupy only briefly” (1998:3). Competing visions of public space are reconciled sometimes but often ‘solved’ unjustly by adhering to fixed, oppressive, and static definitions of who is the ‘public’ is and what public space should be. For example:

When a growing population of evictees from the private and public spaces of the official housing market began to sleep in the park, periodic police sweeps, counter protests, and state violence began to unfold. Under the slogan, ‘Whose fucking park? It’s our fucking park’ more

organized opposition was met with force. The homeless, the New York Times argued, had stolen it from the public and the park would thus have to be reclaimed. The authorities evicted between two hundred and three hundred park dwellers and fenced off public space from the public, in the name of the public (Blomley, 2004:49).²

This thesis asks ‘what is a public space?’ with this new and pervasive urban context in mind. This question disrupts and complicates urban sequences that feature restricted uses of public spaces, displacement of people, and state imposed surveillance of open-access places. This question is also designed to ‘unsettle’ persisting spatial imaginaries that present public space in opposition to private space. To address this question, I conduct empirical research and employ a theoretical framework that examines public space as fluid, ambiguous, and evolving. I pay attention to how public spaces provide valuable opportunities for the enactment of activities and behaviours typically associated with private spaces. Respecting and attending to the hybridity contained within many public spaces acknowledges that individuals and groups make legitimate private and communal claims to public space. Moreover, such a research undertaking reveals that some people are squeezed out of, or have, limited access to private space in many urban centres. Conceding that many urban citizens do not enjoy equal rights and access to social and human rights of privacy is an imperative project for any ‘liveable’ and democratic city.

I now identify less visible, although no less important, spatial practices that demand a reconsideration of ‘what is a public space?’ Often, highly contentious issues involving the homeless inspire investigations of conflicts over public space.³ In particular, research has explored instances when “those evicted or squeezed from urban private space” (Blomley, 2004:31) utilize public space in private ways and confront opposition or

displacement. This is an important and valuable line of inquiry. However, private uses of public space are not restricted and exclusively confined to 'homeless' people. Arguably, youths who do not own 'private spaces' in a conventional sense become standard accoutrements of parking lots, basketball courts, and parks. In other ways, people living in over-crowded apartments do not have the same access to private spaces as do single-dwelling households in the suburbs and turn to public spaces as a 'stand in'. Asking 'what is a public space?' may reveal that many people and groups do not enjoy equal rights to private space in urban centres. Private spaces can serve valuable political functions for individuals and communities.⁴ In many ways and perhaps for the foreseeable future, public spaces will be used in private and communal ways for 'abnormally' prolonged periods of time. The spatial logic of urban neoliberalism necessitates this result and reinforces it through process of gentrification. As Neil Smith explains, "gentrification had evolved by the 1990s into a crucial urban strategy for city governments in consort with private capital in cities around the world", causing out-right displacement in some cases and limited, over-priced real estate in other cases (2002:440, 446). Nicholas Blomley adds that these processes have become only more aggressive, generalized, and naturalized, often presented as integral for the lofty goal of 'urban regeneration' (2004:31).

I use this thesis to advance an analysis of, and defence for, the spatial ambiguities of public space. I specifically explore how public spaces function as places where individuals can engage in activities and acts typically associated with the private sphere or private space. I focus on the 'public' spaces of community gardens in the City of Ottawa and question how gardeners use and perceive these sites. In effect, I document that people comprehend public space to be spatially ambiguous through their uses, behaviours, and

social relations. Demonstrating that people negotiate elusory and fluid spaces on an everyday basis can certainly benefit struggles over public space. This demonstration aligns itself with different but related “sustained and creative oppositions... to the rolling out of urban neoliberalism” (Blomley, 2004:31). While culture jammers, union activists, city residents, ravers, and squatters protest surveillance and policing of public spaces such as streets and parks, the research presented in this thesis strives towards a similar aim, however using different means and media. Where urban protestors engage with spaces, appropriate signage, occupy buildings, and produce urban maps from a non-Cartesian point of view, this thesis presents narratives that communicate nuanced and complex spatial imaginaries of a diverse set of urban dwellers. The narratives I herein present are:

“counterstories...th[at] can open new windows into reality, showing us that there are possibilities for life other than the ones we live. They enrich imagination and teach that by combining elements from the story and current reality, we may construct a new world richer than either alone. Counterstories can quicken and engage conscience...(Delgado, 1989: 2414-2415).

Approach and Focus

Scholarly research, non-for-profit organizations, and municipal governments concur that since the 1970s, community gardens have grown in popularity but their socio-spatial functions and values remain remarkably consistent: community gardens are grass-roots, community-based projects; they are important because they foster a sense of community in cities, neighbourhoods, and among various social groups; and they function as public spaces. My thesis challenges this consensus on community gardens as public spaces for communities. Instead, I focus on how community gardens transcend the

separation between private and public space in urban centres. I attend and contribute to the observation that:

Community gardens are a more terrestrial local commons. Often carved out of underutilized land, whether public or private, community gardens operate within the legal shadows. Many gardens are created extra legally, through occupations and horticultural 'guerrilla' raids...Although some community gardens can be fenced they are neither clearly public nor private. If anything they transcend the separation...They are part of the public domain and are sites of many functions conventionally equated with the private sphere...This ambiguity has proven important... (Blomley, 2004: 41-42).

I apply a postmodern, socio-spatial approach to community gardens to investigate the meanings and implications of their spatial ambiguity more fully. This thesis does not aim to supply a neat and compact answer to 'what is a community garden?' Instead, this thesis documents the fluid and over-lapping social spaces of community gardens specifically and contributes to broader discussions about the ambiguous and hybrid zones of public spaces, where both privacy and publicity intersect: I show that:

in everyday lives, individuals are...likely to find themselves traversing a number of ambiguously coded spaces, few of which could be definitively or usefully classified as public or private... It would be...indeed appropriate that the post-modern imagination should be haunted by images of drifting, fast-proliferating spaces and unstable permeable boundaries (Coole, 2000:349-352).

In this thesis, I specifically question if community gardens are used and perceived as public spaces by community gardeners, and hypothesize that community gardens may simultaneously function as private spaces and 'third' spaces. I focus my study on the City of Ottawa and in particular on three community gardens located in central and west Ottawa. I consider why people use these particular spaces, paying attention to gender, race, and class, and using qualitative research methods. My research question asks, 'how do community gardeners perceive and use garden space?'

Thesis Outline

The remainder of this chapter provides an overview of community gardening development in North America. First, I show that while community gardens have been features of the North American urban landscape since the late nineteenth century and have evolved considerably, their re-emergence particularly in the 1970s is important. During this time, community gardens emerged as 'sacred commons', irrevocable public spaces in urban centres. Community gardens are defined historically and presently as an archetypal public space, providing opportunities for interaction, conversation, representation, and ultimately the cultivation of a 'community' or civil society. Therefore, it is useful to ask questions about private uses of public space within community gardens, as the insights derived from this case study can be applied to comparable spaces like parks and public squares. I conclude with a brief overview of community gardening organizing in the City of Ottawa to contextualize my research study.

In the second, third, and fourth chapters, I present my theoretical framework, methodology, and data analysis respectively. The second chapter provides an analysis of the scholarly literature on community gardens. I critique the literature specifically to demonstrate that so-called public spaces, like community gardens, function as private spaces in urban centres. I then justify this critique, my research focus, and research hypotheses by presenting a socio-spatial theoretical framework to use when studying community gardens. My theoretical framework is informed by the field of critical geography generally and draws on spatial theories and concepts advanced by Ted Kilian

(1998), Nicholas Blomley (2004), Carol Rose (1998), Edward Soja (1999), and bell hooks (1990) specifically.

The third chapter presents the methodological process I used to explore the social spaces of community gardens. I begin by identifying those feminist theories which informed my research design and data collection. In this chapter, I also rationalize adoption of particular data collection tools and provide a feminist approach for adapting particular methods to suit a diverse sample of participants. In chapter four, I present my research findings in two sections, where I reflect on perceptions of entire garden space and individual plot space. This chapter shows that gardeners use and perceive garden space differently among one another; that uses and perceptions of space shift between the entire garden space and individual plot space; and that garden space is complex, fluid, over-lapping, and powerful. This chapter presents new perspectives to consider when conceptualizing community garden space specifically and urban social space generally.

The last chapter of this thesis illustrates the broader normative and practical implications of my research study. Specifically, I consider how this research can contribute to and benefit urban planning policy more generally and land use debates in any growing city. Following, I reflect on some limitations to my research study and provide suggestions for how to confront these limitations in the future. I conclude this chapter by inviting other scholars to delve into a particularly important future research direction in the field of social space and urban land use.

History of Community Gardens in North America

Community gardens are not new in many North American cities but can be inconspicuous. Broadly defined, a community garden refers to a collectively used piece of land, usually on vacant or public land, where people participate in gardening activities (Wang, 2006). The formal term 'community garden' emerged with a more specific definition in the 1970s, when the community garden movement began to develop in large North American cities (Wang, 2006). The 'community gardens' of the 1970s referred to gardens developed through grass-roots initiatives and strategies and differed from community gardens that emerged in the late 1890s in Canada and the United States.

At the end of the nineteenth century, community gardens emerged in North American cities as a result of financial and administrative support provisions by the state. In Canada, community gardens first appeared in the 1890s at railway stations along the Canadian Pacific Railway (CPR) route. In the United States, community gardening traces back to the late nineteenth century when social reformers helped unemployed labourers in Detroit, New York, and Philadelphia access land on vacant lots for gardening purposes.

Community gardens experienced a revival in North America during World Wars One and Two, as a result of governmental advocacy and support. In Canada, the federal government encouraged citizens to establish 'victory gardens' in various provinces. People used victory gardens to respond to wartime challenges by reducing the domestic impact of labour shortages in food production industries. Governments supported victory gardens because they increased production of crops, which could then be used to send overseas as part of the war effort. The United States government officially adopted a Victory Garden Campaign in the early 1940s, with Canada's federal Minister of

Agriculture quickly following suit. In 1943, the Canadian Department of Agriculture released a pamphlet called, "The Wartime Garden". It appealed to individuals to contribute to the war effort, declaring "every available bit of land that is suitable should be put into a garden" (City Farmer, 2003). During this time, provincial and municipal governments entered leasing arrangements with groups of people to permit use of publicly owned land for these purposes. Private companies also leased land for the use of victory or wartime gardens.

Following the war, governmental and popular support for community gardens diminished. However, community gardens did not disappear completely but instead reappeared in the 1970s as a distinctly grass-roots movement which had little to do with governmental support and nationalistic policy. Historical documentations of public gardening in New York City provide detailed information about this time period. This era is characterized as one spurred by "social unrest and urban disinvestments" (Kurtz, 2001) and performed through guerrilla operations (Smith and Kurtz, 2003). During this time, groups of people claimed vacant lots of land for gardening activities, without "government assistance and on oppositional terms" (195). There is little information about public gardening activities in Canada during this time. However, the City of Toronto and the City of Montreal seem to have witnessed similar developments. Long-time residents of Toronto recall the presence of 'informal' gardening areas in hydro fields and abandoned brown fields during the 1970s. It is also noted that in the City of Montreal, public gardening was a 'post-OPEC development' and remembered as instances of "Italian and Portuguese immigrants guerrilla gardening" during the early 1970s (City Farmer, 2002).

Community Gardens Today

Community gardens appear in many urban landscapes in contemporary North America but are defined as unplanned places in cities, as they often emerge on 'left-over' land after a city is developed (Lawson, 2005). Typically, they are established on city-owned land, vacant lots, brown fields, and church lands and are initiated and used by groups of people. Many community gardens still persist as grass-roots initiatives with historical roots in the community gardening movement of the 1970s. However, Canadian cities in the new millennium are witnessing a different kind of community garden.

Many historians and researchers explain that since the 1970s, community gardens have retained a commitment to 'community building'. As one researcher comments, "a general trend in community gardens of the 1970's that has persisted today is the focus on community empowerment" (Wang, 2006:7). This contention may be supported in some cases. However, it belies new trends in community garden development where municipal governments assist with establishment and administration of these sites. As early as the late 1970s, the organic, grass-roots community gardens that had been established by groups of people on vacant land entered a period of change. During this time, municipalities developed processes to regulate public gardening activities. In 1978, New York City created Operation Green Thumb to organize the distribution of land leases for gardening activities taking place outside of the 'home'. In the late 1970s, the City of Montreal formalized a process to permit and organize public gardens. Many of these municipal processes have remained in place and other Canadian municipalities have adopted processes that now govern 'community gardens'. Moreover, approaching

community gardens as 'communal' places and aligning them with community empowerment does not account for the spatial implications of bodies interacting with and transforming land and mistakenly fixes these sites as public spaces. I fully explain these arguments in Chapter Two.

Community Gardens in the City of Ottawa: History and Current Organization

I now provide a brief overview of community garden development and current administrative practices in the City of Ottawa to contextualize my research. This section also shows that community gardens in the City of Ottawa reflect a history of organic, community-driven development as well as increasing governmental support. Conducting empirical research in this locale is, therefore, ideal for testing claims regarding the communal aspects of community gardening and for investigating users' spatial imaginaries.

Until 1999, community gardens in the City of Ottawa functioned as individual entities. No formal communication channels existed between gardens and a central body to coordinate community gardening efforts and to provide financial and physical resources had not yet been created. Gardening groups established gardens in partnership with church organizations, community health centres, or established them independently on vacant lots of land.

In 1999, three university graduates laid the groundwork for a centralized, information-sharing network to harmonize community garden development in the city. These recent graduates initiated the creation of three new community gardens by contacting various community health centres involved or interested in community

gardening. Following this first collaborative community garden development effort, a community garden network emerged and was formalized when the network received an operating grant from the Social Services Department of the Regional Municipality of Ottawa-Carleton to hire a coordinator for the summer. In the summer of 1999, the Community Garden Network emerged as an organization which “held regular meetings, organized skill-share workshops, produced information booklets, and lobbied for more support from the municipality” (Westman, 2000:75).

Currently, the Community Garden Network (CGN) functions in order to share resources between community gardens, establish garden development, liaise with City staff, and help support already existing gardens. The CGN is administered by a paid coordinator and funded by the City of Ottawa. Since its inception, the CGN has worked with the City of Ottawa to garner more support for community garden development. In 2003, the CGN submitted a report entitled, “A Proposed Role for the City of Ottawa” to the Health, Recreation, and Social Services Committee. Following submission of the report, an interdepartmental city staff-working group was established to “develop an inventory of community gardens, review the City’s current role, and discuss potential options regarding municipal support” (City of Ottawa, 2004:1). The work of this group culminated in the submission of a Community Garden Action Plan to the City in 2004. The plan recommended the establishment of a Community Gardening Program, providing for: “identification and access to community garden space; support for capacity development through a staff liaison to facilitate access to sponsorships and other funding sources; operational support and evaluation” (City of Ottawa, 2004:1). Council approved this report in October 2004.

Despite creation of the Community Garden Network and a City endorsed Community Garden Action Plan, community gardens in the City of Ottawa are largely unregulated activities. Individual community gardens are subject to few centralized requirements. The Community Garden Network does not require that gardens should be organized in a certain manner, charge a yearly fee, or adopt code of conduct documents, for example. The only requirements that the City of Ottawa places upon community gardens include:

“a community garden cannot be a commercial operation; the produce grown can only be for personal use and consumption of the individual working in the community garden; and vehicles, equipment, buildings or structures of any sort, including an arbour or other such supporting structure, are not permitted within 1.5. meters of a public street.” (City of Ottawa, 2003: Section 82)

As of August 2006, approximately twenty community gardens lined the urban landscape in the City of Ottawa. Each community garden differs in terms of history, size, land-use arrangements, rules and covenants adopted to govern conduct, and administrative structures. Some gardens have been around for close to twenty years while the summer of 2006 marked the creation of three new gardens in the City of Ottawa.

Community gardens in Ottawa are located throughout the city; however, most are situated in the downtown area (See Map 1). The size of community gardens ranges from four small raised beds to five hundred plots, 20 feet by 40 feet in size. Furthermore, the internal organization systems vary among community gardens. Most gardens are organized by a group of volunteers in the form of a steering committee, while some gardens appoint a gardener to act as the garden coordinator; other gardens have no volunteer-gardener organization but are singularly administered by a person affiliated with the land used for gardening. Community gardens reflect multiple spatial

arrangements, contain various organizational structures and social relations, and present a diverse group of users. These sites provide an ideal case study to investigate how people's spatial imaginaries operate within and through public space.

Conclusion

Through examining community garden development in North America and Canada over the last century, I have demonstrated that these sites, like other urban spaces, are evolving, changing, and dynamic features within the urban landscape. As such, approaches and concepts used to study these sites should not be fixed in time and presented as immutable. Explorations of community gardens require a theoretical approach and an analytic framework that can take account of the fluid and changing aspects of social space. Moreover, in briefly highlighting increasing municipal government involvement, I have not intended to argue that this development alone necessitates that a new approach to community gardens should be adopted or that it provides cause to reconsider the thesis that 'community gardens are public spaces'. Rather, I use this new development as a cursory foundation to establish that it is inappropriate to saturate explorations of community gardens with attributes of community building, grass-roots initiatives, and public space. I build on this argument in Chapter Two by reviewing existing literature, addressing gaps in the scholarly literature and then by presenting a flexible, adaptable, and progressive theoretical framework to use when studying social spaces.

The Social Spaces of Community Gardens

Introduction

In March 2007, Hellmann's Canada announced its Urban Garden Project, turning five "uninspiring street corners...into urban fruit and vegetable gardens" (Hellmann's, 2007). As part of its campaign, Hellmann's invited residents across Canada to enter a contest to win one of twelve individual garden plots in each of the five gardens located in Vancouver, Calgary, Toronto, Montreal and Halifax. Garden plots assigned to the selected winners in May 2007 will operate until September 2007.

Scholarly literature on community gardens and organizations that support them argue that these sites are valuable communal spaces in urban centres where communities are able to develop. Given this perspective, the Urban Garden Project, with its corporate control, selection of 'winners', purchasing of vacant land, and assignment of individual plots may be negatively received, if not resisted, by community garden scholars and advocates. This project may be interpreted as an affront to the public spaces of community gardens and treated as an emerging threat to the communal quality of these places. It is even possible that this project will become a contentious issue in some cities. An on-line news and discussion forum shows that such responses are already evident. In reference to Hellmann's Urban Garden Project, respondents explain,

co-opting community gardens is pretty low.... It is a good idea to take advantage of this 'contest' to expose some of the contradictions of a privatized community garden in highly urbanised public settings, especially considering that all of the cities slated for participation have massive numbers of poor, hungry, and homeless persons. This 'contest' has the potential to be a point-of convergence for many (different) interest groups (Leftnews.org, 2007).

My intent is not to assess the long-term ramifications of Hellmann's Urban Garden Project. Rather, I use this interesting, first of its kind project, to underline that the current thinking on community gardens, which emphasizes that these sites are communal, public spaces, is inadequate to deal with current changes among community gardens and is also incomplete.

Scholarly literature on community gardens shows that these sites function like public spaces in urban centres. The literature argues that these public spaces are valuable because they encourage 'community' building. These aspects of community gardens are certainly important. However, I argue that analyses of community gardens would be well served to interrogate community garden space, particularly considering how these sites may function as private and 'third' spaces in city centres. I use this chapter to present a theoretical framework to mount such an investigation.

Chapter Outline

In this chapter, I review the scholarly literature on community gardens. The research considers inter-connections among community gardens, communities, and public space. In doing so, it does not fully consider or explain repeated instances of community gardens functioning like private spaces. To begin addressing this conceptual omission, I apply a microscopic analysis to community garden research. The community garden literature distinguishes between two kinds of community in relation to community gardens. A well-established branch of the literature shows that community gardens foster territorial communities while a smaller section of the literature shows that community gardens foster communities of interest. In this section, I argue that while the concept of

'community' can be nebulous, the literature consistently links together and layers 'community' with public spaces, affecting an incomplete and myopic reading of social space. While this analysis details meticulously how concepts of community and space are applied to community gardens, I contend that deconstructing links between community and public space is an essential task in any investigation of social space, especially ones that seek to work across and through dichotomous and oppressive constructions of social space.

