

NB: NOT FOR QUOTATION OR CITATION WITHOUT THE AUTHORS' PERMISSION

**Cultivating citizen-subjects through collective praxis:
organized gardening projects in Australia and the Philippines**

Kersty Hobson, Fenner School of Environment and Society, The Australian National University (Email: Kersty.Hobson@anu.edu.au)

and

Ann Hill, Resource Management in Asia-Pacific Program, The Australian National University (Email: M.Ann.Hill@anu.edu.au)

Abstract

Community gardens or 'organized gardening projects' have of late received renewed impetus as a form of governmental intervention that responds to increasing concerns about (amongst other things) obesity, food security and community cohesiveness. Scholars have likewise responded with keen analytical interest, deploying manifold conceptual lenses including Foucaultian governmentality, which explores how and to what ends such interventions come about. In this chapter, we discuss empirical evidence of organized garden projects in Australia and the Philippines through a 'realist governmentality' approach, which examines the actual impacts of interventions on subjects, and potential 'disjuncture' between governmental aims and actual outcomes. We argue that these interventions can be read as enacting the disciplinary and normalizing intentions of contemporary modes of governing, in-keeping with the work of governmentality theorists. However, through joint action, exposure to shared vulnerabilities, and shifts in perspectives on the self and others, these interventions exceed their governmental intentions. This occurs not through 'disjuncture' per se, but through the proliferation of (potential) sites and connections of cultivating ethical praxis, which overreach the spatial and ontological confines of these projects' initial intention.

Cultivating citizen-subjects through collective praxis: organized gardening projects in Australia and the Philippines

Introduction

One cannot live on cookies alone...me now know that cookies is 'sometimes' food...me had crazy times in the '70s and '80s...me like the Robert Downey Junior of cookies.

This self-admonishing confession of the lovably infamous Cookie Monster aired in 2008 on the US-based Comedy Central's *Colbert Report*.¹ Cookie Monster—a key character on the American children's programme *Sesame Street* that in 2009 celebrated 40 years of continuous programming—was being interviewed by Colbert about forsaking his eponymous gorging and wasting of high-fat and high-sugar biscuits in front of millions of children and their parents/guardian/carers around the world. With a cheeky comparison to the actor Robert Downey Junior's well-documented drink and drugs addictions of the 1990s, Cookie Monster launched his own rehabilitation and reintegration into public life by advocating a more measured consumption of fruit and the designation of cookies as a 'sometimes food'.

While a seemingly popularist and trivial move, such shifts in discourse and practice by well-known entities can arguably be seen as part of a panoply of recent interventions, which aim to confront public and policy anxieties about rising obesity levels and junk food consumption amongst both adults and children. These concerns in turn intersect directly with worries over food security, as well the loss of knowledge, skills and spaces of self and collective provisioning. Indeed, in the USA, while Cookie Monster was transforming his *raison d'être*, the recently installed First Lady Michelle Obama was marking out her own public persona, which included an appearance on *Sesame Street* on the subject of healthy eating: and transforming the White House lawns into a vegetable garden. This latter project took place with the assistance of one local school and the hope that, as the First Lady is reported to have commented,

‘through children, they will begin to educate their families and that will, in turn, begin to educate our communities’.²

How then is one to read such moves by well-known individuals, both human and puppet? On the one hand, it could be argued that they symbolize gradually shifting norms around health, community and food. Or they could arguably be read as a form of cultural tokenism with little ability to make inroads into the complex causes of unhealthy eating, which include ‘food deserts’, fluctuating global markets and insecure land tenure. Scholarly analysis however requires that neither default extremes is automatically rehearsed. Hence, the recent academic upsurge in explorations of community gardening projects wherein multiple methods, conceptual interpretations, and case studies provide a by-now rich field of writing and debate.