The second part of this chapter presents an analysis of the scholarly literature, demonstrating that a good portion of the literature 'reads' community garden space in binary terms. Binary readings of community gardens construe these spaces as only 'public' and about communities. This approach obscures the private spaces of community gardens and individual uses of these sites. I then re-present the scholarly literature using a more fluid and 'unsettled' spatial approach, whereby public and private space are not treated as mutually exclusive categories. Research reveals that several community gardens in New York State, Toronto, and Minneapolis function as private spaces: often, debates about exclusivity arise within community gardens and among community gardeners; gardeners often desire and protect their privacy within community gardens. However, these intersections between private and public space in relation to community gardens are not explored sufficiently. My research attends to this gap in the scholarly literature, by examining community gardens as a borderland, where public, private, and 'third' spaces intersect.

In this chapter, I argue that community gardens simultaneously are public and private spaces in urban centres. I contend that substantive connections are evident among

community gardening, the private sphere, private spaces, and private property rights and that it is inappropriate to obscure these connections. I contribute to this branch of the scholarly literature by drawing on work conducted by scholars as diverse as Kate Millet and John Locke. I demonstrate that gardening activities and the private sphere in which they occur possess historical and powerful connections and that gardening activities, incorporating both permanent and transformative qualities, can be usefully linked to private spaces and private property rights.

Increasingly, social space is conceptualized in non-binary terms. Spatial theorists and critical geographers argue that space cannot be neatly ordered around mutually exhaustive and exclusive categories of private and public. Instead, “both privacy and publicity exist as part of all spaces” (Kilian, 1998:124). Additionally, writings by Henri Lefebvre (1991), Edward Soja (1999), and bell hooks (1990) argue that there are ‘third’ spaces. These ‘third’ spaces are not necessarily quantifiable and finite in form. Rather, recognizing ‘third’ spaces entails a theoretical and political position committed to a “radical openness, [one] that enables us to see beyond what is presently known, to explore ‘other’ spaces...” (Soja, 1999:269).

I present these theoretical and conceptual spatial insights as critical starting points for thinking about community gardens as public, private, and ‘third’ spaces. Recognizing that privacy and publicity are parts of all social space presents new spatial possibilities. I draw on writings that trace connections between space and property to show that spatial imaginations inform property classifications and related rights claims. I identify this conceptual and practical link between space and property to argue that exploring new spatial possibilities can ‘unsettle’ traditional, and sometimes oppressive, property

classifications and related rights claims (Blomley, 2004). Examining intersections between public and private space exposes the ways in which people use public spaces in private ways. This is a critical insight as it provides an opportunity to witness invocations of rights claims which would typically be unrecognized as they are thought to be out of 'place'.

Communities and Community Gardens

The scholarly literature demonstrates that for historical reasons, community gardens fulfill a valuable function in the building of communities. This well-established connection to localized, community-mobilization efforts suggests that it is appropriate to raise questions about communities in relation to community gardens. I now briefly consider the concept of 'community', focusing on two particular types of communities that relate to community gardens.

The concept of community is amorphous. It is often used in different ways, for different ideological reasons, and refers to a multitude of relationships, groups, and processes (Shafer, Deller, and Marcouiller, 2006). However, 'communities' do have some defining elements and characteristics. Ferman and Kaylor identify "key ingredients of community...: a sense of attachment and belonging, a sense of identity, the existence of regular social interactions; shared activities, values, and events; some continuity regarding values and norms; and formal and informal networks" (2001:54-56).

While communities share some common and universal ingredients, they come in different forms, aligned around various common interests. Communities can form based on shared identities or interests, such as culture, religion, gender, ethnicity, and sexuality

(Castells, 2004). These communities can be described as 'communities of interest', as a shared interest, as opposed to a shared place, provides a basis for belonging. Cultural or ethnic communities are often described as communities of interest (Cornell, 1996; Winter, P.L. et al., 1999; Forest, 2004). Communities are also 'imagined' in the case of political and national communities (Anderson, 1991). Additionally, there are territorial communities. These communities are geographically based and operate at varying scales: an apartment, a street, a neighbourhood, a city, a region, including the state and nation (Silk, 1999; Guest, 2000). For the purposes of this discussion, I distinguish territorial communities and communities of interest.

In its broadest form, territorial communities are "restricted to a geographical space around which a boundary can be drawn" (Silk, 1999:8). This definition suggests that territorial communities can develop at very wide scales, such as that of the nation, region, province, or even around diasporic groups. However, a review of 'territorial community' definitions reveals that the concept often is used to describe and classify community formation that occurs in places situated at a much more local scale (Silk, 1999; Knox and Pinch, 2000; Shafer, Deller, and Marcouiller, 2006). As Silk explains, "the territorially based community is often taken to be a local place-based community... the chances for development of community are maximized when there is unmediated face-to-face contact between people, as when they share a restricted territory" (1999:8). This definition of a 'territorial community' is useful when examining community gardens. Community gardens can constitute local, place-based communities and also can function as sites used by surrounding local, place-based communities, such as those that form around neighbourhoods or apartments.

Territorial Communities and Community Gardens

In this sense, community gardens are less about gardening than they are about community... where people can gather, network, and identify together as residents of a neighbourhood (Glover, 2004:43).

Such observations permeate the scholarly literature. Community gardens are sites in urban centres where territorial communities are able to develop. They are a contemporary, local place where face-to-face, unmediated interactions can take place.⁵ In this sense, community gardens are analogous to “institutions such as taverns, pool halls, and laundromats” (Knox and Pinch, 2000:250), other notable local places where territorial communities are able to develop.

Research conducted predominantly in New York State corroborates these observations. New York State, and New York City in particular, are appropriate locales to examine community gardens. The community garden movement that emerged in the 1970s was most pervasive in New York City. Guerilla gardening techniques were employed there and several organizations born out of this movement still support community gardening today. Currently there are 750 gardens in the city, dispersed throughout five boroughs. Finally, New York City’s community gardens are largely ‘neighbourhood’ based; garden membership often correlates to residential proximity (Smith and Kurtz, 2003).

Beginning with the neighbourhood scale, research conducted in Loisaída, located in Manhattan’s lower east side, illustrates a birth of territorial communities around community gardening practices (Schmelzkopf, 1995). Loisaída is an impoverished neighbourhood of about 30,000 residents with more than 75 community gardens. Loisaída

is predominantly a Latino neighbourhood, and nearly 50% of the gardens are utilized by Latino groups exclusively.

Schmelzkopf explains that, “Over and over gardeners told of how gardening and socializing in the gardens make them feel as though they are a part of the community and a part of the land” (1995:373). She shows that this ‘sense of neighbourhood community’ occurs in two ways among Latino gardeners. All of the Latino gardens are either family oriented or casita based.⁶ Women reported that they gained a sense of neighbourhood community from being a member of the family-oriented gardens and men articulated similar comments in regards to the casita-based gardens.

Schmelzkopf’s study successfully considers connections between ‘community’ and community gardens, but neglects intersections between shared languages and cultures and sense of community. Interviewees reported that a neighbourhood community was able to develop through community garden usage. This does not mean that this ‘neighbourhood community’ was cultivated necessarily through a local, bounded place, such as the community garden. Rather, in this case, sense of community can be attributed to the surrounding Latino neighbourhood or the relatively homogeneous group of Latinos who used the gardens. Despite this omission, Schmelzkopf’s findings are supported by other case studies conducted in New York City.

Research conducted by Smith and Kurtz (2003) similarly focuses on a neighbourhood scale but conceptualizes community gardens as the basis for community formation. Their study of gardens across New York City explains that through community gardens, “gardeners realize the ‘essential interests’ of neighbourhood revitalization, fostering community” (200). They underline that the territory of this community building

is rooted in the garden and spreads out to the local community (201). While community gardens cultivate communities at the neighbourhood level, Staeheli, Mitchell and Gibson (2002) observe that community gardens inculcate territorial communities at the city scale. “These were places where the gardeners argued that people could work together – even while recognizing and valuing differences in status, class, age, gender, immigration status, and race in the pursuit of building community and developing a voice to be heard in the city as a whole” (201).

Research conducted outside of New York City corroborates these findings. A survey of 63 gardens in upstate New York shows that at most of the gardens (87%), gardeners work cooperatively. They share tools, exchange produce, and cultivate together (Armstrong, 2000). Survey results suggest that community gardens foster a territorial community at the neighbourhood level. Armstrong explains that in some cases, community gardens inspire increased maintenance of surrounding properties and local community action: “Community organizing was made possible by a community garden” (2000:324).

These findings are confined to New York State and New York City predominantly. I suggest that conclusions drawn from this scholarly literature are a result of the area’s well-established history of community gardening, guerilla origins, and positive correlations between residential location and garden usage. However, these results are also replicated in different locales. In the City of Toronto, gardeners explain that gardens can create a territorial community at a very small scale. The Riverside community garden fosters a sense of community among residents of a particular apartment building:

Tenants at Riverside are clear about the benefits...Saras and Merline tell a story of how they used to pass each other in the lobby of the Riverside Apartments without so much as a smile. Since the community garden was started, Saras and Merline have shared recipes, gardening tips, and new friendship (Baker, 2004:319).

Another gardener commented, "I savor the communal aspect of being involved in a community garden" (319).

Similarly, research conducted in Minneapolis confirms the argument that community gardens foster territorial communities (Kurtz, 2001). Gardens mobilize communities at the neighbourhood level. The Thomas Avenue Garden is used as a space to build networks among residential community members:

The garden is a well-used play space for children, and as adults from their household visit the garden with them, they make the acquaintance of neighbourhood residents from different cultural backgrounds and ethnicities. These interactions are felt by garden participants to increase an overall sense of neighborliness along Thomas and Upton Avenues (664).

This literature persuasively argues that community gardens foster territorial communities at various scales. These communities form through community garden usage, suggesting that community gardeners constitute a community in and of themselves, in relation to an apartment building, a neighbourhood, or a city. Additionally, these conclusions suggest that community gardens are communal places. However, a significant gap that persists in this literature lies in viewing place-specific communities as detached from other bases of belonging. While communities can develop through place-specific sites of community gardens, this may be a result of other shared interests beyond the shared territory of a garden, an apartment, a neighbourhood, or a city. Shared language, culture, gender, and class may explain why communities develop in and

through community gardens. This gap is addressed by scholars who consider intersections between communities of interest and community gardens.

Communities of Interest and Community Gardens

A separate body of research on community gardens also shows that these sites foster communities of interest. Rather than focusing on how community gardens build place-based communities either within the garden, in apartment buildings, at the neighbourhood level, or at the city level, a small body of literature explores how these sites can function to build communities around ethnicity, experiences of immigration, and language. This literature responds to more general observations within the scholarly literature regarding high usage of community gardens by immigrants and visible minorities.⁷

A majority of this literature shows that community gardens sustain ethnic, cultural, and immigrant communities. Studies conducted by Airriess and Clawson (1994) and Koc and Welsh (2002) illustrate that community gardens cultivate and sustain specific ethnic and immigrant communities by providing access to land to cultivate culturally appropriate foods. These studies argue that an opportunity to cultivate or access culturally appropriate foods is a valuable tool for sustaining and building communities, particularly for immigrant populations.

Based on crop inventories of Vietnamese community gardeners in New Orleans, Airriess and Clawson explain that community gardens provide opportunities for “behaviour to be transported from the Old World” (19). In this case, community gardens “function as a powerful symbol in the maintenance of ethnic identity” (30). Koc and

Welsh's study reinforces this claim. They explain that because community gardens provide culturally appropriate foods for immigrant users, these users are able to reconstitute a sense of community based on identity. Koc and Welsh explain that culturally appropriate foods are analogous to "religious observation, rights of passage, language, leisure activities, clothing, art, literature, and music" (2) to the extent that they play an important role in the maintenance of community. Koc and Welsh's study focuses on three particular immigrant communities: a francophone community from Algeria and Zaire; a Somalian community, and a Vietnamese community.

While community gardens help sustain specific ethnic and immigrant communities, they also promote community building among immigrant populations more broadly. Lauren Baker's study (2004) emphasizes the "cross cultural exchanges" which occur within community gardens, noting that such exchanges occur between immigrant groups. A garden coordinator in the City of Toronto who participated in this study explains:

We've got a really nice collection of people from all over the world...They are mostly refugees or out of a job...They meet, usually have the same problems, so they have a connection, they have a common understanding of what they have to face in this new country (312)

Koc and Welsh's study supports this observation. Their research shows that community gardens meet common needs of immigrant communities. Community gardens provide opportunities to learn English, to generate an income, and to reduce isolation.

While this literature fills an important gap in the body of research on community gardens, it does not fully consider if garden 'communities' would still persist if users' residential locations were dispersed across a city. While both strands of research confirm that community gardens can build communities across race, class, and language, this

cultivation is geographically based. It is unclear if garden 'communities' are able to form when users do not possess a residential relationship.

Communities, Community Gardens and Space

Drawing from communitarian theory, public spaces and communities are often paired together. Communitarians position themselves in opposition to liberal theory's emphasis upon the rational individual, and his or her "atomistic tendencies, increasing rootlessness, alienation, and callous individualism" (Silk, 1999:6). Communitarians instead see individuals as constituting "communal bonds", sharing "some notion of the common good" and adhering to "social duties and responsibilities" (6), which is made possible by un-mediated face-to-face contact. Communitarians' un-mediated face-to-face contact takes place in particular spaces that likely materialize as wide-open places, with unrestricted access and high degrees of inclusion. This space is typically understood to be a public space. As Staeheli and Thompson assert, "public spaces [are] a setting for debate, the exercise of rights as citizens and a place where people of diverse backgrounds can meet as a citizenry (1997:30).

A space becomes public if it is accessible by various and multiple communities (Goheen, 1994). Parks, town squares, and plazas are exemplary public spaces; places where 'community' happens. Following this logic, community gardens, acting as sites for the cultivation of territorial communities, emerge as public spaces. This line of inquiry is clearly evidenced and explicitly probed in the scholarly literature.

Community Gardens and Public Space

With ten years between their studies, Francis (1989) and Nemore (1998) both comment that community gardens are public spaces in the city. They are viable recreational alternatives to public parks. In several American and Canadian cities, community gardens are shown to be public spaces.

An analysis of city auctions of community gardens in New York City traces a clear relationship between a sense of community and public space (Staeheli, Mitchell, and Gibson, 2002). The gardeners interviewed in this study explain that the city administration's selling of community gardens represented an assault upon their right to public space. Following a citywide dispute over garden auctions, an arrangement was achieved where land trusts took control of the gardens. Gardeners conceded to this solution because they viewed land trust control of gardens as a long-term method for preserving the publicity of community gardens. As one respondent explained, "the entity [the land trust] has the responsibility to ensure that these gardens are going to be maintained as gardens, as beautiful open spaces for community, for public use" (203). This analysis asserts that community gardens, as community building projects, are best organized as public places in cities.

Another analysis of garden closures in New York City in the late 1990s also explains that there is a natural relationship among community gardens, community building, and public space. Smith and Kurtz (2003) discuss garden auctions as a neoliberalization of space. They explain that the auction conflict represented an attempt to privatize urban space. This privatization of space was challenged by the community garden movement in New York City and stood as the antithesis to the aims of community

gardening. Respondents in this study explain that gardens are truly public spaces in the city and a resource to be enjoyed by the New York City community.

During the climax of this conflict, garden movement demonstrators staged a series of protests to communicate their struggles to the wider citizenry and to gain support against the city administration. These protests were intentionally staged in “visible and symbolic public places to drive home the message that the struggle was over a mosaic of community gardens and their benefit to the city as a whole” (206). Moreover, the gardening movement’s resistance to the auction was expressed as part of a larger resistance to the privatization of public space in New York City. The gardeners’ coalition participated in Reclaim the Streets, an international movement that protests the increasing privatization of public spaces. Gardening advocates aligned themselves with left-leaning organizations and defenders of public space. They articulated that garden closures were an affront to public space. Gardening advocates cast the auction as analogous to closing, restricting access to, or surveilling public parks (207).

Gardeners in New York City not only defend gardens as public spaces, they are required in some cases to ensure that gardens are maintained as public spaces. Several not-for-profit organizations and municipal programs help support development and management of community gardens. Many of these groups explicitly promote an agenda of protecting public space and commit to “preserving and maintaining open space in the city. They perceive community gardens as especially beneficial to this goal” (Schmelzkopf, 1995: 374). Some municipal and grassroots organizations preserve open spaces in the city by requiring community gardens to remain publicly accessible. Operation Green Thumb, a city-run gardening program, and The Green Guerrillas, a

grassroots gardening organization that developed in the 1970s, require that gardens which they support “must have a publicly accessible entrance and must be open to the public at least once a week, with hours posted on the front gate” (376).

This relationship among public space, communities, and community gardens in New York City may not constitute a generalizing claim. A political context of garden auctions, the role of not-for-profit and municipal institutions, and a well-established history of grassroots community gardening may be fertile grounds for understanding these sites as public spaces. However, additional research shows that in other locales, community gardens still emerge convincingly as public spaces.

One particular garden examined in Minneapolis is described as a successful ‘community’ garden because it promotes community building and neighbourhood revitalization. This success is attributed to a “lack of actual enclosure” which “allows fluid movement through and interaction within that place” (Kurtz, 2001:665). This explanation is repeated in an investigation of gardens in upstate New York: “Many community gardens lead to further neighbourhood organizing by providing a physical location for residents to meet each other, socialize, learn about other organizations and activities/issues in their community” (Armstrong, 2000:325).

Community gardens in St. Louis are also public spaces. A telephone survey conducted with community gardeners from several community gardens showed that gardens are an inclusive place, where specifically interracial contact is likely to occur. Gardens in this sense can be compared to idealized or prosaic public places like town squares and plazas: “community gardening brings together people who belong to different

racial groups, and they bring together people who would not normally socialize together” (Glover, 2004:9).

Community Gardens and Private Space

In some cases community gardens are also clearly private spaces. While this aspect is not emphasized overtly in the literature, I argue that there are clear aspects of privacy or private space embedded in community gardens. In many cases, community gardens are not absolutely or irrevocably public spaces. In several cities community gardens constitute private spaces. Elements of privacy or private space commonly emerge through discussions about exclusivity in relation to community gardens. The scholarly literature describes visual and physical cues within and among gardens,⁸ providing an opportunity to consider acts of privacy, private space, and exclusivity.

In Loisaia, nearly 50% of the gardens are fenced and inaccessible to the general public (Schmelzkoph, 1995). Kurtz’s study of community gardens in Minneapolis (2001) shows that some community gardeners construct borders between the garden and the surrounding neighbourhood and between fellow gardeners. The Columbus Garden with its fenced and locked enclosure is characterized as an exclusive place for particular neighbourhood residents. The Dowling Garden is also profiled to illustrate that acts of privacy within a community garden can be expressed in different ways. The Dowling Garden is publicly accessible. It is not enclosed but features fencing around individual plots where borders are erected only between gardeners. Both of these gardens illustrate that community gardens are not inherently public spaces but can also be private spaces for

communities and individuals. Similarly, in upstate New York, 67% of community gardens established in urban areas are adorned with fences (Armstrong, 2000).

Community gardens also function as private spaces in less physical ways. Fences, gates, and keys clearly express exclusivity and privacy in a highly tangible way. However, activities and materials typically associated with the sphere of the home also connote elements of privacy. Latino community gardens in Loisaida provide insightful illustrations of the private spaces contained within, or cultivated by community gardens. In many cases, gardens become extensions of the home, as the gardens are equipped with makeshift kitchens and washing facilities. Female gardeners explain that the garden is a site for “many domestic chores, such as cooking, mending, dining and even washing clothes” (Schmelzkopf, 1995:373). Puerto Rican men also use the gardens as a ‘casita’, a Puerto Rican word that refers to a local gathering place. Twenty community gardens in Loisaida are described as casitas and are run by, and exclusively for, men. These gardens fulfill a primary function of a meeting place; “male domains where men drink beer, play dominos, socialize and sometimes even sleep” (Schmelzkopf, 1995:369). Latino gardens, both family-oriented and casita based gardens, are typically adorned with Puerto Rican flags and statues of the Virgin Mary.

Research conducted with community gardeners also illustrates that gardens are used precisely to have access to a non-public space (Schmelzkopf, 1995). In New York City, young female gardeners make a clear distinction between the spaces of community gardens and the spaces of the streets. While the streets are a public space, which bring with them unregulated activities and behaviours such as drugs, prostitution, and guns, the

gardens are described as a 'shield', which protects them from the public spaces of the streets (Schmelzkopf, 1995:374).

A study by Kurtz (2001) hints at the non-public quality of community gardens. She asserts that community gardens allow urban residents to "carve out spaces of their own control." This reference to residents' control points to the non-public nature of these sites. They are not necessarily akin to a public park or street; they are not always inclusive and non-restricted spaces in the urban landscape. Instead, community gardens are "safe havens in the city...green spaces free of unlawful behaviour such as drug trafficking and use" (658).

Gardening, Transformations of Land, and Private Space

Turning away from the scholarly literature, I now present new issues to consider when discussing private spaces within community gardens. My discussion focuses on interactions among bodies, land, transformation, and ideas of 'private'. Gardening is a commonplace activity in a community garden. While gardening activities are often treated as benign and irrelevant, I argue that they are very significant when thinking about the spaces of community gardens. These activities suggest that these sites are not public spaces.

Gardening activities are commonly seen as in 'place' within the private sphere, and are associated historically with femininity and the home. An article published by Kate Millet in 1969 illustrates that gardening typically is constructed as an activity aligned with women, their maintenance of the home, the 'private' sphere and detached from the male sphere of waged work and politics. Analyzing a seminal lecture given by John Ruskin in

1864, Millet shows that gardening often is used as an analogue for women and the private sphere and therefore rarely is analyzed as a politically significant activity⁹.

In the popular imagination and through political discourse, gardening is located somewhere in the 'private sphere'. While such an assignment to the private sphere should make connections between gardening and private space visible, this is not the case. I challenge this omission by paying attention to complex aspects of gardening, especially in the context of community gardening. Gardening is both a permanent and transformative activity; it is not a once-in-a-while activity, but is rather year-round or seasonal. Further, even when 'people' are not gardening, the activity still remains physically present as the 'matter' of the space is physically transformed. Gardening, therefore, represents a permanent use of space.

Permanent uses of space have a strong connection to private spaces. Community gardens are an example of such a connection. Bodies interact with land to produce food. Such interactions between bodies, place, and land can constitute a private space. Liberal political theory and particularly, theories of property rights, explain that interactions between bodies, place and land constitute private spaces and signal rights claims. In classical theories of property rights, interactions between bodies and land constitute an important philosophical tenet. In John Locke's *Second Treatise of Government* (1690), the first argument for private property rights was advanced and has served as a basis for current theories and thinking around property rights. Locke used the tenet of interactions among bodies, land, and transformations as a fundamental rationale for private property rights. He referred to these interactions as 'labour mixing with land.' He reasoned:

The labour of his body and the work of his hands, we may say, are properly his. Whatsoever then he removes out of the state that nature

hath provided, and left it in, he hath mixed his labour with, and joined to it something that is his own, and thereby makes it his property (Chapter V, Section 27).

Gardening activities that take place within community gardens have a strong connection to the private sphere, private spaces, and private property rights. While gardening activities are often viewed as apolitical and benign, they clearly impact the spatial contours of community garden sites. Despite historical locations of gardening within the private sphere of the home, gardening constitutes a unique activity. Gardening enables a process of transformation; bodies interact with land, transforming it into a private space. Such transformations are carefully aligned with definitions of property, and private property and its related rights in particular. This is not to say that gardening activities necessarily belie perspectives that view community gardens as public spaces. Instead, they serve as a discussion point to explore aspects of publicity and privacy in space.

Socio-spatializing Community Gardens

As I have surveyed, the literature explicitly traces a connection among community gardens, communities and public spaces, and it concomitantly points to provocative illustrations of private space. I contribute to the literature by exploring elements of privacy within community gardens, which otherwise have been overlooked in scholarly work. This is an important and useful approach because failing to examine intersections between private and public space make other conclusions premature. More attention to expressions of privacy within garden space might result in community gardens being viewed as sites for individuals, in addition to communities.

A socio-spatial approach recommends itself for an examination of community gardens. The socio-spatial dialectic emphasizes interchanges between space and social relations. Social relations constitute, constrain, and mediate spaces and vice-versa (Soja, 1980; Knox and Pinch, 2000). Socio-spatialization demonstrates that community garden space impacts the nature of relationships between different social groups. Similarly, users themselves determine and impose themselves on the community garden site, shaping and forming the kind of space it occupies. A socio-spatial approach explores how garden users and their accompanying relationships construct and determine private and public spaces within community gardens. Similarly, this approach examines how such spatial constructs affect the nature of gardener relationships. In short, this approach confirms that social space is neither fixed nor static and therefore is useful for untangling commonplace theses which assert that these sites foster 'communities'.

It is problematic to construct a community garden as a public space for theoretical and related practical reasons. Increasingly, socio-spatial examinations of urban forms show that contrary to conventional wisdom, urban space is not categorically private or public (Sibley, 1995). Traditionally, legal, political and geographical thought asserts that space is accurately organized into two dichotomous categories. These perspectives explain that mutually exclusive and exhaustive categories of private and public accurately represent social space (Staeheli and Thompson, 1997; Mitchell, 1995). In contrast, critical geographers argue that space is both private and public (Kilian, 1998; Blomley, 2004).

Binary readings of space are criticized on several grounds. Carol Rose (1998) challenges dichotomous constructions of space because they permeate and inform conceptions of property. Rose argues that binary spatial perspectives make other types of

property invisible, such as communal properties, which are typically used by “persons deemed somehow inappropriate to make claims of entitlement” (141). Nicholas Blomley (2004) also critiques dichotomous readings of space and property insofar as they legitimate colonization and dispossession of land for particular groups. Blomley specifically argues that dichotomous readings of space and property provide a rationale for not recognizing Aboriginal claims to land (9), as they do not conform to dichotomous conceptions of private or public space and property.

These critiques of dichotomous readings of space, and how they relate to property, are very insightful. Tracing connections between space and property reveal two important points. Property is constituted by a finite space. Property is space and space is property. Additionally, these spaces of property are assigned particular rights. Subsequently, binary readings of space impact property classifications and opportunities to make rights claims. Particular spaces and the properties they constitute are assigned particular rights (Blomley, 2004:11).

The most immediate rights claims associated with property include exclusionary rights claims. For example, private property owners possess a bundle of exclusionary rights within their own private property, within their own finite space. Dichotomous readings of space and property prohibit these exclusionary rights to be used in public spaces and on public property. The resulting situation is immediately problematic. For example, problems posed by such conceptions of space and property affect homeless people. Dichotomous readings of space and property legitimize a non-recognition of their rights in parks and on the streets. While many homeless people often use the public spaces of parks and streets in a very ‘private’ way, they have no access to rights claims

because such spatial transgressions are not recognized or legitimated. The purpose of deconstructing binary categories in this example is not to advocate that homeless people should have a right to sleep in a park, although this might be important in some cases. Rather, the point is to show that some public spaces are used in private ways. This provides an opportunity to raise questions about “human rights of privacy” (Kilian, 1998:130). In the case of homeless people, deconstructing binaries raises the question of their right to a home.

In the case of community gardens, a similar problem is present. Constructing gardens as public spaces and relying on dichotomous readings of urban space eclipses how these spaces might be used in private ways. There are then few opportunities to raise questions about a relationship between community gardens and ‘human rights of privacy’. The scholarly literature on community gardens hints that gardens frequently blur the boundaries between private and public space. However, the literature does not sufficiently problematize this aspect. As Karen Schmelzkopf explains, “they transcend the separation between the public and the private: they are part of the public domain and are the sites of many functions conventionally equated with the private sphere.” (1996:379). However, her analysis stops there.

Thinking about intersections between space and property in relation to community gardens may show that in some cases, the private-public dichotomy breaks down. A deconstruction of this dichotomy presents several new spatial possibilities. Spaces can be private and public. Additionally, space can be defined in terms outside of public and private. The scholarly literature suggests that community gardens are fertile grounds for examining intersections between privacy and publicity in space. Even the property

arrangements for, and physical contours of, community gardens suggest that divisions between public and private space might not be very clear-cut. First, community gardens are public in terms of their property and ownership arrangements but spatially private in many cases. Community gardens are typically situated on public lands, on municipally owned properties. At the same time, they are encased by fencing, suggesting that they are private spaces. Additionally, in most cases anyone can join a community garden. There is a high degree of participatory access to these sites. In this sense, community gardens are public spaces. Concomitantly though, in many Canadian cities, community gardens are organized spatially into individual plots assigned for the exclusive use of one person. In this sense, community garden plots can be private spaces. Second, community garden property is neither private, public, nor private-public. Rather, community gardens can be described as a type of 'limited common property', where "property [is] held in common among the members of a group, but exclusively vis a vis the outside world" (Rose, 1998:132).

Socio-Spatializing Community Gardens as a 'third' space

My research question builds on the existing scholarly literature and examines intersections between private and public spaces in relation to community gardens. Provocative and multiple possibilities can emerge when looking to the borderlands where private and public meet. Doing so expands the analysis beyond what has become a truism in some ways: community gardens foster communities.

This is a new line of inquiry. The building blocks for pursuing this topic have been present for some time; however, there has been little attempt to fully test these

observations among community gardeners and in a geographical locale with a short and non-politicized history of community garden usage. A somewhat similar investigation has been pursued in Vancouver in relation to a municipally sanctioned neighbourhood greenway initiative (Blomley, 2004a). Blomley's investigation similarly questioned the spatial contours of the greenway, with attention paid to bodies interacting with land and how the greenway is both a public and private space. While useful, the results of this conclusion cannot be applied without modification to the case of community gardens.

Taking a socio-spatial approach provides an opportunity to examine the contours of community garden space within a framework that rejects, but recognizes the pervasiveness of, dichotomous and fixed readings of space. My research raises the possibility that community gardens can be used as private spaces, at the same time as they function as public spaces. Practical and legal connections among space, property, and rights claims make such an inquiry significant. Community gardeners might make private rights claims to public space. However, these rights claims often are not sanctioned by or recognized within Western-based legal systems. It is critical to challenge this myopia. Investigating peoples' private uses of public space forces a recognition of peoples' rights to privacy and private property rights. Rights are the language through which individuals can make claims on the state and are recognized by the state. They provide the power to "name, blame, and claim" (Felstine et al., 1980: 3-4). My research investigates how people use and perceive garden space, with attention paid to how private rights are exercised in community garden space. I raise these questions with regard to women, new immigrants, and unemployed populations in particular, as demographic groups who tend

to use these spaces and groups of people who do not always have high degrees of access to rights claims made on the state.

Finally, this socio-spatial approach and my research focus are aspects of a broader theoretical framework used to think about community gardens as 'third' spaces. Geographical approaches have moved beyond material and representational articulations of space, towards a third reading of space (Soja, 1999). The contours of a 'third' space are intentionally not articulated nor fixed. Consistent with postmodern thinking, "thirding does not end with the assertion of a third term or with the construction of what some might describe as a holy trinity" (Soja, 1999:269) of space. Rather, approaching space as 'lived' 'other', or 'third' is to imagine space with 'radical openness', allowing one to:

see beyond what is presently known, to explore 'other spaces' that are both similar to and significantly different from the real-and-imaged (material and represented) spaces we already recognize (Soja, 1999:269).

Asking gardeners how they perceive garden space, opens up possibilities for space to be neither public, private, nor public-private and instead something entirely different. Imagining that the boundaries of space and therefore property can be "disorder[ed], deconstruct[ed], and tentatively reconstitut[ed]" (Soja, 1999:269) provides an opportunity to see a new kind of social space. A 'third' space is a space or property that is embedded with political possibilities and one that can be coded as a potential site of resistance. As bell hooks explains, lived space can be a:

radical creative space which affirms and sustains our subjectivity, which gives us new location from which to articulate our sense of the world... a site of creativity and power, that inclusive space where we recover ourselves, where we move in solidarity to erase the category of colonizer/colonized (1990:152-153).

This research therefore raises these questions explicitly with those who choose to use these sites and experience them on a daily basis. Existing research has tended to examine insights of community garden gatekeepers, such as organizers, garden coordinators, and supporting non-for-profit groups. I pursue these questions with everyday gardeners and attempt to raise these questions across the identity communities that are shown to use these spaces, such as individuals from immigrant and ethnic communities.

Entering Community Garden Space

Introduction

My research on how gardeners conceive of garden space unfolded as a process that included developing a research design, establishing pre-fieldwork strategies, and collecting data. This three-stage process demonstrates how knowledge about community gardens evolved and how this knowledge can contribute to the existing body of scholarly literature. Presenting research as a process centralizes the role of the researcher.

Researchers continually make decisions and choices that shape and influence their studies and the knowledge that they generate. Choices are made about where research will be carried out, who will be sought to participate and whose insights will be important to the research question. Decisions need to be made regarding how to enter the community under study, how to attract study participants, what data collection tools to use, and how to employ such tools within a given context.

In this chapter, I discuss the research process that investigates the question, ‘how do gardeners conceive of garden space?’ This exploration implicates myself in the shaping and production of knowledge about community gardens. It also demonstrates that other actors, including community gatekeepers and participants, perpetually shape research endeavours. Finally, this chapter outlines how I employed feminist research practices while engaging in a research process about community garden space.

Chapter Outline

The first part of this chapter demonstrates the importance of the selection process for various research parameters: where to conduct research, at what scale, and with what

kind of sample. Inherent in the decision making process are feminist theoretical positions. “Experimental pluralism” (Code, 1995:42) and “putting diversity at the front and centre” (Vickers, 2002:76) are an integral part of my methodological framework.

The second section examines my initial relationship to the topic and community under study. I discuss preliminary recruitment strategies and provide a rationale for the use of particular data collection tools. This section is framed by the idea that a researcher engages in insider and outsider positions in relation to the topic and community under study. This section demonstrates that the direction in which the research process proceeded was not entirely of my own doing. Community gatekeepers and their relationships with community gardeners determine the success of recruitment strategies. This section argues that choices about data collection tools should not be predetermined but should conform and adapt to dynamics within the community under study.

The third section explains how I used qualitative research methods. Summaries of semi-structured interviews and participant observation are provided, detailing the amount of data that I collected and the success of recruiting a diverse sample of community gardeners. The chapter concludes with a discussion about challenges I confronted while conducting semi-structured interviews with particular community gardeners who generally were either recent immigrants, members of visible minority communities, or who had limited English language skills. This section argues that while semi-structured interviews present challenges, they remain a useful data collection tool.

This chapter highlights the contributions made by all the research participants. Community gatekeepers, individual gardeners, and garden relationships all produced and

contributed to the data collected. Uses of feminist research practices are implicitly evident. As Maria Mies states in a review of feminist praxis:

The research process must become a process of conscientization... for all participants in the research process... the postulate of value-free research, of neutrality, [should be] replaced by conscious partiality; the vertical relationship between researchers and researched [should be] replaced by the view from below... (1996: 13)

Uses of feminist research practices are critical for broader implications of the research question. The research question raises new possibilities for, and documentation of, perceptions of space, which go beyond mutually exhaustive and mutually exclusive categories of 'public' and 'private'. Additionally, this research shows that there may be real world practices where mutually exclusive and exhaustive conceptions of space are transformed. Space can be both private and public or perhaps something entirely different. By using feminist research practices, this research generates knowledge that can challenge colonial, hegemonic, and myopic perceptions of social space.

Research Design Processes: Locale, Scale, Sample

The research process begins with the initial development of a research design, which establishes some preliminary choices about location and participant sample. Developing a research design for this study required the selection of an appropriate theoretical position. A feminist theoretical was chosen for normative positions that are committed to an "experimental pluralism" (Code, 1995:42) and putting "issues of diversity front and centre" (Vickers, 2002:76).

Research Locale: Place and History

Studying perceptions of community garden space in the City of Ottawa was not an arbitrary choice. Although pursued for logistical purposes, the City of Ottawa recommended itself for several reasons. Current research about relationships between community garden space, classifications of property, and rights claims is based largely in New York City. This body of scholarly literature is situated in a place with a well-established history of community garden development and patterns of garden membership linked with nearby residency. New York City is a relatively dense city centre with limited development area and little natural space. It recently dealt with city auctions of community garden land. Thus, the research on community gardens in the City of Ottawa provided an opportunity to develop a contrasting study.

Community gardens in the City of Ottawa are a relatively new development. With approximately 19 community gardens as of August 2006, community gardens in Ottawa have an institutionalized history. The City of Ottawa currently funds the Community Garden Network to oversee support structures for community gardens and to help establish new community gardens in the City. In some areas, community health centres establish and support community gardens. The majority of community gardens in the City of Ottawa are concentrated in the downtown core and do not face development pressures similar to New York City. There have been no documented cases of selling of public land, upon which community gardens are situated, to private developers. Additionally, terminations of leases between the city and community gardeners have not occurred. Testing claims about perceptions of community garden space and property within the City of Ottawa rests on the idea that universalizing claims cannot be made. Just as experience

and knowledge are attached to, constituted by, and dependent upon intersections between race, class, gender and sexuality, it is similarly informed by geographic location and history (Deliovsky, 2002:59). Time and place matter when putting “diversity at the front and centre” (Vickers, 2002:76).

Research Focus: Community Gardeners as the Unit of Analysis

Various participants could be approached to collect perceptions of community garden space. Observations could be amassed by targeting city officials responsible for community gardens, community garden network representatives, coordinators of community garden sites, neighbourhood residents who live near community gardens, people who walk their dogs through community garden sites, groups of community gardeners, or individual community gardeners.

A feminist theoretical perspective framed my choice to examine perceptions held by individual community gardeners. I argue that using a feminist framework compels a researcher to communicate with voices and perspectives that have not often been heard (Code, 1995:26). Asking how community gardeners perceive garden space responds to gaps in scholarly literature about community gardens. Additionally, engaging with community gardeners pays attention to people who have the least amount of control and decision-making authority over the continued existence of community gardens. These places are organized vertically and are controlled by individual coordinators and municipal representatives.

Participant Sample: A Wide and Diverse Representation of Community Gardeners

While positivist approaches strive for random sampling, I sought a participant sample that would reflect an “experimental pluralism” (Code, 1995:42). I designed a recruitment strategy that would incorporate specific and numerous communities and would achieve a diverse participant sample. I selected such a sample in order to account for claims that community gardeners tend to form around immigrant, ethnic-minority, or visible minority lines. A feminist position that calls for “knowledge and awareness of the lives of women and men who live in the margin” (hooks, 1984:ix) contributed to my choice to include perspectives from these groups of users. I also selected a diverse sample in order to include other perspectives. I consulted a range of participants to open the research question to a number of contextualized, subjective, multiple and over-lapping possibilities. I consciously decided not to use a homogeneous sample. I wanted the sample to reflect “intersections of gender, race-ethnicity, class, or other social structural aspects of social life without privileging one dimension or adopting an additive formulation” (Naples, 1996:74). This research project explores the question, 'do real people conceive of social space as mutually exclusive and exhaustive categories of private and public?' Therefore, it makes little sense then, to interview people in positions of power, as these privileged and powerful perspectives developed the very categories I am examining.

I visited and used recruitment strategies at four different community gardens in the City of Ottawa. Each garden is unique with its own distinct history, development, geographical location, size, organization, and dynamic. I interviewed a range of people: renters, land owners, long time standing immigrants, recent immigrants, Canadian-born

people, senior citizens, children, people unable to find waged work, people employed in the official workforce, mothers, fathers, grandmothers, non-English speakers, English speakers, visible minorities. Inevitably, a sample cannot be entirely diverse. The participant sample used in this study does not account for every perception of community garden space and property. Rather, it offers a starting point to explore a wide range of possibilities.

Pre-fieldwork Processes: Insider/Outsider Positions, Recruitment Strategies, Data Collection Methods

A positivist view of the research process dictates that data collection and research occurs when a researcher enters the field. This viewpoint neglects that entering a research community and developing recruitment strategies are integral parts of the research process. Underlining these stages of the research process admits that research unfolds in a meditated way; it is not “perfectly detached, neutral, distanced, and disinterested” (Code, 1995:15). Exposing spaces between a research question and data collection attends to the presence of the researcher and the context within which he or she operates: “The privileges, interests, biographies, fetishes, and investments of [the] researcher” (Fine, 1997:140) are centred and exposed.

My own insider and outsider positions in relation to the research topic, locale, and community under study determined initial recruitment procedures. This discussion pays attention to formal recruitment procedures and choices about data collection tools. It derives from an acknowledgment that as researchers:

we are never fully outside or inside the ‘community’; relationship[s] to the community are never expressed in general terms but are constantly being negotiated and renegotiated in particular, everyday

interactions; and these interactions are themselves located in shifting relationships among community residents (Naples, 1997:71).