In this chapter, through case studies of ‘organized garden projects’ (Pudup 2008) in urban Australia and peri-urban Philippines, we engage with recent work that analyzes such projects through a governmentality approach. Here, the Cookie Monster’s confessions of his heady past can be positioned as just one of many diverse interventions that aim to foster and normalize the figure of the disciplined, educated and responsible citizen-subject around the issues of food, community and gardening. Adopting a ‘realist governmentality’ (McKee 2008) approach that questions the actual outcomes of such interventions ‘on the ground’, we argue that—although these projects do indeed display the intention of constituting a very specific and circumscribed ‘field of action’ (Howard 2007)—participants reactions and on-going collective praxis far exceed such intentions, thus expanding their political, geographical and ethical ambit. In short, this chapter aims to show that a Foucaultian governmentality approach *can* illuminate key aspects of organized gardening interventions. However, to provide insight into its impacts on intended subjects and practices, it requires expansion and both conceptual and empirical supplementation by attention to the embodied and collective ‘care of self’ practices that subjects undertake as part of their ongoing participation in these projects (see Cupples and Ridley

2008; Rutland and Aylett 2008 for further comment on conceptual expansion of governmentality).

Interpreting organized gardening projects: surveying recent interventions by social researchers

Organized gardening projects such as Michelle Obama's transformation of White House lawns are without doubt nothing new. Interventions that aim to increase the involvement of citizens in the growing of food for either individual or collective consumption have varied historically and geographically, including attempts to circumvent the ugliness of urban spaces in the early 1900s and 'digging for victory' during WWII (see Armstrong 2000; Pudup 2008). Recently, there has been a renewed proliferation of such projects in both the post-industrial North *and* the Global South, which aim to address and intervene in a number of problematic arenas, touching on issues of community, labour, nutrition, and food security, to name but a few.

Given the diversity of the aims and modes of enactments of these organized garden projects, the analytical approaches adopted by scholars researching them have likewise been diverse, with the strongest empirical focus to date being on the USA and the UK. There have been evaluations of the impacts of community gardens through the lens of ecological restoration (e.g. Irvine et al 1999). Attention has also been given to health outcomes, both in terms of individuals' activity and nutrition levels, and gardens as triggers for further positive community development (see Armstrong 2000; Wakefield et al 2007). Taking up more prosaic debates amongst social researchers, Schmelzkopf (2002: 337) utilises Lefebvre's work on 'trial by space' to argue that public contestations over land use in New York—in particular the demolishing of gardens to allow the sale of land to developers—are not merely tussles over housing availability and exchange value. They fundamentally concern 'control over public space, about who has (or does not have) the right to space, and about the right to be a part of the public'. In addition Guthman's (e.g. 2008: 433) work on the why community food projects 'appear to lack resonance in the communities in which they are

located' suggests that questions of economic and social privilege, in particular the racialized histories of these interventions, are often omitted from studies of 'alternative food practices'.

Many more examples of empirical and conceptual engagements with organized gardening projects exist; rather than rehearse them all here however, in this chapter we take up one recent engagement with such projects through a governmentality analytics. In particular Pudup (2008), writing in a US context, makes the argument that there was a subtle but noted shift in the 1990s from organized garden projects as a form of resistance to a form of governmental intervention. That is:

The agents of neo-liberal roll-out gardening technologies...are less neighborhoods rising up to reclaim their communities and resist their marginalization and rather more a variety of non-state and quasi-state actors who deliberately organize gardens to achieve a desired transformation of individuals in place of collective resistance and/or mobilization (2008: 1230).

Indeed, one does not have to look too far to find evidence of Pudup's claims in particular around the panoply of actors involved today in organized garden projects. For example, Not for Profit organizations like the Australian 'Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Garden Foundation (School Kitchen Gardens)—which will be discussed more below—aims to 'see the Kitchen Garden model and approach to pleasurable food education integrated into the primary school curriculum across Australia'.³ Along similar lines is the work of Chez Panisse Foundation (The Edible School Yard) in the USA that aims to foster a 'new generation' through the principle that 'good food should be a right and not a privilege': and that 'growing, cooking, and sharing food at the table gives students the knowledge and values to build a humane and sustainable [food] future'.⁴

Such interventions are of course not the sole purview of countries like Australia and the USA. Indeed, in the Global South organized gardening interventions are

gaining momentum, but often with agendas that focus more on meeting basic needs, such as giving marginalized families opportunities for income generation and livelihood improvement alongside benefits to health and wellness. For example, The Philippines-based Periurban Vegetable Project (PUVeP: which will also be discussed in greater detail below) is ‘empowering urban poor communities through integrated vegetable production in allotment gardens’: while the Not-for-Profit ‘Garden Africa’ aims to encourage and support people to cultivate their own food rather than rely on food aid.⁵

What then is one to make of this diverse array of interventions? From a pragmatic perspective, it can easily be argued that together they respond to pressing needs for further food security and improved nutrition around the world: which indeed, they do. But such assertions tells us little about *how* these projects function. That is, what exactly their aims and intentions are; how they aim to achieve these; through what means; and to what effect (see Legg 2006)? Indeed, what are some of the possible ‘desired transformations’ at work that Pudup (*ibid.*) speaks about? Adopting a governmentality approach to such questions has the potential to provide a form of analytics that we now discuss, highlighting both its usefulness and its limitations in examining specific organized garden projects in Australia and the Philippines.

For those not familiar with this burgeoning body of scholarly work, the main tenets of governmentality are dealt with elsewhere in this book, and therefore will not be reiterated here. The key aspect we wish to emphasise is how governmentality writings detail the changing functions of the state. That is, they claim that both traditional governing functions and governance actors have been supplemented by a plethora of indirect governance techniques and new actors, which together ‘seek to promote active agency, responsible self-governance and the state as an enabler as opposed to provider of services.’ (McKee: 184). The empirical question thus suggested by this thesis concerns how particular governmental rationalities or programmes are ‘translated, practiced, performed, and produce particular effects’? (Merriman 2005: 237). But rather than suppose

one can automatically ‘read-off’ outcomes from the intentions of interventions (Rutherford 2007), scholars have of late drawn attention to the ‘potential disjuncture between top-down, universalistic plans and empirical reality at the micro level’ (McKee 2008: 186). Hence, a recent ‘realist governmentality’ turn is now gaining momentum, which looks to combine the ‘concern of governmentality theory with how the ‘subject’ is discursively constituted, and more ethnographic methods’ (McKee 2008: 186).

What then can a realist governmentality approach illuminate about particular organized garden projects? In the following section, we introduce two examples of such projects in Australia and the Philippines, and tell the stories of four key actors in these projects: a fitting level of analysis given realist governmentality’s emphasis on ethnographic and ‘micro’ explorations, which aim to temper and critique the distanced and often-sweeping claims made by some previous utilizations of a governmentality approach (see Hobson 2009; Rutherford 2007). We examine the ways in which these interventions do indeed work to constitute a particular field of ‘appropriate’ discourse, subjectivities and practice, aiming to foster active, responsible and disciplined individuals around the pressing issues of food, nutrition and being a ‘productive’ citizen in the neo-liberal world. However—as is often the case—there are more to these projects and individuals’ stories than any ‘just so’ governmentality story suggests; particularly when we explore how, and to what ends, subjects are affected by their enrolment in organized gardening interventions. Thus, we argue below that as key actors become involved in the ongoing processes of articulating the shape and form of ‘their’ communal gardening intervention—although they do not necessarily reshape the basic aims of the interventions—they enact praxis and create further potential that exceeds the spaces, peoples, and the political and social ambit of the original aims of these organized garden projects.

The Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Garden Foundation (Australia) and the Peri-Urban Vegetable Project (The Philippines)

We begin the empirics of the chapter by introducing the two case study projects, along with some individuals who became involved with them.⁶ To begin in Australia, in 2009 Majura Primary School in the inner suburbs of the nation's capital Canberra received a 100,000 AUD Federal Government grant to become the Australian Capital Territory (ACT) Demonstration School for the Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Garden Foundation (SAKGF): a Foundation that now works Australia-wide, operating in almost one hundred schools. As mentioned above, SAKGF aims to significantly alter the food-related behaviours of children and their families through active engagement in the processes of growing, harvesting, preparing and eating school-grown food: and below we meet George and Chris, who were both coordinators in the project.

George Main is a Canberra-based environmental historian and museum curator. He played an integral role in establishing the Majura Kitchen Garden in 2009. George assumed the volunteer role of 'garden coordinator' in the project's infancy with a view to stepping back once the project's garden specialist came on board. George remains an active participant in this garden project as a regular attendee of working bees and meetings.

Chris Stanilewicz is a Canberra-based policy officer in local government, with a background in community development, experience in early childhood policy development and is an ex- chef, so she brings many skills and experiences to her role in the Majura Kitchen Garden project. She began as the sponsorship and fundraising coordinator, then stepped down from this role mid 2009. However she is still very much an active supporter and was instrumental (along with George) in shaping this project.