Positions: Topic, locale, and community under study

At the outset of the research on community gardeners in the spring of 2006, I had no connection to, or interaction with, community gardeners in Ottawa. As a new resident to Ottawa, I never visited any of the City's community gardens during their peak months (May – August). Additionally, exposure to community gardens was similarly absent in my former areas of residence in Toronto and Hamilton. I had never participated in one, never lived near one, never visited one, nor did I know any community gardeners. At the outset of the research, I was an 'outsider' to the community garden movement generally and the community gardening population in Ottawa specifically.

However, 'outsider' positions are never static. I moved into a small apartment in the downtown core of Ottawa in the fall of 2005. It became acutely apparent that I occupied an insider position because I did not have access to 'private' outdoor space. Growing up in a mixed European household with extended family living nearby, my father and grandfather spent spring and summer altering their backyards into spaces of production. I took for granted the fresh produce from the backyard:

A mason jar of tomatoes to be used for sauce from Nonno's canteena; loading the backseat with chicoria to bring back to Hamilton to make that soup that my grandmother used to make; walking into the kitchen to see my mother breading and frying zucchini, trying it fresh and slightly still warm; picking tomatoes from the garden and showing Bryan how to make sauce right from tomatoes; mixing vinegar and sugar in a little bowl as a girl to dip fennel.¹⁰

These rituals had become part of my way of living.

Initial Recruitment Strategies: Processes and Positions

Initial recruitment strategies started with contacting a city-funded administrative body that supports community garden maintenance and development in the City of Ottawa. The Community Garden Network (CGN) was established in 1999 and functions “as an information and resource sharing network” (CGN, 2005). The CGN provides start up funds to new gardens, allocated from the City of Ottawa, and devotes any remaining funds to already existing gardens to off-set operational costs. I introduced my research intentions to the CGN to gain endorsement support for my research and to receive advice regarding appropriate participant recruitment strategies and data collection methods. Provided that the CGN would support my research study, I expected to use the CGN as an information dissemination channel. I would use the CGN to begin employing a ‘snow-balling’ method of participant recruitment.

Contact was established with the Community Garden Network coordinator in June 2006. We agreed, in principle, that the CGN would communicate my research intentions to particular garden coordinators. During this stage, the CGN coordinator mediated my involvement with the gardening community. The CGN coordinator at the time positioned me as an outsider to the community. During our first visit, he commented on the methodological appropriateness of conducting individual interviews with community gardeners. He explained that individual interviewing is a Western data collection method and therefore immigrants and visible minority communities would resist participating in my research. He recommended a communal, group-based approach, similar to focus group data collection methods. Following this initial visit, a period of non-engagement

with the coordinator occurred. This resulted in a sustained outsider position. Despite agreeing in principle to assist with disseminating information to garden coordinators, no information was sent out. Further, future communication attempts went unanswered.¹¹

This position underwent renegotiation with the arrival of a new CGN coordinator in July 2006. I also renegotiated this position by using networks I had with the Food Security Council of Ottawa. I used these networks to contact the new CGN coordinator and to challenge my outsider position. The new CGN coordinator met with me in July 2006 and disseminated letters of information to seven community garden coordinators in the City of Ottawa. The new coordinator provided coordinators' names and telephone numbers, contact information for city officials involved in the administration of community gardens, and a variety of other people involved with community gardens in different capacities across the city.

Processes of insider and outsider construction and negotiation continued to emerge following receipt of letters of information. In some cases, I remained fixed as an outsider and therefore my research went no further. Some coordinators did not return phone calls or emails. Three coordinators did respond to letters of information disseminated by the CGN. These gardens included the Blue Garden, Red Garden, and Green Garden.¹² Responses from these coordinators provided an initial opportunity to become an insider to the community as they each endorsed my research intentions and provided access to community gardeners.

This initial insider position oscillated. It was renegotiated continually during site visits and initial recruitment efforts in July and August 2006. Garden coordinators influenced how gardeners perceived my research intentions and the feasibility of

recruiting a diverse sample. For example, during an initial site visit to the Green Garden, the garden coordinator did not introduce me to gardeners nor endorse any specific research intentions. The coordinator explained that I should introduce myself to gardeners. This approach severely limited my access to recent immigrant gardeners, elderly gardeners, and gardeners with limited English proficiency. In contrast, during an initial site visit to the Blue Garden, the coordinator introduced me to approximately eight gardeners while explaining some of my research intentions. This coordinator facilitated interview times with gardeners and asked gardeners to provide me with contact information that would ensure future communication.

Recruiting Participants: Positions, Challenges, and Patterns

Interactions with garden coordinators affected the recruitment of a diverse sample of community gardeners. Where garden coordinators positioned me as an insider, more gardeners were likely to participate in my research study. Where garden coordinators did not position me an insider, I remained as a suspicious outsider and confronted challenges when recruiting gardeners.¹³

In total, I established contact with five garden coordinators about my research interests. The coordinator of the Orange Garden did not assist in facilitating communication with gardeners and as a result, no gardeners were recruited from this site. The four other garden coordinators facilitated communication in varying ways. At the Red Garden and Green Garden, coordinators facilitated minimal communication with gardeners. I successfully recruited a gardening group and an individual gardener from the Red Garden and no gardeners from the Green Garden. Blue and Yellow Garden

coordinators facilitated extensive communication with gardeners. The Blue Garden coordinator recruited approximately fourteen gardeners to participate in my research and the Yellow Garden coordinator recruited a total of five gardeners to participate (See Chart 1).

In total, I collected qualitative interview data from three garden sites in the City of Ottawa. I did not strategically select these garden sites, but instead employed a self-selection method. I relied on the willingness of coordinators to determine which gardens would eventually participate. Employing a highly strategic method for selecting a diverse group of gardens, in terms of size, location, personal and physical organization, and history would have been useful. However, despite relying on gardens to self-select, the participating gardens reflected a wide range of diversity. The Blue Garden, Red Garden, and Yellow Garden each have distinct histories, geographical locations, land-use arrangements, codes of conduct, and administrative structures. Concomitantly, these three gardens share several common features. The following section traces these contours of each garden.

In 1999, a number of neighbourhood residents independently established the Blue Garden. In its first few years of operation, approximately fifteen to eighteen individual garden plots and a small group of members participated. The coordinator of this garden is a volunteer and this un-paid position currently is occupied by a gardener who has been gardening there since 2001.

The Blue Garden is located in the central downtown core, about a ten-minute walk from Parliament Hill. It is located on the corner of two main thoroughfares, typically with high vehicular traffic and is located very close to a number of public transit routes which

transverse the city. The garden faces southward, towards a series of high-rise apartment buildings. On the garden's east side, a number of residential apartment buildings are located, as are several commercial buildings. The north side of the garden is framed by a concrete wall, which separates the garden from a large football field, owned by an Ottawa school board.

The Blue Garden is situated on land owned by the city. The garden members as a group hold a lease with the city to use the land on a year-by-year basis. The garden group is not affiliated with any organization. The city has the right to terminate the lease and prohibit use with two months notice. The city also requires that the garden pay \$1 per year to use the land.

When they join the garden, individual gardeners sign a gardening agreement, issued by the garden coordinator. This document outlines rules of membership and permitted activities. Returning gardeners are given first right of refusal, at the beginning of each season, to receive the same plot they had used previously. Plots are assigned on a household basis; only one plot per household is permitted. Formally, a plot agreement with a gardener can be revoked only when a gardener breaches code of conduct guidelines, which outline permitted behaviours within the garden (See Appendix 4).

Currently, there are approximately eighty gardeners at the Blue Garden and approximately eighty individual plots. Gardeners pay a \$7 user fee to the garden coordinator on a yearly basis. Currently, there are approximately thirty people on a waiting list to join the garden.

At the garden, there is a storage shed, which all gardeners have access to through a lock-and-code mechanism. Shared tools are stored in the shed, there is a wooden picnic

table for the gardeners located near the front entrance of the garden, and a small seating area located at the back of the garden, consisting of various pieces of household furniture. There are no fencing structures along the perimeter of the garden.

The history of the Red Garden dates back to at least the late 1980s. In the late 1980s, the City of Ottawa purchased the Red Garden land from the National Capital Commission. Prior to this transfer, the land was used for gardening purposes and administered by the National Capital Commission. The Red Garden is located in a predominantly residential neighbourhood, south of Alta Vista and east of Bank Street. It is located on a large tract of land, with two sides facing single dwelling backyards. The other two sides of the garden open on to residential streets and face single dwelling homes. On the immediate southwest side of the garden, there are a number of apartment buildings. Two relatively quiet streets with low vehicular traffic provide pedestrian access to the garden. Public transit routes run along both of these streets.

The City of Ottawa currently owns the Red Garden land, administering and coordinating the garden through a community health centre, with a paid City of Ottawa staff acting as the coordinator. This is the only garden that the City of Ottawa directly administers. Individual gardeners register on a yearly basis to receive a plot at the Red Garden. They sign an agreement with the city each year, which acts as a 'permit' to use an individual plot of land.

Returning gardeners are given first right of refusal at the beginning of each season to receive the same plot they had used previously. The City of Ottawa reserves the right to close plots or certain areas within the plots and may require gardeners to change their plot location from time to time. Additionally, the City of Ottawa reserves the right to revoke a

plot permit if a gardener does not comply with its Code of Conduct Document (See Appendix 4).

Currently, the Red Garden features 500 individual garden plots, ranging in size from 20 feet by 40 feet to 25 feet by 50 feet. Of the 500 individual garden plots available, only 200 were assigned to individual gardeners during the 2006 season. Gardeners pay \$58.50 on a yearly basis to use the plots to the City of Ottawa. Gardeners are eligible to apply for a city-run subsidy program for low-income residents to offset gardening fees by 75%. Currently, there is no waiting list at the Red Garden.

A limited number of storage sheds are available for gardeners to rent on a yearly basis for a fee of \$17.50. There are no common tools available for use at the Red Garden. An interviewee commented that gardeners often bring their own tools on a daily basis, sometimes using public transit. There are portable washroom facilities located on site for gardeners to use. There are no fencing structures along the open perimeters of the garden during the growing season. As of November 1st, gates are closed along one entrance, which is car accessible.

A community health centre initiated the Yellow Garden. In 1996, the community health centre successfully received funding through a Trillium grant, established the Yellow Garden on land attached to the community health centre, and hired a garden coordinator. By 2000, the Trillium funding expired, resulting in a discharge of the original coordinator. In 2000, a multicultural liaison worker employed at the community health centre, assumed the garden coordinator position.

The Yellow Garden is located in the west end of Ottawa near Carling Avenue and Merivale Road. The surrounding area is largely residential with few commercial and

business services. This garden is situated directly behind the community health centre. One side of the garden faces a subsidized housing complex and is bordered by single dwelling residences on the other side. The garden is located near a main thoroughfare, with several public transit routes and high volumes of vehicular traffic.

The Yellow Garden is situated on land owned by a community health centre. No formal lease is held between the gardeners and the community health centre to use the land. Rather, the land use agreement is relatively informal and has no legal recourse. Each year, gardeners attend an Annual General Meeting, at which gardening agreement forms are signed, permitting use of an individual plot. Returning gardeners are given first right of refusal to receive the same plot they had used previously. The community health centre reserves the right to confiscate produce or revoke individual plot permit privileges if rules outlined in the gardening agreement are not followed (See Appendix 4). Gardeners are permitted to use only two individual garden plots. As of 2005, use of the Yellow Garden was restricted to only permit people residing in the community health centre's catchment area.

Currently, there are approximately 120 gardeners and 100 individual garden plots at the Yellow Garden. There is no yearly fee associated with using the community garden. In lieu however, the community health centre expects each gardener to devote at least ten hours of volunteer service to garden maintenance and support. Volunteer hours can be fulfilled by participating in clean up days or participating in fundraiser luncheons. There is a waiting list at the Yellow Garden.

Since its inception, a steering committee, composed of gardeners, has occupied an organizational role, facilitating fundraising efforts. They have also been responsible for

reviewing rules listed in the gardening agreement. Increasingly, the community health centre is encouraging the steering committee to play a larger role in the development and maintenance of the garden. The steering committee now calls meetings and involves itself in resolving conflicts among gardeners.

There are communal storage sheds located in the garden, containing shared tools. There is one seating area located near the gated entrance to the garden. There is one communal plot at the garden, used for growing food to donate to the Ottawa Food Bank. A chain link fence surrounds the perimeter of the garden and is lock-and-key accessible.

Data Collection Tools: Rationale and Use of Semi-Structured Interviews and Participant Observation

I recruited gardeners to participate in one-on-one, semi-structured interviews. I used semi-structured interviews to elicit information about community gardening experiences and perceptions of garden space. I conducted interviews to provide a forum for conversation and for divergent ideas and themes to emerge from participants. Additionally, interviews provided an ideal method for data collection because of the access they give “to the meanings people attribute to their experiences and social worlds” (Miller and Glassner, 1997:100). Interviews afford an opportunity for participants to tell their own stories.

Semi-structured interviews provide the researcher with useful devices. A semi-structured interview is best characterized by its combination of structure with flexibility. The researcher uses a question guide to probe a pre-identified theme while providing opportunities for interviewees to raise new themes and divergent responses. I conducted semi-structured interviews to explore a matrix of themes. They also provided

opportunities for gardeners to explore content and share perspectives that I had not originally considered.

I adopted semi-structured interviews as a primary data collection tool against the advice of the CGN coordinator. The coordinator advised that focus groups or group interviews would be a more effective data collection tool. After conducting initial site visits in late July and early August 2006, group interviews appeared to be unworkable because there are no structured communication channels at gardens. Consequently, advertising a group interview and coordinating a meeting place and time involving several gardeners proved difficult. Additionally, a number of gardeners who agreed to participate in my research study had varying degrees of English proficiency.

Accommodating varying levels of English proficiency, either through use of pictures or rephrasing, is problematic in a group setting. Finally, during site visits a pattern emerged where people introduced me to individual gardeners or individual gardeners approached me. I never encountered groups of gardeners and there were few appearances of groups of gardeners during site visits. I communicated with more than one gardener at a time only when there was a family of gardeners present.¹⁴ At each of the garden sites, individual interactions were the norm. In collaboration with garden coordinators, I reasoned that data collection methods should be determined by the interaction patterns present within gardens.

To facilitate the collection of data from several community garden sites in Ottawa, I selected participant observation as a secondary method. Participant observation allowed me to collect a small sampling of data from several sites without being reliant on garden coordinator facilitation or deep involvement from gardeners. This method also provided

an additional resource to draw upon when approaching gardeners in interviews and designing and reformulating the question guide at the outset of the interview process.

Finally, I conducted participant observation to provide an alternate source of data in order to crosscheck data collected from one-on-one interviews. These interviews tended to discuss patterns of interaction within the garden. Participant observation of gardener-to-gardener interactions provided additional data to supplement interview data. Participant observation also explored interactions between coordinators and gardeners and the variability among these interactions. Interviewing alone could not have accessed these interactions.

Semi-Structured Interviews

I conducted a total of fifteen semi-structured interviews with community gardeners between August 2006 and October 2006. In total, twenty-one community gardeners, fifteen women and six men, participated (See Chart 2 and Chart 3). Interviews occurred predominately at garden sites while others were conducted at community health centres, coffee shops, and at gardeners' private residences. Participants determined the interview location with interviews lasting between forty-five minutes and one hour. Participants received an ethics approved consent form at the start of the interview. I conducted all interviews, except one, in English.

Fourteen participants had been born abroad, having arrived in Canada at various times. Time spent in Canada ranged from forty years to one year. Participants' ages ranged from ten to seventy years old. Eleven participants can be descriptively considered members of visible minority communities. First languages included English, French, Arabic, Bengali, Tagalogue, Romanian, Lebanese, Finnish, and Chinese. Garden

membership ranged from one year to fifteen years. Finally, participants' residential location relative to the garden and housing type varied. Some participants live very close to gardens while others require public transportation or a vehicle to get to their garden. Some participants rent apartment units while others live in and own single dwelling houses (See Chart 3).

I used a question guide, which I piloted in early August 2006, to probe seven topics. The topics included reasons for joining the garden; the garden environment; interaction patterns; levels of socialization; access to the garden; conflicts in the garden; and residential information (See Appendix 1). I did not formulaically administer the question guide, but rather used it as a loose framework to probe themes, raise follow-up questions, and elicit information about gardening experiences.

I indirectly explored perceptions of garden space. I did not explicitly ask gardeners questions like, 'do you feel that the garden is a public space' or 'do you feel that the individual garden plot is like a private piece of property'. I explored perceptions of garden space by asking a series of probing questions about daily activities in the garden, conflicts and problems in the garden, reasons for using the garden, similarities between the garden and a backyard, presence and absence of fencing structures, and orientations to the presence of strangers (See Appendix 1). No visual aids were used throughout the interviews. As I wanted to explore the spaces actually used by gardeners, I felt that showing pictures of other community gardens would be inappropriate and instead it was sufficient to collect narratives regarding gardeners' daily experiences at their individual community gardens.

Three coordinators participated in semi-structured interviews between October and November 2006. These interviews occurred at community health centres and at personal residences. Generally, interviews lasted between forty-five minutes and one hour. Coordinators received ethics approved consent forms at the beginning of the interview. I conducted these interviews in English and used a tape recorder. I used a question guide to explore four broad topics: garden history and involvement; background information about the garden; duties and responsibilities held by the coordinator, and gardener dynamics (See Appendix 2). Again, I explored each coordinator's perceptions of garden space in an indirect way, as I did not explicitly raise questions about 'public' and 'private'.

I also conducted informal interviews at one garden site. These interviews are considered informal because they were not scheduled, a question guide was not used, and consent forms were not provided. However, informal and formal semi-structured interviews explored similar themes. I also conducted an informal interview with the Community Garden Network coordinator (See Chart 2).

Participant Observation

Participant observation occurred between July and November 2006 at four garden sites. I visited the Blue Garden five times and the Red and Green Gardens twice. Participant observation occurred once at the Orange Garden (See Chart 4). I conducted participant observation visits during formal settings such as 'work parties' and during informal settings, such as when families of gardeners visit after dinner and tend to their plots. In some cases, I walked around, talking to gardeners, offering to help with

particular tasks. In other cases coordinators led me around, introducing me to gardeners. Alternatively, one coordinator did not introduce me to gardeners but kept me close by, thus offering an opportunity for me to discreetly observe interactions between gardeners and coordinators. In three cases I visited gardens independently and walked around, observing gardeners or other people who were tending to their gardens.

Following each visit, I recorded my observations. I outlined, in chronological order, events that transpired and people that I met. I also attempted to record gardeners' questions and to describe their reactions to explanations of my research interest. I later transcribed these field notes into an electronic format.

Methodological Challenges During Interviewing

Semi-structured interviews elicited rich and nuanced insights about community garden space. However, interviews presented several methodological challenges. In particular, interviews conducted with recent immigrants, people from visible minority communities, and people with limited English proficiency skills illustrated that the effectiveness of semi-structured interviews can be limited.

Semi-structured interviews are criticized as an ineffective data collection tool when using with "minority ethnic" participants (Bowler, 1997:75). Some scholars suggest that using an interrogative approach, even when semi-structured, can be aversive to communities unfamiliar with western-based research practices (Bowler, 1997:68). Some research also shows that 'minority ethnic' communities are unlikely to participate in interviews and when they have, interviewing requires a great deal of clarification and explanation (Bowler, 1997:69). Moreover, interviews are considered to be *fundamentally*

problematic when being used by white, western educated researchers with such participants because they reinscribe a hierarchical structure already embedded in the very act of collecting data about another person.

These limits of interviewing emerged throughout data collection. At times, gardeners refused to participate in interviews. In other cases, gardeners would not show-up for a scheduled interview. Occasionally, potential interviewees did not seem to understand why I would possibly want to talk to them about their experiences and seemed hesitant when consenting to participate. These instances occurred when I was trying to set up an interview with a gardener who was either a recent immigrant, member of a visible minority community, or had limited English language skills.

There is no single method for confronting these challenges. Some argue to abandon interviews completely as interviews employ “dominant communicative systems” (Bowler, 1997:76). They do not quickly elicit information, and can be ill equipped to adapt to social and cultural protocols among participants who might require a particular setting for the interview or might require a group dynamic. However, feminist research practices show that particular methods can mediate these issues, such as adopting a reflexive approach. I utilised a reflexive approach during interviews to manage challenges I confronted when using a tape recording device and consent forms.