In terms of outcomes of this project to date, for Majura Primary it is still early days. As we write, the kitchen—which is an integral part of the SAKGF project—is being built, and the garden is in the process of becoming a productive foodscape. Plus, the project has recently employed a garden 'specialist' who—along with 'a kitchen specialist who will help the children prepare the recipes

and cook food’—‘comes with the Stephanie Alexander program’ (School Principal: Majura Video Story, ANU).

And then there is Luminoso and Jimboy: allotment gardener representatives of the one hundred families who have received income and health benefits through the Peri-Urban Vegetable Project (PUVeP) of Xavier University, which is located in Cagayan de Oro, in the north of the island of Mindanao, the Philippines. To explain, the PUVeP intervention supported the development of nine allotment gardens in Cagayan de Oro City and has been many years in the making, now being well beyond its initial funding cycle (Holmer et al. 2008). Of these nine gardens, the Saint Niño Allotment Garden in the barangay (ward) of Lapasan, was launched on December 11, 2003. It was co-funded by the Asia Urbs Project of EuropeAid (2002-2004) and the Peri-Urban Vegetable Project of Xavier University. This funding was provided for the establishment of the garden and for the first two croppings only: a period of about six months. Since then—other than occasional donations—gardeners have had to self-fund their allotment production. The Saint Niño allotment that Luminoso and Jimboy work is presently managed by ten families. Sometimes they work together in the form of collective voluntary labour or ‘pahina’ but mostly they work their own plots.

Luminoso Rosal is an allotment gardener who has worked his allotment in the Saint Niño Allotment Garden since 2003. He began with no prior knowledge or experience in vegetable crop production or gardening, and has subsequently become one of the most successful allotment gardeners in Cagayan de Oro city, winning ‘The Best Allotment Gardener of Cagayan de Oro City Award’ in 2007. He is the president of the Saint Niño allotment gardeners’ association and is actively engaged in addressing issues related to the future of the communal garden such as ensuring continued access to land.

Jimboy Eugenio is a teacher at the Lapasan National High School in Cagayan de Oro. He is also an allotment gardener who like Luminoso has worked his

allotment in Saint Niño since 2003. He is a highly enthusiastic and energetic member of the association and an advocate for urban agriculture across the city.

Although both case studies are organized gardening projects that aim to increase self-provisioning—through facilitating knowledge and skills of how to garden, as well as marking out spaces for these activities—Saint Niño Allotment Garden differs from the Majura Kitchen Garden in many respects. Poor and marginalized communities were targeted for the PUVeP program: households within those communities such as Lapasan, where Saint Niño is located, then applying to become allotment gardeners. By contrast the suburbs surrounding the Majura School are relatively (although not uniformly) affluent and membership of the SAKGF project mostly (but not solely) comes through children’s enrolments in the Majura school. In addition, the PUVeP is an intervention to improve health *and* sanitation. This was achieved through the installation of composting toilets and household waste composting facilities in the gardens: as well as increasing the amount of fresh produce in the diet of participants and local communities. In addition, PUVeP aims to provide income generation opportunities for participants, with seventy per cent of the produce grown being sold and the remaining thirty per cent being used for self-provisioning and gifting within the community.

However, the aim of this chapter is not to compare the two case studies, directly evaluating them against one another. Rather, they are outlined briefly so we can ask what then are we to make of both of these organized garden projects, in terms of their governmental aims, mechanisms and outcomes? To return to Pudup’s claim—that gardening projects are no longer about collective resistance per se but aim to ‘achieve a desired transformation of individual’ (ibid.)—it can be argued that the SAKGF project for one aligns with other forms of socializing and disciplining interventions, in the Foucaultian sense.

For example, there were concerns expressed by participants of the Majura project that the garden and kitchen had to be sympathetic to the ethos of the

school; to meet the curriculum requirements of the ACT Department of Education and Training; and to find amicable existence amidst many other programs and activities already operating at Majura Primary. Early in 2009 participants expressed anxieties that the garden project could detract from children's learning. In response, the Head of the school was clear this was not the case, stating that:

One of the things Majura does very well is it has a very strong sense of what its core business is. Our core business is literacy and numeracy. The Stephanie Alexander program enhances that core business rather than competes with it (Majura video story 1, 2009).