Using a Reflexive Approach

Reflexive practices made semi-structured interviews a functional data collection tool. A reflexive approach provides an opportunity “to confront and work against issues of difference and power – endemic to the researcher/subject relationship” (Wasserfall,

1997:152-153). Such an approach helps to negotiate unequal power relations between the researcher and the participant. While some suggest that one-on-one interviews should be abandoned when working with diverse communities or 'minority ethnic' participants, I argue that interviews can be adapted so as to collect reliable and credible data.

Making the semi-structured interview work: Tape-recording devices

Interviews are often expected to be tape-recorded (Richie and Lewis, 2003). However, tape-recording devices do not necessarily capture data in its truest form. Use of technological devices during the interview process can act as colonial or hegemonic practices. While a recording device facilitates verbatim transcription, it does not necessarily ensure that a transparent and reflexive rendering of data will be produced. Increasingly, assumptions that verbatim transcriptions are "mundane, technical, or unproblematic" (Lapadat and Lindsay, 1999:67) have been criticized.¹⁵ Recording devices can paralyse data collection and can censor participants' responses or insights.

During the first few interviews, I explained that I would like to tape-record the interview. In response, the first few participants expressed hesitation with use of the device. One interviewee responded, "*No, no I don't like that. Don't use that.*" In other cases, when the tape-recorder appeared and I explained that I would like to record the interview, interviewees shifted the topic of conversation. In one case when this happened, I inquired again about the use of a recording device and the interviewee then explained that she did not want to use it.

Interviewees did not appear to be confused about the purpose of a recording device, but rather they expressed a discomfort with its presence during the interview.

These moments became emotionally charged interactions. Some interviewees refused to participate if I used a recording device. I accepted these terms of participation and proceeded with the interview, notebook and pen in hand. During interviews, I took detailed notes and used short hand to indicate questions. I achieved verbatim transcriptions for several interviews because dialogue was expressed slowly and I asked participants to repeat themselves.

I recorded further field-notes afterwards, describing the interview and interactions that had occurred outside of the formal interview. I transcribed recordings of interview dialogue and field notes into an electronic format. As the first six interviewees expressed discomfort with recording devices, I proceeded without a tape-recorder for the remaining interviews. Not using a recording device reconfigured the power relations and rapport with the participants in a positive manner.

Making the semi-structured interview work: Decisions regarding consent forms

Consent forms raised parallel concerns and called for a similar methodological approach. Introducing consent forms during interviews are designed to achieve both ethical and 'good' research. However, when conducting interviews with a diverse sample of community gardeners, they can have an opposite effect. They re-inscribe unequal power relations and make interactions uncomfortable. Ann Oakley identifies this challenge:

The mythology of 'hygienic' research with its accompanying mystification of the researchers and the researched as objective instruments of data production [must] be replaced by the recognition that personal involvement is more than dangerous bias – it is the condition under which people come to know each other and to admit others into their lives (1981:58).

Consent forms pose deep contradictions for feminist research practices, as such practices aim to “work against unequal exchange and exploitation” (Wolf, 1996:2).

Introducing consent forms disrupt a comfortable rapport. They also make it difficult to treat participants as co-controllers in the research process. In some cases, while explaining the purpose of the consent form, asking participants to read it, or reading it to them, I found it difficult to cultivate a non-exploitive environment.

In some cases, participants expressed unease with consent forms through body language and eye contact. One interviewee sat back and crossed her arms while I explained the purpose of the consent form. She stared at the wall as I spoke. Feeling distressed with this reaction, I explained that she did not have to sign it but then that I would not use our discussion in my report. In the end she shifted her face back towards me and leaned back on to the table between us and read the consent form and signed it. Another participant read the consent form with some unease and asked, “*Why would I want to call this, number [the Ethics Committee]?*” After reading the consent form, she pushed it back to me and asked if we could reschedule the interview to be conducted at her house. I agreed and later we met at her house to conduct the interview, where she quickly signed the consent form.

Concerns that consent forms can be exploitive and can reinforce power relations are documented elsewhere and outline similar experiences and challenges confronted in the field (Michelle Knight et al, 2004; L. Mum Wong, 1998). In an analysis of consent forms used to recruit Spanish-speaking students, Michelle Knight et al. argue that the research team’s revision of the consent form, in collaboration with school personnel and

Spanish-speaking educators, resulted in a higher degree of participation in their study. The revision also allowed “researchers [to] attend to and respect the processes, beliefs, and values under girding the ways trust is established in local cultural contexts” (Knight et al, 2004: 401). Although I did not have the resources to revise consent forms with members of the community with which I conducted interviews, I did revise the consent form several times in order to employ language that was non-threatening and accessible (See Appendix 3). I also found it useful to discuss the consent form in detail with participants who felt uneasy. Such discussions and choices balance institutional research requirements with feminist research practices.

As Daphne Patai instructs:

On one hand, we are obligated to our academic disciplines and institutions, within which we must succeed if we are to have any impact on the academy...On the other hand if we take feminism seriously it commits us to a transformative politics. In other words, most of us do not want to bite the hand that feeds us; but neither do we want to caress it too lovingly (1991:138-139).

Exploring Spatial Imaginaries

Introduction

"I have seen people here that don't have gardens and I talk to them and it's nice to see people and see people from the apartments. It's nice to see mothers with their children, so they have a place to run or play. I like not having a fence, so people can see. I don't like fences." (Female Gardener, Blue Garden)

"If there is no fence around the entire garden... there is no border... people don't understand that this is a garden... if there was a border, people would recognize that this is someone else's property..." (Female Gardener, Blue Garden)

"I cried for six months. I wanted to go home. I was stuck in the apartment with four kids. The garden takes the depressed away." (Female Gardener, Yellow Garden)

I use these quotations to illustrate that gardeners communicated a range of spatial imaginaries during semi-structured interviews. Consistent with earlier research on community garden space, gardeners explained that gardens are and should be public spaces and these spaces are important for developing a sense of community. However, qualitative data showed that such perceptions are not static, uncontested, or inevitable. Many gardeners explained that gardens are private spaces and 'third' spaces.

Documenting articulations of private space and 'third' space within community gardens is a new line of inquiry. Traditionally, community gardens are observed as public spaces only. They are typically and technically 'publicly' owned or are quasi-publicly owned, occupying "vacant lands that are owned by municipal governments, churches, universities, or non-profit housing cooperatives" (Westman, 2000:76). Previous community garden research conceptualizes social space in dichotomous categories of private and public. This results in fixing community gardens as public spaces and sites for community use. This approach fails to consider that they might also be sites for individual

use, may function as private spaces, or constitute an altogether different, unknown kind of social space.

That being said, it is not at all surprising that gardeners explained community gardens function as private spaces and 'third' spaces, especially when a socio-spatial approach is employed. Often, social spaces are saturated with ideas of property (Blomley, 1998). Exploring how social spaces are impressed with notions of property can provide valuable insights about how people perceive and navigate certain spaces. As Carol Rose explains, property claims are communicated through visual cues: "sight, both real and metaphoric, dominates the persuasive and rhetorical aspects of property" (1994:267). Similarly, in a study of property claims put forward in New York East's Side, Brigham and Gordon explain, "ownership is presented in material ways, [with] locks, fences, razor wire" (1996:278). In the City of Ottawa, there are fences around entire gardens. As well, in the majority of gardens in Ottawa, individuals are assigned their own plot of land, where they, usually with family and friends, alter the landscape, cultivating, mixing labour with land. Typically, fences border these individual plots.

Community gardens raise questions about the utility of dividing social space into two mutually exclusive and exhaustive categories. Instead, these sites suggest that spatial dichotomies can be disrupted or disordered; perhaps space can fluctuate between private and public, always in a process of becoming. With such possibilities in mind, I approached community gardeners in the City of Ottawa to explore these ideas. I pursued this research, attempting to contribute to the "relatively little empirical research on everyday legal geographies; that is, on the way people actually navigate and apprehend the spatial dimensions of law, such as property" (Blomley, 2005:286).

Chapter Outline

I begin this chapter with an account of steps taken to analyze data collected from semi-structured interviews and participant observation sessions. I detail how I organized and separated data to reveal recurring thematic patterns. Following, I identify the concepts I used when analyzing interview texts and field notes. Specifically, I argue that conceptualizations of property are useful when analyzing qualitative data about participants' spatial imaginations.

Including this information achieves a transparent, reliable, and credible interpretation of the data I collected from community gardeners. Studies that employ qualitative research methods are criticized often because they do not detail sufficiently 'how' data is analyzed. Qualitative researchers do not always *explain* how they arrived at a particular interpretation but *present* their findings, resulting in an inability for outsiders to assess their conclusions constructively (Lee and Fielding, 1996). I present several stages of data analysis in order to "enhance the value of [my] interpretations, as well as to aid other researchers carrying out similar projects" (Attride-Stirling, 2001:386).

In the second part of this chapter, I present my findings regarding perceptions of garden space within the larger garden and within individual garden plots. I first demonstrate that gardeners do not perceive and use the entire garden as only a public space. Instead, the data I collected shows that gardeners feel that the entire garden is a private space, often making comparisons to private pieces of property. However, the data also show that perceiving the entire garden as a private space is limited in some ways.

I then shift the discussion to consider gardener perceptions of individual garden plot space. I argue that gardeners more strongly perceive these parts of the garden to be private spaces. Gardeners talked specifically about trespassing, a need for fencing structures to protect 'their land', and they also made analogies between their garden plots and backyards. I then put forward an analysis of social relations within the gardens and employ field notes collected during participant observation to demonstrate that individual plots function as private spaces. In this section, I also consider how some gardeners uphold perceptions of gardens as public spaces. I particularly focus on issues of aesthetics within gardens to illustrate this point.

The third section of this chapter argues that some gardeners perceive individual garden plots as a 'third' space. I use ideas of a 'third' space, put forward by critical geographers, to present gardeners' perceptions of garden space, which fall outside of categories of private and public. In the last part of this chapter, I focus on interactions with land and crop cultivation, arguing that these activities serve valuable political functions. Contrary to my hypothesis and theoretical reasoning, interactions with land do not indicate only the presence of a private space but suggest the emergence of a 'third' space. I discuss intersections among working the land, crop cultivation, maintenance of social and cultural practices, socio-economic improvements, and access to culturally appropriate foods to illustrate this point. I argue that these functions of community garden usage indicate the presence of a 'third' space and that immigrants and women particularly experience these functions, raising the possibility that space can be infused with a 'radical openness'.

Coding and Retrieving the Data

I used a computer software program, Atlas.ti., to organize interview transcripts. I first read transcripts to identify themes that had been raised across the interviews. I read transcripts a second-time to isolate phrases, which corresponded to previously identified themes. Following, I used these isolated phrases to develop 'codes'. I filtered transcripts a third-time to assign codes to various segments of interview text. In some cases I needed to develop new codes and in other cases, I collapsed several codes into one. In other cases I developed and assigned codes to pieces of interview text without yet establishing a corresponding theme.

Preliminary Remarks About the Data

During interviews, I phrased questions in terms of the 'garden'. Generally, I did not verbally demarcate between the entire garden and individual plots. My interview questions did not specify particular garden spaces. However, gardeners distinguished between entire garden space and individual plot space without prompting or probing. For example, I often asked interviewees to describe a typical day at 'the garden'. In most cases, interviewees made references to activities within their individual plots.

Interviewees also talked broadly about the 'garden'. For example, several interviewees recounted occurrences of strangers within the entire garden space. Gardeners talked about these two spaces contained within the garden. As such, this chapter separately explores perceptions of entire garden space and individual plot space.

Perceiving Space as Property

I employed conceptualizations of property to analyze interview data. The concept of property is a useful analytical tool to employ when exploring intersections between private and public space within community gardens. As Nicholas Blomley explains, “Structures [and] uses of space are saturated by conceptions of property... when we attend to struggles over property... we can begin to see that...they...concern descriptions of particular spaces” (1998:570-571). The spaces we transverse are organized according to configurations of property. The street I walk down is public property, the grocery store I enter is a semi-private piece of property, and my home is a private piece of property.

For example, while analyzing the data, I categorized references to fencing, exclusions, controlling access and trespassing as indicators of a sense of ownership, or of private property. I similarly categorized objections to fencing, references to inclusion, openness to strangers, and recognitions of limited power of control as indicators of a lack of private ownership and a recognition of public space. These conceptualizations correspond heavily to legal definitions of property (Singer, 2000a: 4-5). While these conceptualizations do not account for all “meanings and political possibilities of property” (Blomley, 2001: 157), they are useful for analytical purposes.

While property is made “materially present” (Blomley, 1998:572) and “ownership is presented in material ways [through] locks, fences, razor wire” (Brigham and Gordon, 1996:277-8), “property can be made...discursively.” (Blomley, 1998:572). As such, I paid attention to discursive narratives, practices, and acts in relation to garden space while analyzing interview text. I considered how gardeners represented garden space. To do so, I focused on reasons for garden use, social relations within the gardens, and aesthetics of

garden plots. Some gardeners compared garden space to a 'personal place' or explained that it was 'like home'. I categorized such references as indicators of private space. Additionally, I encouraged gardeners to describe social relations within the garden. I categorized evidence of already existing and family/friend based relations between gardeners as an indicator of a kind of use associated with private property. During data analysis, I determined if social relations were independent of or dependent upon garden usage.

Often during data analysis, I constructed conceptualizations of private and public space in opposition to one another, employing fairly binary definitions of public and private property. However, I did not apply them in a dichotomous way or in oppositional terms. The presence of one, did not discount the presence of the other. Transcripts were often filled simultaneously with indicators of private and public space.

During data analysis, segments of interview text often did not correspond to conceptualizations of private and/or public property, and as such did not correspond to private and/or public space. I coded these segments as an 'unknown' space. Some gardeners seemed to reject the idea that space is cordoned off into categories of private and public. Rather than space functioning as 'private' and/or 'public' and revolving around inclusions and exclusions, some gardeners suggested that garden space might serve a different function. The emergence of this strand in the data corresponded well to ideas of a 'third' space.

'Third' spaces are less about material or representational manifestations, private or public, as we know them to be. A 'third' space is a property, a place, a space that creates, as bell hooks theorizes, "a defiant political gesture...spaces where [one] pushes against

oppressive boundaries set by race, sex, and class domination” (1990:145). While analyzing interview data, this kind of ‘lived’ property emerged. Gardeners explained that the garden provides opportunities to: leave the home for a safe place; to access particular cultural communities; learn English; discuss ways to find jobs as a new immigrant; to contribute to family incomes while unemployed; and control diets. I categorized these narratives and uses as an articulation of a ‘third’ space or a ‘lived’ space. Such a space is a “site of creativity and power...[an] inclusive space... where the category of colonizer/colonized” (hooks, 1990:152) can be resisted, subverted, and challenged.

Entire Garden Space

Perceptions of Private Space: Fencing and Controlling Access

For many gardeners, the entire garden constitutes a private space, similar to a private piece of property. Ten gardeners explained that the garden perimeter requires fencing in order to restrict access to the garden. Two female cousins who had been gardening at the Yellow Garden since the late 1990s and who emigrated from Lebanon a number of years ago, explained: “*We need the fence. People steal. Anybody can walk in.*”¹⁶ Similar observations arose consistently across the interviews. A woman from the Blue Garden, who emigrated from Algeria in the late 1990s explained, “*because there is no edge [fence], it is open. It would be better with an edge. It would protect from people.*” Finally, another female gardener from Eritrea explained, “*The fence we need it, so the children around can’t get in easily. It is safe from passbys.*”

Discussions about the presence of ‘strangers’ in the garden generated parallel articulations. Ten gardeners partnered justifications for fencing with a need to prevent

strangers from walking in. The reasons though for wanting to restrict access varied. Many gardeners explained that access to the garden should be restricted because of theft of produce. One gardener explained that access to the garden is an issue because of strangers dumping garbage and vandalizing the site. Two female gardeners, who usually garden alone, explained that a fence is desirable for ensuring feelings of safety. One of these gardeners, a woman who recently immigrated from China, explained, *"sometimes there are men not from here. Drinking over there. I don't like them."*

Some gardeners hesitated in suggesting that the entire garden is a private space. However, this is not say that these same gardeners concluded that the entire garden is a public space, similar to a park for example. Rather, these gardeners provided complex responses that, to varying degrees, illustrate a fluid and over-lapping reading of social space but one that is uncertain. In four cases, gardeners objected to fencing around the perimeter of the garden. Initially, I categorized these objections as indicators of a perception of public space and of a strict divide between private and public space. However, closer analysis showed that these gardeners, despite their reluctance, did in fact perceive the garden to be a private space. In one of these four cases, a male gardener from Quebec explained that while the garden space is public and inclusive, it is simultaneously important because *"it's a place to call your own."* In the other three cases, interviewees suggested that the garden is a public space, as they opposed a fence around the perimeter. However, when justifying their objection to a fence they did not raise concerns about inclusion, access or compare the garden space to a park. Rather, they explained that a fence is undesirable because it projects the 'wrong' impression. These

gardeners do not necessarily feel that the garden is a public space but feel that it is important to project such an image to surrounding community members.

A female gardener from the Blue Garden, who objected to a fence around the perimeter of the garden initially seemed to perceive the entire garden as a public space. However, interactions between this woman and a group of men during our interview suggested that although she opposes a fence, she still feels that the garden is somewhat like a private space. At the beginning of our interview we met and were to use a seating area located at the back of the garden. Several men were sitting there. I had never seen them before and they did not appear to be 'gardeners'. I suggested that we sit elsewhere and talk. The interviewee disregarded my suggestion and walked up and stood, clearly watching the group of men and slowly moving forward. They soon got up and left the garden. She then sat down where they had been sitting and we conducted the interview there. It was clear that this interviewee felt that it was inappropriate or problematic that these men, non-gardeners, were using the seating area. This stands in stark contrast regarding her comments about not minding strangers in the garden and feeling that the garden is a public space.

Perceptions of Public Space: "It's Their Right" To Close the Garden

During interviews, I asked gardeners how they would respond to news that the garden would be closed. Almost all gardeners explained that they would do nothing, as there was no point, because they are not the rightful owners. A Filipino woman from the Yellow Garden explained, *"Well if they are closed, they are closed. We can't do nothing."* The cousins from the Yellow Garden also identified the power that comes with

legally recognized ownership, as they unexpectedly told me that the garden coordinator had just taken one of their plots away because of a new rule limiting the number of plots per family. I asked how they felt about that, and they explained, *"it's fine. I'm fine. We're nothing."* Similarly, an Algerian woman from the Blue Garden insightfully explained, *"... it's not mine. I feel sorry but it's not mine. It's not from my father."* Finally, another Filipino female gardener explained, *"I would feel bad if it stopped. It is their right to stop it. I can't do anything but I would ask why."*

These discussions complicated the extent to which gardeners feel that the entire garden is a private space. Gardeners explained that the garden needs a fence and that strangers, passer-bys, and children need to be kept out of the space. They simultaneously explained that their right to control and define the space is limited. Eight gardeners explained that a right to close or determine the continued existence of the garden rests in the hands of the 'owner' – the city in some cases and community health centres in other cases.

Some gardeners explained that they are owners of the entire garden space while talking about fencing, for as Singer notes, "owners control a space and boundaries of the space serve to separate owners from nonowners" (2000b:30). However, these same gardeners also shifted ownership out of their persons and into the legally recognized owner – the city or a community health centre. Tracing how gardeners shift ownership in and out of their person has implications for perceptions of private space in the garden. Ownership suggests a privatization of space or a manifestation of private property. As Nicholas Blomley explains, "so put simply, because I am categorized as an owner, I have an enforceable right to my home" (2004:4). Similarly, ownership, when vested in a state

institution or a public institution suggests a manifestation of public property. Gardeners understand themselves to some extent, as owners of the entire garden space, thus suggesting that it is a private or a communal space (where ownership lies in the hands of a collective). Yet, gardeners explain that they are not owners – real rights rest in the hands of the city or a community health centre, suggesting that the entire garden is a public space.