Therefore this suggests that the SAKGF project works alongside other forms of interventions such as formalized education, which aims to foster particular types of young citizens, who are responsible, productive and active citizens-in-the-making (Ferreira 2000). Indeed, the Majura project—again, in line with Pudup's claims—could not be framed as a form of collective mobilization in the 'bottom-up' sense, as organized resistance through gardening projects may once have been. Instead, participants were happy, and indeed grateful, to be part of an established philosophy, label and methodology. For example, George and Chris recognised that the SAKGF hands a particular structure to the Majura school: one designed to instil confidence in taking the venture on. They state it is like 'a pillar or a lifeline' and George says that it is:

based on almost ten years experience in almost fifty schools down in Victoria. And there's so much that's of value there. And I'm grateful to the foundation for what they're offering. I think it's extraordinary, it's generous.

However, that the SAKGF seemingly aligns with Pudup's claims does not mean that we can conclude such projects are yet another governmental mechanism that seeks—and indeed succeeds—to forge subjectivities and practices within particularly prescribed confines (Rutherford 2007; c.f. Bang and Esmark 2009). As Raco (2003) for one has argued, there is a tendency in governmentality-based

studies to make interventions, such as the Majura project, appear logical, coherent and able to achieve desired outcomes with little deviation. But in reality governmental agendas are far from totalizing: indeed, they are contested by the actions of subjects who respond to governing intentions in a variety of ways, including failure, resistance, and the realignment of governmental aims to suit other agendas.

In terms of the case studies in this chapter, there was certainly evidence of some (mild) resistance by participants to the rigours of the project. For example, Chris took on a role of sponsorship coordinator: a role that she was not wholly comfortable with. Or as she said: 'As soon as I was in the role I knew I didn't want to be in it but I knew someone had to be so I just plodded'. She indeed tried to get 'regular monthly meetings of all the coordinators so we could keep issues on the agenda' but 'there was quite a lot of resistance to that more structured stuff ... comments about [it being too] bureaucratic'.

Beyond that, is there then evidence from these case studies for some 'potential disjuncture between top-down, universalistic plans and empirical reality at the micro level' (McKee 2008: 186)? We argue here that the idea of 'disjuncture', while a useful starting point, misdirects in terms of what is taking place in both the case studies presented. 'Disjuncture' is a noun that suggests separation, disconnection or disjoining. However, as we will argue in the final section of this paper, the praxis developed by participants are partially in line with the governmental aims and therefore do not represent a disconnection or overt separation per se. Instead, they exceed the aims of the interventions in ways that are unpredictable, overflowing the 'field of action' (Howard 2007) they aim to establish and thus present actual and potential ground for the development of further ethical praxis around gardening, food, and collective provisioning.

Exceeding the 'field of action' through ethical communal praxis

Before proceeding to detail the empirical evidence for the above claims, it is first necessary to pause briefly to reflect upon how ideas of ethical praxis relate

conceptually to the tenets of governmentality. For one, claims could be made that the participants of both the SAKGF project and the PUVeP are already 'ethical' people. That is, they are the 'usual suspects' or minority of people who are already active around and committed to environmental and/or community issues. However, social researchers have argued that such claims—although there is often an element of veracity in some cases—miss the point that ethics are not a separate/innate/pre-cognitized sphere of practice that belong to a few and thus stand outside of governmentalizing impulses. Rather, ethical practices are both articulated and 'worked-up' through diverse forms of governmental intervention. Or as Dean (1994) outlines, governmentality bridges the political and ethical dimensions of subject creation, as there are 'governmental' and 'ethical' self-formation processes working in conjunction. Here the former are means by which conduct, aspirations etc are shaped and individuals enlisted in particular strategies and goals: and the latter, the means by which individuals seek to know, decipher, and act on themselves, drawing on discourses and practices from governmental self-formation interventions in the process.

And yet, in later work on the 'care of the self', Foucault made the case that the development of one's own ethics may be one way to resist such governmental imperatives: that is, to somehow step outside of governmental self-formation imperatives. Fundamentally, he argued that particular practices could enable individuals to form ways of being or 'practices of freedom', which could contend with contemporary techniques of power that aim to discipline and suppress (Myers 2008). The aim here was the development of individuals' capacities to conduct themselves 'properly' in relation to others. How this might be done, according to Foucault, involves various forms of self-reflection and the uptake of self-directed practices that aim to constantly ask 'what do I aspire to be?' (see Cordner 2008).

However, as a strategy for political action, Foucault's 'care of the self' theory is not without problems. Myers (2008) for one has pointed out a distinct disconnect between Foucault's thesis and collective political strategies for more

equitable, open and responsive power relations. Or as Cordner (2008: 593) posits:

The ethical subject described in Foucault's later writings is too self-concerned: Foucault's ethics does not sufficiently acknowledge the authority of 'the other' in our ethical interaction.

In short, Foucault presents us with a picture of individuals, standing in isolation from others and thus unable to ultimately alter the forms of power they are working to reconstitute themselves against. However, these comments have been made by political theorists whose text-based exegesis of Foucault's work has done little to test such claims empirically (Hobson 2009). As we explore below, the ways in which individuals 'work up' their own ethical practices *can* allow them to connect with others. For example, having to work with and consider actors as diverse as parents, children, the plants, the Stephanie Alexander Foundation and the Majura curriculum; as well as consumers, other gardeners, land owners and their crops in the PUVeP case, means 'the other' that Myers claim is missing in Foucault's work is already present through the embodied practices of these projects. Thus, while 'the other' may be conceptually absent in writings on the 'care of self'—making it thus appear as a dead-end in terms of forging collective ethical praxis—in practice they are uncompromisingly present due to the fundamental requirements of the governmental interventions of organized garden projects.

So what evidence is there that for participants of the PUVeP and the SAKGF project the links between these two modes of forging 'political subjectivities' (Dean 1994) are discernable, wherein ethical self-formation works to exceed, but is not disjointed from or wholly resistant to, governmental aims? As already suggested, evidence of the governmental aims of producing particular types of subjects through organized garden projects are present in these case studies. For the PUVeP, the aim of this intervention is arguably to create self-reliant and productive subjects, who create surplus and generate income by gaining access to local markets in the face of unstable global food markets and sparse state

welfare support. The two participants featured here had indeed managed to attain these goals, becoming in part the profitable and entrepreneurial citizens that many argue neo-liberal interventions seek to create. At the same time, Luminoso and Jimboy discuss how they have both developed new ways of viewing themselves and acting, wherein the goals of the intervention have been internalized, re-evaluated and in many ways surpassed, in terms of their own sense of self worth and praxis. Indeed, both Luminoso and Jimboy constantly state they have developed a new sense of pride in themselves—a consciousness of their dignity that exceeds purely economic calculations. Luminoso states that he is now considering extending his new practices into other spaces. This is in part because he does not own the land he currently works, and the landowner may take the land back. Thus, Luminoso is hoping to become a communal farmer working with others to further his own goals and skills *and* improve collective well-being, if suitable farmland is found in Bukidnon, Mindanao: or else he will continue to garden and look for another area to have an allotment. Thus, despite the tribulations and vulnerabilities of access to land and insecure tenure, it does appear that the communal gardener subject position is now firmly part of Luminoso's understanding of himself. Even though he is still at the whims of markets and landowners, he appears to feel some ownership now for the process of gardening and selling, claiming his ethical self-formation as one of choice, as—given the expiry of project funding—it is now wholly Luminoso's decision to be and to keep becoming a communal gardener.

Rather than inhabiting a lone position or venture however—an individualized and isolated 'care of self' tactic—he has worked in conjunction with others, and now invites them to join him on his journey. In a similar vein, Jimboy is now going door-to-door around his local area, to encourage people to begin gardening and to think about the importance of urban food production: taking on the role not only of self-provisioner but community educator. As he states:

Selling the fresh vegetables from house to house, it's a very good option for us to spread [information] all about the project. That is one of my techniques in having this allotment garden, to be known as an allotment

gardener as part of the project here... [and to] inculcate in their minds about urban agriculture.

In the Majura project—while not working to subvert or disconnect from the intentions of intervention—there has been the generation of additional outcomes wherein participants have collectively worked up the political and ethical ambit of the project in ways that exceed and expand upon its original aims. For one, as George explains ‘there is space for a lot more to hook in and energise’ the kitchen garden project. Participants are ‘flavoring’ the project with what they want to get out of it as well, as Chris puts it. Indeed, for Chris the kitchen garden is, amongst other things, an opportunity to build and strengthen the community, to build resilience through local food production and develop skills that will help us live ‘post-peak-oil’ and climate change. She explains:

we've got some pretty significant emerging environmental and global crisis in terms of peak oil and climate change. We really need to be working collectively to build resilience so that when they emerge we're prepared.