Individual Garden Plot Space

During interviews, gardeners predominantly discussed individual garden plot space. For example, I always tried to encourage participants to ‘describe a typical day at the garden’ at the outset of the interview. Participants generally described daily activities within their individual plots. Evelina¹⁷, a Finnish woman from the Blue Garden, commented, *“I hoe the garden... pull up weeds, put on tomato gauges, put poles on the beans. I have carrots and onions and zucchini and beets.”* Gardeners commonly provided this type of response. At times though, some gardeners additionally noted that daily activities at the garden occur outside of the individual garden plot. Participants explained that they talk with friends, see what other gardeners are growing, and discuss growing techniques.

Generally, gardeners explained that they perceive individual plots as private spaces. Gardeners’ explanations varied considerably. Some gardeners spoke straightforwardly and unequivocally when talking about the private spaces of their individual plots while other gardeners talked more cautiously and abstractly about these same spaces.

Private Spaces: "It's Our Land Not Their's"

Several gardeners explained that their individual garden plot *is* their own private property. In an interview with a mother and daughter from the Blue Garden, who recently emigrated from Bangladesh, the ten-year-old daughter provided very insightful and articulate remarks regarding perceptions of ownership within the individual garden plot. She emphasized that sharing fresh produce is a desirable activity, but explained that permission must be granted from the rightful owners; the person who grows the produce. She commented, *"we like to share our vegetables and food with other people, but you can't just take, you can't just take from someone else's private property."* She further described how this idea could be visually projected outward. She remarked, *"you know, there should be like a rectangular enclosing around the garden with a doorway. Yes. That's what should be around each garden."*

Gardeners often paired individual garden plots with private property while talking about trespassing on and restricting access to individual gardens. Thirteen gardeners described circumstances when someone had either trespassed onto their individual plot or had physically encroached upon their individual garden plot, always articulating that this is inappropriate behaviour. A Filipino woman from the Yellow Garden illustrated this conception of individual plot space: *"I am not greedy from my garden. I like to give. I just want people to ask if they can have. I am happy to give away. I let people go into my garden. I tell them to go into just my plot. No one else's. It's my responsibility."* She clearly understands that the individual garden plot is her exclusive property and that she regulates access to the garden. Her rights of control also extend to family members. She

explained, *"See, I am married to an African man...He comes sometimes but it is mine. I decide what to plant. I don't waste my land."*

Gardeners frequently described individual plots as private property while talking about 'problems' at the garden. Another Filipino woman from the Blue Garden recounted a story of the inappropriateness of trespassing on and illegitimately using 'her' garden plot. I initially asked if there were any problems or conflicts in the garden. This gardener responded that at the beginning of one season, she came to start planting her seeds and it appeared that someone else had begun to prepare her plot for planting. She explained that this is a problematic feature of the garden. Gardeners often want more garden space and will occupy seemingly vacant plots without permission. This is often treated as a serious transgression by many gardeners. This gardener explained that other gardeners advised her to *"to plant something in it before someone takes it."*

Another gardener from the Yellow Garden, a woman from Eritrea, raised these same kinds of problematic transgressions regarding rights to control individual plot space. This gardener explained that the coordinator recently enacted a new rule regarding the number of plots allowed per person.¹⁸ She argued that coordinators do not have a right to confiscate plots from gardeners. This gardener instead explained that she would *allow* the coordinator to take only one particular plot and asserted that she would not give up her two other plots. She suggests that her agency and right over the individual plots should dictate their distribution. The fate of her garden plots is a matter for her to decide.

An interview with a gardener from the Yellow Garden captured the frequency of and challenges associated with gardeners perceiving their individual garden plots as private property. This particular gardener is white, Canadian born, has lived in Ottawa for

most of her life, and has had both professional and non-professional experience with community gardens in the City of Ottawa. This gardener originally assisted with the development of a community garden in the downtown core when working as a community developer at a community health centre. Since then, she has been a member at two community gardens. This gardener voluntarily described an instance of a neighbouring gardener encroaching on her garden space with a fencing structure. She explained that this is a typical occurrence, as gardeners tend to view individual garden plots as private property. She reinforced this statement by noting that several other gardeners reprimanded him for encroaching upon her property and noted that the neighbour refused to remove the fencing structure. The interviewee explained that reprimands from other gardeners are indicative of the common perception that individual plots are individual pieces of private property. She also argued that fence building indicates a sense of misplaced ownership and entitlement to use land in whatever way gardeners choose. She sarcastically commented, *"it was his land...whatever... he can have it. I don't need it."* Moreover, she explained that it is commonplace for the steering committee at the Yellow Garden to support her neighbour's perception of the individual garden plot and would have supported him in the matter. She concludes that, *"I guess some people feel that it's their land and that's not a good thing."*

Private Spaces: "It's Like My Backyard"

In other ways, gardeners explained that their individual plots are not literally their own private property. Instead, these spaces are analogous to having private property. In making these analogies, gardeners often explained that having their individual garden plot

is *like* having private property or is *like* being at home. An older woman from the Blue Garden, who recently moved to Ottawa but immigrated from Finland decades ago, explained *"it's like my own property...it's like my own backyard."* Ten gardeners reiterated this comment. Another gardener explained, *"I feel the same as I am home. It's my ground. It's for me. It's something for me. Personal."* Another woman, who recently emigrated from China explained, *"it feels like my own"*. Similarly, the mother and daughter I interviewed, who recently emigrated from Bangladesh shared the sentiment, that *"it feels like our own backyard. It feels very private"*. A Filipino woman from the Blue Garden echoed this comment: *"I do my thing here and other people do their thing. It's like having my own backyard."*

Gardeners who made analogies between their individual garden plots and a backyard, are apartment building dwellers and are immigrants to Canada. These gardeners explained that individual garden plots provide them with feelings similar to the specific place of a backyard. Further, a number of these gardeners also explained that individual garden plots are similar to 'home' because they provide them with an opportunity to replicate gardening activities enjoyed previously when they had owned a backyard or lived in a different country. Gardeners who expressed this idea, came from all three gardens.

Farah, Malay, Evelina, Cathy, Maria and Eli, and Peter, who have immigrated from Algeria, Bangladesh, Finland, China, Lebanon, and Romania respectively, explained that the individual garden plot provides physical land for the specific use of cultivation and this use is tied to a previous sense of home. Cathy explained, *"In China, I had a big yard and planted fruit trees and vegetables. It makes me excited to see seeds grow up."*

Here feels the same. I miss my yard." Malay also explained that the individual garden plot provides a feeling of home, when he lived in Bangladesh, because he is able to replicate the experience of having *"a piece of land that is my own and growing foods and being successful."* Farah articulated similar explanations: *"it's good to be on the land like it was where I lived before. My father had a farm of 17 hectares. I am happy I got this place and I remember how I was. I also think then, about how I am. It's not the same now, but it's okay."* Evelina, Maria and Eli, and Peter also explained that their individual garden plots function as a reminder of home because of its provision of land to be used for cultivation. Evelina commented:

I grew up on a farm and it was the greatest joy to see the snow melting in the spring and turn the soil. I can't wait to see something come up in the spring... then I can make salada and use your own vegetables... It reminds me of where I grew up, even though it has been 42 years.

Maria and Eli similarly explained that the garden *"is good. It's like Lebanon for us. We grew there"* and Peter's son explained that having the garden plot allows him to take part in a tradition of farming: *"his parents were farmers, so it's like a tradition."*

Garden Relations and Acts of Privacy within Individual Garden Plots

Participant observation notes and interview segments revealed that often, non-gardening activities take place within individual garden plots. These activities indicate the presence of private spaces. A number of gardeners explained, or I observed, that children, friends (made previous to the garden) and other relatives typically attend the garden together. Husbands and wives, mothers and daughters, sisters, cousins and friends frequently accompany each other to and at the garden. When family members or friends are there together, they talk to each other and if children are with adults, they typically

stay in and around the individual garden plot. Additionally, interview data showed that social interactions within the garden are highly informal and personal between gardeners who had known each other prior to joining the garden.

Interview data showed that groups of friends or families who joined the garden together often use the garden space as a venue for personal socialization. A number of gardeners explained that they had convinced friends and family to join the garden or had found out about the garden through a friend or family member. Every gardener I interviewed, with the exception of one, explained that they had either joined the garden because of a friend or use the garden to socialize with friends (known previously). Some gardeners explained that they go to the garden and talk with friends about their children, personal problems, or jobs. Malay, a recent immigrant from Bangladesh, expressly described the socialization he enjoys at the garden: *"Me and my friend. The friend who told me to come. We talk every night. We sit there. We talk about everything Canadian politics, Bengalese politics, work, back home, tv, news, jobs the future. We talk most about the job. How to get a good a job."*

In contrast, interview data showed that social interactions between gardeners who had met each other at the garden are highly formal and impersonal. Every gardener stressed that there are limited interactions between gardeners who had not known each other previously. As Farah from the Blue Garden explained, *"I don't talk to people at the garden about personal things. Most people there don't talk to people about personal things."* Gardeners frequently explained that the extent of conversation or socialization revolves around growing techniques. Many gardeners explained that they rarely get to know other gardener's names, where they live, or what they do. For example, a Filipino

woman from the Blue Garden explained, *"You don't really know these people so when you talk it's about gardening."* Other gardeners explained that it is common to not see any gardeners while gardening, or if other gardeners are present, it is common to not talk to them. That being said, three gardeners did explain that they experienced making friends at the garden, but this seemed to correlate with speaking a certain language and being recent immigrants. A number of gardeners and coordinators also explained that there should be more socialization and a greater sense of intimacy between gardeners.

Participant observation at the Red Garden revealed the frequency of non-gardening activities, indicating that individual garden plots are private spaces. During one visit to the Red Garden, I noted an individual garden plot, where two people sat on benches within a mosquito tent. It was a hot summer day and early in the morning. The two gardeners sat across from one another and spoke a language I did not recognize. They passed a shisha pipe back and forth. Similarly, during another visit, I passed by a group of middle aged men, seated around a plastic table, with an umbrella, located on the individual garden plot. There were various items surrounding the table; gardening tools, shoes, some clothing, water bottles, a cooler. Some men had taken off their shirts. It was early morning; some men were drinking coffee and chatting. Interviewees from the Red Garden also touched on these aspects of garden usage.

During an interview with Peter, an elderly man who immigrated from Romania a number of years ago, his son who translated, explained, *"gardeners bring chairs and tables and umbrellas and van seats. Some do BBQs and some of them have mosquito tents."* Peter explained that although these types of activities occur frequently at the Red Garden, he was initially uncertain about participating in such activities. Peter explained

that having a BBQ is a distinct activity that does not typically occur outside of the home and as such was uncertain about bringing the private out into the public. Peter articulated a public-private divide, finding it important to maintain, through practice, the garden as a public space and not as a private space. However, in actual practice, our discussion showed that this strict division was difficult to sustain. Peter's son explained, "*Before my father was scared to do BBQs and bothering people but we convinced him to do it.*" Another group of gardeners from the Red Garden also remarked on the quality of non-gardening activities that take place within individual garden plots. One gardener, a Canadian born, white woman, explained:

some gardeners incorporate into their plots interesting features from their own culture and I find them fascinating and have learned so much from them. Some have built interesting structures to support their plantings, arbours for grapes, gazebos with lounge chairs and tables and decks with barbecues. Some Italians bring a sense of community to the site as they sit under umbrellas and play cards with their friends while "watching" their beautifully tended and healthy looking garden plants grow.

The appearance of individual garden plots also showed that individual garden plots are not public spaces necessarily and instead are perhaps more aptly described as private spaces. A number of plots at the Red Garden are adorned with lawn seats, tables, chairs, and umbrellas. Additionally, a number of plots also feature carpets and other household items. Conventionally, people do not bring such items to public spaces, such as a park for example. Moreover, such items are typically located in an individual's backyard or in their house. Transporting these items to individual garden plots demonstrates a transportation of private space into public space. Through the presence of such items, individual gardeners express that it is appropriate to decorate and adorn their individual

plots as they see fit. However, aesthetics of garden plots are also an issue around which other gardeners express unease with some gardeners bringing their private décor out into the public space of the garden.

Public Spaces: Challenging Acts of Privacy Within Individual Garden Plots

One group of gardeners from the Red Garden expressed concern about the appearance of some individual garden plots. One gardener, a Canadian-born, white woman, from this group explained, *"other gardeners at the allotment gardens don't seem to care much how their gardens look. They use ugly red plastic fences that are jarring to the eye; they use ugly red carpets strewn all over their garden plots."* Although this gardener's comments are framed in terms of appropriate garden maintenance, there seems to be unease with individual gardeners organizing their plot in whatever manner they desire. The garden coordinator at the Red Garden also raised similar concerns about aesthetic choices. This coordinator clearly feels that some adornments and features of individual garden plots are clearly out of place in the garden. He commented: *"I had seven of these little huts and I put out some phone calls and people said no problem and they took them down. So it's really nice to see that responsiveness from the gardeners."* The coordinator explained that the transportation of some items into garden plots or the use of some building materials by gardeners is a source of contention with neighbouring residents whose single dwelling residents border two sides of the larger garden space. He explained, *"Mostly, it's aesthetics. Mostly, it's how it looks. Um, they don't make a lot of noise, they aren't in there at night, at times there is youth activity at night but that's not the gardeners. So residents are mostly concerned with what it looks like."*

This issue is framed in terms of appropriate aesthetic choices within individual garden plots. However, it speaks to ideas about private and public space. Concerns about individual garden aesthetics hinge on the idea that the garden is not a private space and by extension neither are individual garden plots; it is inappropriate for an individual to mediate the landscape however he or she so chooses. Take for example someone's backyard and the presence of 'junk' in their backyard. The popular contention would say that as "property is about rights over things and the people who have those rights are called owners...Owners are free to use property as they wish" (Singer, 2000b: 2-3). In the case of aesthetics in the Red Garden though, responses from some gardeners, the coordinator, and neighbouring residents do not endow individual garden plots with the same rights that would accompany a conventional private piece of property. Especially when aesthetic choices become contentious issues, some things are clearly seen as out of place; garden space cannot be simultaneously public and private.

Gardens as 'Third' Spaces

A Solitary Place Outside of the Home; A Place Not in Public

Gardeners also explained that garden space is not necessarily public or private. Several women from the Yellow and Blue Gardens explained that the garden is a place that they can go to, which is distinctly different than the space of the private home. While these gardeners explained that their individual plots are different than the private sphere of the home, they did not by extension suggest that the garden is a public space. These women explained that their individual garden plots fall outside of conventional categories of public and private space. These women suggested that their individual garden plots

provide an opportunity to escape duties associated with their home lives and to enter an anodyne place.

Five women and one man from the Yellow and Blue Gardens touched on this construction and function of garden space. Yassira, who recently emigrated from Morocco, explained that going on gardening field trips allows her to 'get out of' Saturday afternoon rituals of cooking for her mother-in-law and brother-in-law. Corazon, who emigrated from the Philippines nearly fifteen years ago, explained, "*going to the garden makes you forget about your problems.*" Following this comment, she qualified her statement: "*You see, I'm married to an African man and the culture is different. They sit and watch tv. and talk on the phone while the woman does all the work around the house.*" She concludes her explanation by commenting "*It would make me happy - I could bring my little girl and it would be good to get out of the house.*" Three other women from the Yellow Garden touched on similar themes. Maria and Eli explained, "*we come a lot at the beginning. That's when we came to the Canada. You forget about everything and I stay all day. Don't want to come home.*" One of the cousins further reflected back on the importance the garden served when she first immigrated: "*I cried for six months. I wanted to go home. I was stuck in the apartment with four kids. The garden takes the depressed away.*" Finally, Kesi, who recently moved to a single dwelling residence from an apartment and now has a garden in her backyard, shares this sentiment. She explained, "*I like gardening here better. I can spend hours. I am free. At home, I know I should do other things.*" Malay, who recently emigrated from Bangladesh, explained that the garden gives him an opportunity to leave his house and go to a place

that functions like a Bengalese community centre, a place where he feels he is able to share his views and opinions on the world, his happiness and success.

Gardeners who raised these themes are predominantly women who have recently immigrated to Canada, experienced periods of unemployment, and have been responsible for primary care-giving in the family. Female gardeners who recently immigrated to Canada and have experienced periods of unemployment view the garden space as an important stand in for a non-private and non-public space. In this sense, the garden provides an opportunity to go somewhere outside of the private sphere of the home but not inside in a highly public space, like a park for example. For these people, the garden provides a unique opportunity to traverse in between the space of the private and the space of the public, to find a place that is still protected (so not entirely public) but not restricted (so not entirely private).

Some gardeners also explained that garden space provides opportunities to forget about or reduce problems in their lives. Gardeners explained that stress reduction and feelings of happiness are derived specifically from solitary gardening activities. This particular insight is important. Previous research on community gardens suggests that feelings of happiness experienced in the garden are a result of existing communal relationships. Effectively, this research argues that people use community gardens in order to have access to a community and that these sites are valuable for this reason. In contrast, my research shows that gardens are 'safe' and 'happy' places because of their solitary nature and provision of gardening activities. Gardeners did not link garden use, pleasure, and reduced stress with a community of gardeners. They instead emphasized individual participation in gardening activities as the leading reason for enjoying and

using a community garden. A diverse group of gardeners from the Yellow and Blue Gardens, both men and women, explained that the act of gardening and planting specifically assisted with reducing stress in their lives. This expression came in different forms:

It's refreshing...rejuvenating...great to feel the dirt and play with nature. It's a destresser... you forget about your stress."; "Gardening is good for your head."; "And when I am stressed I go to the garden and I play with things."; "gardening is a very good idea... You get stress off of you. You keep yourself busy."; "Gardening is my hobby... I like planting. It's a therapy for me."; "it's a good place for us... it's a quiet place... I can think about my emotions."; "It's my time and my place to stop thinking about things."

Garden Space and Interactions with Land

Gardeners also explained that the garden space provides feelings of productivity, self-worth, and self-sufficiency, particularly through their use and cultivation of land. Three gardeners from the Yellow and Blue Gardens voluntarily and repeatedly described the feelings of pride they derive from crop production. Cathy, Corazon, and Malay, immigrants from China, the Philippines and Bangladesh, stated that they use the land well and successfully utilize the small spaces they have been given. Cathy provided statistics regarding her crop yield from last year, while Corazon repeatedly listed the amount and variety of things that she is able to grow on a yearly basis. Malay explicitly said that being able to grow food successfully provides him with a deep sense of self-worth. All three of these gardeners are currently or were recently unemployed and looking for work. Malay is returning to school as he has found that a degree from Bangladesh is not recognized here. Corazon just started working and Cathy is looking for work as a dental hygienist but is having difficulty due to her limited English language skills.

Every gardener touched on this theme of deriving some sort of satisfaction from his or her growing efforts. Contrary to earlier community garden research, my research shows that solitary gardening activities are pivotal in explaining why people use these spaces. While earlier research does not consider this aspect of community garden usage sufficiently, participants in my research study all explained that bodies interacting with land are a fundamental aspect of community gardening. Again, this insight should not be obscured or treated as a benign indicator of 'women's work' or hobby making. Rather, datum collected during interviews show that opportunities to interact with land serve valuable political functions. Interview data supported the contention that bodies interacting with land indicated a presence of private space.¹⁹ However, I argue that the emergence of this strand in the data contributes more critically to perceptions of a 'third' space.

Some gardeners suggested that transforming land provides them with a direct sense of ownership. However, this ownership does not pertain only to the land but is reinforced and constituted through cultivation of crops. Five female gardeners explained that having their *own* vegetables is extremely important. Evelina, Kesi, Manali, Manisha and Corazon all explicitly noted that owning produce is acutely different from and more preferable to purchasing food from stores. While these gardeners did not always elaborate this point, other gardeners provided further insights to help understand this connection.

Nearly half of gardeners interviewed suggested that ownership of produce, through transformations of land, permits participation in food exchanges with friends, family, and co-workers. Several gardeners repeatedly described the joy they experience when being able to offer gifts of food to close relations. They noted that this activity is only

permissible through garden usage, as purchasing food from a grocery store and then giving it to a family member is nonsensical. As Corazon, from the Yellow Garden, explained: *"From your garden to your kitchen to your pot. The food tastes better here than from the market. My neighbours and the teachers like that I give the basket of tomatoes. I plant the lettuce and then plant things after the lettuce is done."* Gardeners further reinforced these ideas, as often at the end of interviews, they provided me with fresh produce from their gardens.

Several other gardeners traced links between ownership of produce and experienced benefits of garden usage. While many gardeners argued that giving food away to family and friends is an important social and cultural practice, other gardeners emphasized that ownership of produce enhances self-sufficiency. Discussions about connections between self-sufficiency and crop ownership emerged in two ways. Some gardeners explained that having an opportunity to grow, and effectively to own their own produce, results in an offset of grocery store expenditures. Gardeners who recently immigrated to Canada in the last year put forward these remarks. Manali explained:

being here gives me a fresh mind... makes me happy... gives me more vegetables and fruits than I would have... I can pick them. I would be very disheartened if the garden disappeared...it solves many economic problems for us. We don't need to spend as much on food.... And we get the food we want. Other people sell their stuff to stores to solve their economic problems... it is very good for that... it solves the economic problems... it is a very big problem.

Other gardeners also explained that crop ownership promotes self-sufficiency by providing access to culturally appropriate food crops, which are otherwise unavailable in the City of Ottawa. Many gardeners touched on this idea. Particularly, gardeners who immigrated from Southeast Asian, African and Middle Eastern countries explained that

having the individual garden plot is important for their well being, both physically and mentally. Three sisters from Bangladesh explained that without the garden, they are unable to access *denga*, a leafy vegetable integral in many Bengali dishes. Similarly, Cathy, a recent immigrant from China, noted: "*I bring seeds from China to plant. I can't get them here.*"

Fluid and Ambiguous Public Spaces

Introduction

On May 7th, 2007, a group of Ottawa residents reclaimed public space. Organized by the Ottawa Community Chalk Network, adults and children converged on Lisgar Street in the downtown core to protest the municipal governments' surveilling and controlling of public space. This group, with multi-coloured chalk in hand, appropriated streets and sidewalks leading up to City Hall. They chalked art, poetry, slogans, and hopscotch boards. This event was organized in response to city staff power-washing a hopscotch board that children had chalked along Third Avenue in the Glebe neighbourhood.

This event and the actions of the 'chalkers' on Lisgar Street are described as an expression of a desire to claim public space (CBC, 2007). Similar events and strategies are prevalent in many urban centres today. The Ottawa Community Chalk Network parallels more established groups seeking to reclaim public space from governmental and corporate control and privatization, such as Toronto's Public Space Committee, Vancouver's Public Space Network, and London's Space Hijackers.²⁰

These groups and their movements exhibit a "sustained and creative opposition to... the rolling out of urban neoliberalization...a resistance...that consciously reworks and appropriates both public and private urban spaces" (Blomley, 2004:31). The conclusions I present in this chapter similarly strive for a 'sustained and creative opposition to the rolling out of urban neoliberalization'. However, drawing on the theoretical framework I employed and the empirical research I conducted, I emphasize a proactive and strategic re-thinking of 'what is a public space?' Rather than appropriating, reworking, and corrupting "the language and signification of architecture and...space"

(Spacehijackers, 2007), I identify two strategies for justly resolving conflicts over uses of public space. The strategies I present are not interactive or reactive. The theoretical and practical recommendations I present can become politically strategic tools if used long-term, in a consultative fashion, and with policy makers, decision-making bodies, and community members. I argue that the results of this thesis suggest that conflicts over uses of public space, and therefore oppressive re-workings of public space, can be creatively opposed and challenged by: (1) re-thinking the efficacy of using discourses of community and (2) actively and empirically demonstrating that private and 'third' spaces are parts of all public space. I conclude this chapter by identifying limitations to this research study and proposing future research directions.

'Communities', Communal Claims, and Social Space

My research argues that community gardeners should not be represented only as neighbourhood communities or communities of interest, as has been the trend in earlier scholarly research and within community garden advocacy associations. While this insight pertains to community gardeners, it similarly applies to other groups seeking to use public space. Utilizing ideas of 'community' can present challenges for some groups to gain access to public spaces, especially already utilized spaces like parks.

Firstly, research about community gardens and research examining uses of urban space more generally should more seriously consider how discourses of 'community' are situated in local political debates and conflicts. In many contexts, perceptions of 'undesirables' are perpetuated by ideas and discourses of community. A professional, middle-class neighbourhood does not fear the one homeless man who panhandles outside the new luxury condominium. Rather, this one man's presence is feared as it may indicate

an infiltration of groups or communities of homeless people into the neighbourhood.²¹

Similarly, the presence of one prostitute does not become a publicly contentious issue.

When several prostitutes are noticed in a neighbourhood however, a 'problem' begins to

emerge.²² One young Somalian man sitting outside a movie theatre is not an endemic

problem, it is the groups of young black men that residents fear.²³

In neighbourhoods where the presence of different social groups becomes a 'problem', according to race, class, language, profession, employment status, or residential status, using discourses that emphasize community can be counterproductive when championing proposals that seek to enhance access to public spaces. I do not advocate that feelings of community and communal claims to space should be abandoned. Rather, I am suggesting that invoking ideas of 'community' is not always politically and legally strategic, particularly for groups who are already marginalized from mainstream political communities and in local contexts where clashes between diverse communities are sources of conflict.

Secondly, it is increasingly untenable to employ discourses and ideas of community effectively in cities dominated by urban neoliberalism. In large Canadian and American cities, discourses that emphasize the individual and his or her private rights often assume a powerful position in comparison to discourses that emphasize ideals of community and communitarianism (Smith and Kurtz, 2003). Specifically, forces of globalization are presumed to necessitate an adoption of neoliberal policies in urban centres which work to create a "basic legal and security system to underpin the individual contractual pursuit of private goals" (Preston, 1996:253). Neoliberal policies are adopted in order to attract capital and investment into urban centres and rely on specific ideologies

and processes. Ideologically, neoliberalism in the 'revanchist city'²⁴ seeks to confirm that that the "rights of the wealthy, of the successful in the global economy, are sufficient for all the rest" (Mitchell, 1997:305). This tenet is reinforced by particular processes. Don Mitchell's analysis of the deployment of neoliberal policies and ideologies provides an insightful analysis of spatial processes presently at work in many cities:

... the ideology of gloablization allows local officials, along with local business people and property owners, to argue that they have no choice but to prostrate themselves before the god Capital, offering not just tax and regulatory inducements, but also extravagant convention centers, down-town tourist amusements, up-market, gentrified restaurant and bar districts, and even occasional public investment in such amenities as museums, theatres and concert halls. Image becomes everything (1997: 304).

With respect to land use provisions and urban space, neoliberal policies particularly advocate that public spaces should be privatized. Within economic and political contexts of globalization and as land becomes a limited commodity in growing urban centres, local governments and their land use decisions often utilize a rhetoric that emphasizes the rational individual and his or her private rights. Luxury condos, high-rise apartment buildings, new shopping malls, and transitways are often rationalized as improving quality of life for city residents, providing valuable necessities, investment, amenities, and consumer choice. Additionally, social spaces often are saturated with and governed by legally established ideas of property. In North America, property claims are narrowly conceived so as to omit communal claims. As Blomley explains, "it should not surprise us, therefore, that on the rare occasions when a community claim is heard by outside observers, it is quickly dismissed (2004:45). While I do not subscribe to these ideologies, processes, and conceptions, I recognize that it is useful to be able to speak the

same language and use the same reference points as those in positions of power. The arguments and evidence offered in this thesis presents a resource to be able to do so.

For example, when city administration planned to auction community gardens in New York City, municipal representatives and the Mayor justified the impending garden closures by appealing to individual citizens and families in desperate need of housing.²⁵ In contrast, community gardening advocates emphasized that community gardens function to mobilize and empower communities and also maintain public spaces in the city. The conflict unfolded on oppositional terms where the needs and rights of New York citizens to housing confronted the needs and rights of neighbourhood communities to access public space. While several hundred community gardens were preserved in the end, it was an uphill battle and many gardens were lost in neighbourhoods that were unable to fully mobilize and incorporate themselves into the larger gardening movement.

If appeals to 'community' are measured and then buttressed with arguments and research demonstrating that privacy is a constitutive part of all public space, uses of and access to public space may become more equitable. This approach provides an opportunity to demonstrate that all interested parties make private claims to space and it is not just underprivileged groups or 'undesirables' doing so. Using a park for picnics with your children is analogous to using a park bench to sleep, sunbathing or using a tract of parkland to grow vegetables. These are all private uses. Demonstrating that everyone makes private claims to public space provides an opportunity to devise solutions that reconcile and balance various individuals' private uses of public space as opposed to simply casting some claims as legitimate (dog walking) and other claims as illegitimate (gardening or sleeping). This approach is not extremely radical or immediately

transformative but does aim to slowly mediate polarizing debates and decisions that pit communities against individuals and public space against private space.

Public-Private-‘Third’ Spaces; Context, Power, and Use in Social Space

This thesis argues the public spaces are used as and constitute private and ‘third’ spaces, by exploring the social spaces of community gardens and gardeners’ perceptions of these sites. This is not to say though that community gardens do not function as public spaces in many ways. To dismiss the thesis that community gardens are public spaces is as counterproductive as asserting they are private spaces only. Maintaining community gardens as public spaces is an important objective among community gardeners, as the organizer of a new garden in Ottawa’s east end comments: “we wanted to make sure that the public, everyone – rich or poor- could get there with ease... We had to make sure a main bus went there. That’s probably one of the reasons we picked the location, because it’s much easier for everyone to get to” (Cummings, 2007). However, it is politically important to document that community gardens are used by individuals, function as private spaces and ‘third’ spaces, and become sites for the enactment of rights typically associated with private property owners.

Emphasizing that social space is ambiguous, shifting, and over-lapping, that private and ‘third’ spaces intersect with public space, is a useful strategy for resolving land use conflicts. This approach can reconfigure land use debates to consider how a given tract of land, an urban space, is a site where many groups and individuals’ interests, rights, and needs can be realized. This approach takes into account that property owners, local business people, homeless people, prostitutes, and youth *all* have vested interests in,

and rights to, urban space. However, this approach does need to be grounded in local contexts and needs to attend to power relations and individual social locations.

In practice, competing private uses of public space can be reconciled equitably by taking into account issues of power and privilege. This is a lofty, but important, goal. Decision-makers and land use policies need to consider that within social space, various groups and individuals are bound within power relations (Kilian 1998). Research showing that regulated uses of public space have tended to preserve powerful groups' private uses of a space (Mitchell, 1995; Kilian, 1998; Teelucksingh, 2006) also needs to be accepted seriously. Finally, various groups' and individuals' specific uses of a social space need to be contextualized and documented. These three considerations – societal and spatial power relations, historical, institutional, and spatial systems of privilege, and uses of social space - need to be bottom-line reference points when evaluating, arbitrating, or participating in land-use disputes or conflicts over urban space. This is a vital approach within an urban context where:

...cities seem to have taken Anatole France at his word, ignoring the clear irony in his declaration...that the rich have no more right to sleep under bridges than do the poor. Such irony can only be so easily ignored if we somehow also agree that the poor have no greater need to sleep under bridges – or to defecate in alleys, panhandle on the streets, or sit for a length of time on park benches. For this is what the new legal regime in American cities is outlawing...(Mitchell, 1997:305).

This thesis deliberately presents a diverse group of gardeners' representations of garden space and their explanations for why they use gardens. Gardeners' narratives and their diverse and nuanced insights are valuable resources for understanding the value of community gardens. They are also useful when resolving land use conflicts. The private spaces of community gardens allow gardeners to replicate previous experiences of living

in a house with a backyard or in a different country and to socialize with family and close friends. The 'third' spaces of community gardens provide opportunities for gardeners to: contribute to family incomes; leave the home and enter a safe place; feel successful and productive in a context of unwaged work and unemployment; reduce stress in their lives; derive a sense of ownership; and maintain social and cultural practices. A fairer debate about the uses of urban space can emerge if such uses and social locations are taken into consideration.

Research Limitations

The research I conducted shows persuasively that community gardens are a borderland where private, public, and 'third' spaces intersect. These sites are not irrevocably public spaces that are used by communities. Individuals and families perceive and use community gardens as private spaces and 'third' spaces. The reasons for such perceptions and use are complex and varied as explained in the previous chapter.

While this research study contributes to the growing body of scholarly literature on community gardens specifically and urban space more generally, its conclusions should be treated as a case-study. Further research is required in different cities, in many gardens, and with a fully diverse sample of gardeners to examine adequately the ambiguities of community garden space. Moreover, I conducted this research at community gardens that are affiliated with the City of Ottawa through the Community Garden Network. Community gardens are not always affiliated with, recognized, or supported by local governments. Some develop and sustain themselves independently, sometimes through the support of a school, charitable organization, or church group.

Conducting a comparative research study with community gardeners that come from both types of community gardens will be useful.

The results of this research study are also limited for conceptual and methodological reasons. Future community garden research should conceptualize and explore relationships among garden space, gardening activities and acts of privacy. Future interviewing techniques should encourage participants to talk about gardening activities in relation to perceptions of garden space.

The presence of non-gardening activities taking place within individual garden plots should also be an area of focus in future research. Such a focus will help when analyzing the spatial meanings of a gardener barbequing, knitting, or drinking coffee in his or her plot. During data analysis, I found it difficult to categorize these activities in terms of associations with private or public property, as I did not query these activities with the observed gardeners, due to recruitment challenges. To say that a woman knitting in her garden plot suggests that the plot is like private property is problematic, as it turns on a dichotomous and gendered reading of space and property and in turn reifies the space. It will be useful to recruit gardeners who participate in these kinds of activities within their individual plots and to explicitly probe connections to garden space. For example, a question guide would be well served to ask participants if they perform these activities at home or if they perform them in other places outside of the home. This recommendation should be taken into consideration as performances of non-gardening activities are relevant for studies investigating intersections between privacy and publicity within garden space.

Finally, future research investigating gardeners' perceptions of garden space would benefit by employing language translation services or bilingual researchers. New immigrants and English-as-a-second language speakers tend to use community gardens. This population of community gardeners should be targeted in future research studies due to their high numbers and because their perceptions of garden space and reasons for use reflect particular social locations. Due to financial constraints, I did not employ translators during the interviewing process. While I employed techniques and approaches that functioned to bridge language barriers, I feel that richer data would have been obtained if participants were able to communicate in their first language.

Future Research Directions

My research contributes to the scholarly literature by presenting a new theoretical and analytic framework for approaching community gardens and similar kinds of urban space. Specifically, research in this field should conceptualize garden space as fluid, evolving, and over-lapping. Exploring space in this way produces research, knowledge, and resources that can be politically strategic for the community gardening movement and which can be used as an effective advocacy tool in cities experiencing development pressures, limited land availability, and invocations of neoliberal planning policies. This type of research can benefit community gardeners, their advocates, and urban dwellers into the future.

An equally important future research direction lies outside of community gardens. My research set out to provide evidence that public spaces are used in private and in 'third' ways by community gardeners. Other theoretical and empirical research has pursued similar lines of inquiry in regards to homeless people specifically and their uses

of spaces like parks and the streets.²⁶ While these research foci are certainly valuable, it will be critical to pursue similar lines of inquiry within different social spaces and among different social groups. While it is becoming clear that public spaces are used in private ways by homeless people and community gardeners, it is less clear but equally important to document how so-called public spaces are used, perceived, or represented in private ways by middle-class mothers, university students, local business owners, middle-class dog owners, private property owners, and so on.

Qualitative research is needed in this area in order to illustrate that powerful and privileged groups and individuals also use public spaces in private ways. Such an empirical and qualitative research undertaking has the potential to reveal that some groups and individuals have greater opportunities to have their rights to privacy protected in public spaces while other groups and individuals such as homeless people and prostitutes do not enjoy these same privileges. Additionally, research in this direction might illustrate that private uses of public spaces are not out of 'place' but are defining elements of all social spaces. Often, activities such as picnicking by a river, dog walking along the canal, Frisbee in the park, and early-morning tai-chi are categorized as appropriate uses of public space, even if permitted only for limited periods of time.²⁷ These are presented as somehow public uses that are both natural and inevitable. A complicated logic sustains this presentation. Research needs to be conducted that seriously strikes at and exposes the elusive logic that functions to present some spatial uses as legitimate, appropriate, natural and others as profane, threatening, and, in some cases, criminal.

This logic is sustained by dichotomous renderings of space into public and private. Specifically, this dichotomy adorns public spaces with particular qualities, in so far as public spaces are spaces of 'public interest' and 'democracy' (Mitchell, 1997). This element is dangerously influential when debates arise over redevelopment projects, cleaning up the streets, and permitted uses of urban space. For example, when the City of Toronto put forward a bid for the 2008 Olympics, social activists and poverty organizations protested the bid as it would result in development in the downtown core that would gentrify neighbourhoods and displace squatter buildings and homeless people. City administration dismissed these claims, explaining that the Olympic bid and its requisite development projects would be a source of capital accumulation and investment for the city. In this case, those in positions of power present changes in urban form and development as a matter of public good in a context of globalization; establishing stadiums, convention centres, and hotels will attract capital, investment, and economic wealth.

These appeals to the 'public interest' are important when used within a binary spatial framework. A binary spatial framework affirms that all space is divided into public space or private space; "two spheres which together are mutually exhaustive in the sense that every element of that world is covered, and mutually exclusive in the sense that any element covered by the first term cannot simultaneously be covered by the second" (Bobbio, 1989:1). When such a conceptualization of social space informs land use decisions, is adopted by governments, and is situated within an economic and political context of globalization and neoliberalism, an oppressive and hegemonic result can emerge. Some spaces, uses, and behaviours can be strategically presented as in the 'public

interest', democratic, and therefore appropriate. The logic of the spatial dichotomy legitimizes and sanctions spatial practices that mesh with neoliberal policies by affirming they are appropriate public spatial practices while condoning and challenging spatial practices that seem to impede neoliberal policies, by deeming them as 'private' or out of place in public spaces.

Second, dichotomous readings of space help to naturalize and 'settle' unequal and unjust uses of and access to urban space; it is sometimes difficult to see that legitimated uses of urban space are, in fact, private uses of space and that there is no such thing as an entirely public space (Kilian, 1998). As the social-spatial dialectic confirms, space constitutes, constrains, and mediates social relations and vice-versa (Soja, 1980; Knox and Pinch, 2000). With a dichotomous reading of space, social relations are similarly siphoned into public and private in a pernicious manner. Particular people, behaviours, and uses belong in 'public' spaces, at the expense of others who may not have the same privileges and access to private spaces. This is automatically exclusionary, problematic, and unjust. For example, in Don Mitchell's analysis of struggles over uses of People's Park in California (1995), he shows that fictive 'guardians' of public space, such as local governments and universities, present "university students and middle class residents" (110) as seemingly natural in and entitled to 'public' space. The presence of these types of people and their accompanying activities are instead expressions of privacy (Kilian, 1998) and indicators of these groups' power and privilege to have their rights to privacy in public respected. Qualitative research needs to deconstruct dichotomous renderings of space and how they inequitably function to assign particular social relations, uses, and behaviours to particular spaces.

Researchers in the fields of geography, sociology, urban planning, and political studies can provide valuable contributions by investigating and documenting the ways in which powerful and privileged groups use public spaces in private ways. Exposing how these groups' private uses of space are permitted and respected can be an effective and political undertaking. Doing so presents an opportunity to confront a pervasive "geography in which a local prohibition (against sleeping in public [or gardening in public]) becomes a total prohibition of some people" and where "the annihilation of space by law, unavoidably [results in] the annihilation of *people*" (Mitchell, 1997:312).

Notes

¹ Urban neoliberalism is ideologically based and strives to “restrain public expenditures and any form of collective initiative [and] celebrate[s] the values of individualism, competitiveness and economic self-sufficiency” (Peck, 2001:445).

² See also Neil Smith (1996).

³ See Don Mitchell (1995); Neil Smith (1996); and Lynn A. Staeheli and Albert Thompson (1997).

⁴ Often, private spaces can protect individuals from hostile threats and/or provide groups and individuals ensnared in moral panics with shelter. Private spaces can be very important sites for safety and security especially when religious worship, personal belief, or sexuality, for example, are sources of persecution. However, private spaces can also be oppressive sites. The ‘home’ or private sphere has repeatedly been a place of violence, child abuse, depression, and mental illness.

⁵ See Moncriel & Langsenkamp (1976); Fox, Koppel, Kellam (1984); Severson (1987); Warner (1987); Landman (1993); Linn (1999); and Oldenburg (1999).

⁶ Family-oriented gardens refer to gardens run by women and are extensively used by their children while casita-based gardens refer to gardens run by men and which act as their clubhouses (Schmeltzkopf, 1995:369).

⁷ See Warner (1987); Schmeltzkopf (1995); Armstrong (2000); Kurtz (2001); Shinew, Glover and Parry (2004); Staeheli, Mitchell and Gibson (2002); Smith and Kurtz (2003); Baker (2004); and Perez-Vasquez, Anderson and Rogers (2005).

⁸ Examples of visual cues that communicate private space within community gardens include the presence of fences, gates, lock and keys.

⁹ This dominant reading of gardening is well established and dates back to John Ruskin’s lecture, “of Queens and Gardens” He explains that women are “Queens” and “their territories over which they reigned” are their “gardens (Ruskin, 2002: 69).

¹⁰ Personal reflection of the author.

¹¹ At this time there was a staffing change for the coordinator position of the Community Garden Network. A staffing turn around likely explains delays in communication from the Community Garden Network. That said, I was aware that there would be a new coordinator as of July 2006 and requested that the file be passed on to the new coordinator. Additionally, I inquired about contact information for the new person filling the position and also inquired if the out-going coordinator could update me about his communication with garden coordinators prior to his departure. Although these requests were agreed to, no communication, follow-up, or passing on of information occurred. During a meeting with the new CGN coordinator in July, she had no knowledge of my research and explained that it didn’t appear that communication between the previous CGN coordinator and garden coordinators had occurred.

¹² For purposes of confidentiality, gardens that participated in this research have been assigned pseudonyms. These names will be used throughout the remainder of the chapter and subsequent chapters.

¹³ Attendance of gardeners can be variable. People come at different times of the day and sometimes only a few times a week. Visiting the gardens on my own often resulted in situations where no gardeners were present or each visit introduced me to new gardeners. Using unaccompanied visits to establish a rapport with gardeners was difficult. The

seasonal nature of community gardens meant there was little time to get to know gardeners and to develop an insider relationship.

¹⁴ Interactions with groups of gardeners only occurred within family units. For example, the only cases where I would speak with one more than one gardener at a time, was when I was speaking with a husband and wife, mother and daughter, sisters, etc.

¹⁵ See Rapley (2001); Judith Lapadat and Anne Lindsay (1999); and J.A. Edwards (1993).

¹⁶ Throughout this chapter, I include information about participants' gender, country of origin, and sometimes specify length of time spent in Canada when using a direct quotation.

¹⁷ Pseudonyms have been assigned to participants throughout this chapter to protect their confidentiality and privacy.

¹⁸ At the Yellow Garden, the garden coordinator is a community health centre employee. In this case, the garden coordinator acts as a representative of the legal owners of the garden space. The garden is situated on community health centre land and the community health centre grants permission for garden use.

¹⁹ See section 3.1, Chapter Five specifically for participants' explanations about connections between interactions with land and a private space. Several participants explained that feelings of ownership, which arguably are indicative of a private space, materialize through and are defended by interactions with and transformations of land. A young gardener from the Blue Garden explains that the rightful owner of the plot is synonymous with the person who grows the produce. Similarly, another gardener explains, "*I like to give. I just want people to ask if they can have...*". Finally, another gardener explains that interactions with and transformations of land communicate ownership entitlements. She describes a conflict in the garden, when at the beginning of the season, she came to start planting her seeds and it appeared that someone else had begun to prepare her plot for planting. See also Appendix 3 detailing garden agreement documents. Garden coordinators explain that growing produce, interactions with and transformations of land, constitute a claim to and ownership of individual plot space.

²⁰ See Toronto Public Space Committee website < <http://www.publicspace.ca/>>, Vancouver Public Space Network website < <http://www.vancouverpublicspace.ca/>>, See Space Hijackers website < <http://www.spacehijackers.co.uk/html/welcome.html>>.

²¹ See Toronto media coverage of the 'Out of the Cold Program' in the City of Toronto. Since 1994, this program has been run by church organizations to feed and house homeless people for one night a week. Repeatedly, this program has confronted challenges from residents in affluent neighbourhoods who object to an increasing presence of homeless *people* in their community. The most recent objection to this program occurred in December 2006 in the Beaches neighbourhood, a traditionally NDP supporting neighbourhood located on Toronto's waterfront in the east end. Neighbourhood residents objected to the program's initiation in their neighbourhood and their plan to house twelve homeless people one night a week. Neighbourhood residents delayed initiation of the program with a legal injunction. See Hall (2006), <<http://www.thestar.com/News/article/165736>>

²² See article published in the Centretown News regarding the infiltration of communities of prostitutes in the Somerset and Gladstone area. See Murphy (2005), <http://www.carleton.ca/ctown/home/homeNew.htm>

²³ See local Ottawa media coverage of the youth drop-in centre at the Michele Heights Community Centre. Establishment of this drop-in centre is reported as a place to go for groups of young Somali men in the Britannia neighbourhood. See particularly, Kate Heartfield (2004).

²⁴ The 'revanchist city' refers to actions taken by political leaders to dismantle the social policies of the Keynesian interventionist state. Incentives for corporate privatization of the urban landscape and aggressive policing tactics are cited as examples of revanchist urban leadership. Enemies of the 'revanchist city' tend to include homeless people, panhandlers, prostitutes, squeegee cleaners, graffiti artists, and unruly youth. See Neil Smith (1996) and Neil Smith (1998).

²⁵ 114 community garden sites were to be auctioned in New York City in the late 1990s, in order to 'free up' land to be used for housing construction. See Staeheli, Mitchell, and Gibson (2002).

²⁶ See Kilian (1998); Mitchell (1995); Mitchell (1997); and Staeheli and Thompson (1997).

²⁷ See City of Ottawa Parks and Facilities By-Law No. 2004-276. First, the By-Law explains that all uses of public parks are subject to designation and permission granted by the Director of Parks and Recreation. Some activities are assigned permanently designated spaces, a priori, such as sports activities and activities involving dogs. In contrast, the by-law requires individuals to obtain limited use permits from the Director of Parks and Recreation for particular activities. Some of these activities include: selling, offering, exposing, and advertising food or drink, newspapers, magazines, goods, ware or merchandise, art, skills, or services; possessing any alcoholic beverage; convening, conducting or holding a public meeting, or delivering a speech as a member of or to members of any group or to members of the general public, and distributing any flyers or circulars. Because these activities require a permit, there are occasions when these activities may be prohibited or unsanctioned, as the Director grants permits at his/her discretion and without an established evaluative process. Additionally, it is likely that activities which are not included in the by-law are treated as prohibited activities. See City of Ottawa (2004),

<http://www.ottawa.ca/city_services/bylaws/a_z/parks_facilities/index_en.html>

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Chart 1
Summary of Recruitment Patterns

Garden Name	Number of Gardeners Recruited by Garden Coordinator	Number of Gardeners Recruited Independently of Garden Coordinator
Blue Garden	14*	1
Red Garden	1 gardening group	1
Yellow Garden	5	1
Green Garden	0	0
Orange Garden	0	0

*Fourteen gardeners were recruited by the garden coordinator at this site. However, only nine gardeners participated in formal interviews. Some of these fourteen participated in informal interviews. In other cases, due to scheduling conflicts, some of these fourteen gardeners that were recruited never participated in a formal interview or informal interview.

Chart 2
Summary of Interviews

Garden Name	Formal Semi-Structured Interviews with Gardeners	Number of Gardeners Who Participated in Semi-Structured Interviews	Formal Semi-Structured Interviews with Coordinators	Informal Interviews with Gardeners	Number of Gardeners Who Participated in Informal Interviews	Informal Interviews with Coordinator
Blue Garden	8	9	1	4	8	1
Red Garden	2	6	1	0	0	0
Yellow Garden	5	6	1	0	0	0
Green Garden	0	0	0	0	0	0
Orange Garden	0	0	0	0	0	0
Community Garden Network	N/A	N/A	0	N/A	N/A	1

Chart 3
Summary of Descriptive Characteristics of Interviewees

Descriptive Characteristics	Interview Participants
Men	6
Women	15
Canadian-Born	7
Foreign-Born	14
English-as-a-Second-Language	14
Visible Minority	11
Age Range	10 years old – 70 years old
Length of Garden Membership	1 year – 15 years

Chart 4
Summary of Participant Observation

Garden Name	Number of Participant Observation Visits
Blue Garden	5
Red Garden	2
Yellow Garden	0
Green Garden	2
Orange Garden	1
Community Garden Network	1

Map 1
Community Gardens in the City of Ottawa

Appendix 1

Interview Guide

1. Background Information

- a. When did you start at the garden?
- b. How did you find out about the garden?
- c. What do you grow here?

2. Garden environment

- a. Describe how the garden makes you feel.
- b. Are there other places outside of your house, that make you feel the same way?
- c. Describe what you do when you come to the garden.

3. Interaction Patterns with previously unknown gardeners

- a. How many people do you talk to when you come to the garden?
- b. What do you talk to them about?
- c. Do you socialize with people from the garden, outside of the garden?

4. Interaction Patterns with family/friends

- a. Do you come to the garden alone?
- b. Do you bring children to the garden?
- c. Do you talk to your family about what you do at the garden?
- d. Have you told family to come garden here? Why?
- e. Have you helped friends join the garden? Why?

5. Access to the garden

- a. Do people come to the garden, who are not gardeners? How do these people make you feel?
- b. How does a garden with a fence make you feel?
- c. Is there anything in the garden that you would changed or want to see improved?
- d. Do you like how the garden is organized? Would you want to see a committee of gardeners acting as the coordinators of the garden? Would you want to get involved in this?
- e. Are there certain rules that you think should be implemented?
- f. The city owns this land. If they decided not to have a garden here anymore, how would you feel?

6. Conflicts in the garden

- a. Are there any problems in the garden?
- b. Is there anything that happens in the garden, that you wished wouldn't?
- c. Do people let their dogs run around here? How does that make you feel?
- d. Do people bring their children here? How does that make you feel?

7. Residential Information

- a. Do you live around here?
- b. How long have you been living there?
- c. How long have you been living in Ottawa?
- d. Where did you live before?
- e. Did you live in a house with a backyard before? Does the garden give you the same feeling as your backyard?
- f. If you moved into a house with a backyard would you still come to the garden?

Appendix 2
Interview Guide
Garden Coordinators

1. History of Garden and Involvement

- a. How and when did you get involved with the garden?
- b. Why did the garden get started here?

2. Background Information about the Garden

- a. Can you describe how the garden is organized?
- b. Is there a waiting-list to receive a plot?
- c. How are plots renewed every year?
- d. Is there a high turn around in plot membership?
- e. What are some reasons why people don't return?
- f. Are there rules of conduct or contracts that gardeners must sign?

3. Coordinator Involvement/Responsibilities

- a. What sorts of duties/roles do you assume in the garden?
- b. Are there any challenges you have experienced as co-ordinator?
- c. What is your vision for the garden?
- d. What are some changes or recommendations you would make for the garden?

4. Gardener Dynamics

- a. Are there social or communal activities that take place in the garden or among gardeners?
- b. What are some points of conflicts between gardeners?
- c. Why do you think people join the garden?
- d. Do most gardeners live in the area?

Appendix 4

Code of Conduct Documents

Blue Garden User Agreement

1. I understand that this is a community garden and I will attend at least 3 garden meetings and the spring clean up.
2. I may choose to set up a decorative border within the boundaries of my plot. This border will not be higher than 30 cm., and at least two sides of the plot will be open. I will respect the boundary posts defining my plot. All edging will be inside this boundary. A trellis may go above this height but it should not be perceived to form an enclosure.
3. I will pay the non-transferable and non-reimbursable annual fee by May 15 to help pay for communal garden expenses. If this fee is not paid by May 15, and if I do not prepare the soil so it is ready for planting by this same date, not have my planting done by June 15, I understand my plot will be assigned to another gardener.
4. I will help with the general upkeep and improvement of the garden as a whole.
5. I understand that the plots will be allocated upon payment of the annual fee or by May 15.
6. I will use and promote only organic gardening methods. Examples of acceptable organic methods include: mushroom compost, garden compost, peat moss, lobster meal, sheep manure, aged manure and lime. I will not use such chemical fertilizers as Miracle Grow.
7. I will cultivate and harvest my plot. This will keep the weeds to a minimum.
8. I will only compost those materials which are acceptable according to the reference list on the side of the shed or as suggested by a fellow gardener. I will add those materials to those bins, which have the signs that say, "Add compost here".
9. After using communal tools, I will clean them and store them away in the shed. I will take proper care of the community equipment and tools.
10. I will keep the shed neat and tidy at all times.
11. I will clean my plot at the end of the season.
12. Pets will not be allowed on the garden plots and they must be on a leash.
13. I will not smoke in the garden or the surrounding area in order to avoid the transmission of diseases such as tobacco and tomato mosaic to various tobacco-related plants, such as tomatoes, potatoes, eggplant, and peppers. I will leave the garden property if I choose to smoke.
14. I understand that, when I am on the gardening property, I am there at my own risk.

Behaviours that are absolutely unacceptable by people participating towards anybody:

- Physical assault of person or land. Some example include pushing, hitting, intentionally damaging any part of the garden site of another's garden.
- Threat of physical assault or violence.
- Threatening of any kind. Some example include threatening to watch someone, to follow someone, running towards someone, to get others to kick someone out of the garden, standing closely to someone.
- Verbal assault. Some example include: swearing at someone, yelling at someone, using group emails to deal with conflict, making accusation such as calling someone a liar, fascist or racist.
- Sexual assault
- Sexual harassment.

Behaviours that are absolutely expected by people participating:

- Mutual respect for people, plots, and garden equipment.
- Acceptance of people's differences (ex. Culture, race, gardening method, feelings, time commitment, abilities, gender, sexual orientation, faith)
- Everyone must be respected. Respect means different things to different people, and there must be a willingness to work with this.
- When conflict arises, people will follow the steps outline in 'Response and Steps in Dealing with Conflicts'
- People will make clear, concerted attempts to deal with conflict they have with other people.
- It is expected that gardeners will not alter or touch another's plot without permission.
- It is expected that gardeners will follow decisions that have been made by gardeners at meetings.
- It is expected that gardeners will not make individual decisions that affect the group without their knowledge or agreement.

Response and Steps in Dealing with Conflict:

- State your discomfort with the other person's behaviour to the other person clearly and calmly.
- De-escalate the conflict by walking away.
- Document the incident.
- When the situation has de-escalated attempt to resolve the conflict through discussion, possibly with another gardener present.
- Raise the issue and seek resolution at the next garden meeting.
- If there are any problems which are not able to be resolved through the above mentioned steps, call the CGN coordinator.
- The gardener should call 911 if they feel they need to.

Consequences:

- Possible steps that the CGN may take upon being contacted include: gathering more information, speaking directly with the persons that there has been a complaint about, reviewing the whole situation with an advisory group, issuing a letter of warning, temporarily suspending or permanently expelling someone from the garden.
- If an expulsions is issued than that person and membership will be informed in writing.
- If a suspension is issued then that person and membership will be informed in writing and the plot will be re-allocated.

Yellow Garden User Agreement

1. In addition to work that I do in my own plot, I will volunteer 10 hours of my time during the gardening season for the upkeep or improvement of the Community Garden.
2. As this is a Community Garden, if I use the hose to water my plot, I will first check that the nearest water barrel is full. I will help carry water for gardeners who are unable to do so. I will not waste any water. I will put the watering can away when I am finished. If there are many gardeners in the Community Garden, I will only use one of the shared watering cans at a time to water my plot.
3. I will not tell the combinations of the gate and tool shed locks to people outside the community garden.

4. I will only garden my own plot. I will not block the paths beside my plot in any way.
5. I will plant tall crops only where they do not shade neighbouring plots. If I want to grow sunflowers, I will only plant the short, dwarf kind.
6. I will not plant corn.
7. I will keep garbage and litter cleaned up from my plot. I will put garbage in the garbage bins at the entrance to the Community Garden.
8. I will put materials that are good for composting in the compost bins. If I am not sure what should go into compost bins, I will ask for help.
9. If I use the shared tools, I must clean them with water and put them away in the shed when I am finished.
10. I will only use organic fertilizers and organic ways of controlling insects and weeds in the Community Garden. If I am not sure what can be used, I will ask for help.
11. I will have something planted in the garden by May 22 and keep it planted all summer long. If I must give up my plot for any reason, I will tell the coordinator.
12. I will keep weeds down and maintain the areas immediately surrounding my plot. If my plot becomes weedy, I understand that I will be given two weeks notice to clean it up. After that time, the plot will be reassigned to someone else or tilled in.
13. I will not sell the produce that I have grown in the community garden.
14. Due to the blight and other diseases, I understand that we are encouraged not to grow tomatoes. However, if I grow tomatoes, I will limit the number to 3 plants per plot. If I do not take care of these plants, or if they become diseased, I will be given 1 week to remove them. If the blight continues this summer, there might be a total ban on tomatoes in 2006.
15. I understand that I can use only the plot assigned to me by the coordinator.

Gardeners who sign this agreement are consenting to follow the above rules for the good of the Community Garden. If gardeners ignore these rules, the consequences may be that they lose their produce, or they may be denied access to equipment, or they may even lose their plot together.

Red Garden User Agreement

Each Plot is described as a Seasonal plot. Gardeners from last year are provided with the opportunity to renew their plot prior to the plots becoming available to the general public. However, gardeners should be aware that the City of Ottawa reserves the right to close plots or certain areas within the plots and require gardeners to change their location, from time to time. Gardeners are not absolutely guaranteed to have their same plot(s) every year. So please be aware that this may occur when you are planning to invest financial and personal resources into your seasonal plot.

- 1 All gardening activities are subject to City of Ottawa Policies and User Guidelines.
- 2 All disputes will be handled by City of Ottawa staff.
- 3 Plot numbers are attached to a marking stake next to the plot. Please be sure you are planting on your own plot number. Do not move or remove this stake at any

time. Please ask for assistance if you are not absolutely certain or if there is a problem with the measurements or location of your plot. Measurement of plot sizes is approximate.

- 4 Request for refunds will carry an administration fee plus GST where applicable. No refunds are given due to poor weather or ground conditions, in case of a mechanical problem with the irrigation system, or vandalism and theft. Requests for refunds will not be accepted after June 30, 2006.
5. Gardeners using the plots do so at their own risk and expense. The City of Ottawa shall not be responsible for loss or damage to crops, produce, or equipment howsoever caused while you participate in the Allotment Garden Program.
- 6 Produce from Allotment Gardens may not be sold.
- 7 Gardening activities must be confined to the gardener's plot. Laneway and paths are to be kept free of obstacles. Mechanical or manual tillage or drainage ditches which interfere with other plots or the neighborhood is prohibited.
- 8 Garbage and trash are to be placed in the large container when provided in May and September. Only put your gardening waste in the large bins. All Garbage at other times, including vegetation must be brought home with you for roadside pickup.
- 9 Seasonal composting is permitted on site. Composters must be similar to the black rectangular box household type known as the "Garden Gourmet". Composters may be put up after the start date but must be removed when you have completed your season or by Thanksgiving Day whatever comes first. Do not overfill your composter and under no circumstances are these composters to be left on site after Thanksgiving Day.
Gardeners should not add fresh vegetation to their composter in September or October unless it is the gardener's intention to spread the material that is in their composter on their own plot area when they remove the composter itself. We recommend the use of compost accelerators in order to functionally use a seasonal composter.
The City of Ottawa retains the right to dismantle any composter that is not kept in accordance with the regulations.
- 10 No permanent structures, except for composters and plant support structures, are permitted on plots.
- 11 Gardeners must be present during watering; please use water sparingly. Washing of vehicles and filling of small pools are not permitted.
- 12 The following chemical compounds are prohibited: all insecticides except Sevin and Derris Dust; all herbicides, all fungicides.
- 13 In the event of plot abandonment, poor husbandry practices, severe disease or pest damage or growth of illegal plants, the City reserves the right to plough/tear down, and cancel re-application privileges.
- 14 All plots are to be cleaned out by Thanksgiving Day. Removal of all dead vegetation and plant material, stocks, stems, stakes, rope, garbage, etc. is required. Failure to do so will result in the cancellation of re-application privileges.
- 15 No garbage bags of any colour are to be left on any plot at the end of the season.

- 16 Gardeners will receive the right to renew their license for the same plot(s) next year.
- 17 Garden plots are not transferable to other gardeners without authorization from the Program Coordinator.

Failure to comply with the user guidelines may lead to loss of produce, equipment, supplies, etc. and may also result in the complete loss of gardening privileges and/or permit cancellation.