And for George there are other considerations, as he states:

One direction I am trying to explore and see whether we can build on, that I think is a bit different to the Stephanie Alexander vision, is to see whether we can build on the heritage that exists within the school, the social justice angle and in particular the Aboriginal reconciliation activity ... I wonder whether we can really respond to that heritage in a creative way and bring something ... that is different to the foundation. This is something that has come up independently though the indigenous families. One aboriginal woman who's a parent in particular ... She's hoping that we can bring into the program awareness that there are different ways you can engage with land. But how you engage land and grow food is determined by or shaped by culture and history and stories.

In this quote, we can therefore see how the Majura project and its clearly defined aims and mechanisms are being exceeded by participants to include the

contentious and pressing issues of social justice and Aboriginal reconciliation. How this is happening is obviously an outcome of dialogue, negotiation and debate amongst participants, as well as other modes of engagement. For example, the above comment on 'engaging' the land speaks to the affect of embodied, hands-on experiences as key to altering praxis (e.g. see Hitchins and Jones 2004). Indeed, as the SAKGF website states that is favors a 'hand on' approach to behaviour change as:

We believe that no-one embraces change in their behaviour if they think it will be unpleasant, uncomfortable or too difficult. Cautionary messages that food is 'good-for-you' or 'bad-for-you' do not resonate with young people.

As researchers have recently argued, the somewhat disembodied and text-based focus of many governmentality studies have missed the ways in which the 'doing' of new practices are key to changes in individual and collective praxis (Cupples and Ridley 2008). Along similar lines, the practice of participants putting themselves 'at risk' appeared in the fieldwork data, as a visceral and also productive experience. That is, whereas the political strategy ascribed to Foucault around the 'care of the self' is arguably about creating a circumscribed and highly personal and safe space as a form of political action, in taking on projects like the SAKGF participants have no alternative but to enter into 'unsafe' and risky territory, in terms of being able to discern and foresee outcomes. As Chris explains:

to get anything to move I think you need people who are willing to follow a process even though you don't know where it is going to head, but to have faith that people can come together and create change.

And George also states:

I think faith is a really key word because I mean we don't know if this is going to work. We hope it is, and are imagining it will, but we don't know. People may not become volunteers next year... we are taking risks.

Thus for participants of organized garden projects like the SAKGF intervention, there is a desire and willingness to (for the most part) comply with the structure of the project, for example hiring specialists, constructing a kitchen etc. At the same time, participants are—and indeed feel like they have little choice, in terms of taking the project forward—opening up spaces for thinking and acting outside the desired outcomes, allowing for the uncertainty and possibility to enter in. Many dynamics inevitably surfaced in moving a group of people towards ‘the thing’ as Chris refers to it, particularly once the initial project enthusiasm wears off. There are expectations from the school and the foundation, and there are personality differences and different agendas amongst project participants: ‘What’s kept us going is the vision, dream and all our individual passions, plus our individual skills sets to move us all towards the thing’ says Chris. So whilst the SAKGF is a ‘pillar and lifeline’ (ibid.), both the Majura project and PUVeP participants are more than the sum of the intervention and their individual passions and ‘skills sets’, which exist outside of and prior to the intervention. Rather, these form the basis to initiate and move the project forward, and in turn are furthered, extended *and* exceeded by their involvement in the project.

Concluding comments: the on-going work of organized garden project interventions

Both organized garden projects discussed in this chapter are undoubtedly works in progress. At the time of writing, the Majura project continues to grow, and the participants of the PUVeP are moving their livelihoods in diverse and unpredictable directions, made less certain by their reliance on access to markets and insecure land tenure. From an intervention perspective, both projects to date can be considered successful, in terms of enrolling the targeted individuals to meet many of their goals. However, there are concerns about the sustainability of the interventions: for example, with regards to keeping the ‘community energy’ that the project relies upon going beyond initial ‘passion’ and interest, as well as the PUVeP participants’ search for new land.

However, even if these projects ultimately do not become sustained interventions, they have affected participants in ways that may not be immediately obvious if one undertakes a governmentality analysis 'from afar'. That is, if one adopts an analytical methodology that focuses on the intentions of interventions via texts and policies, rather than following the impacts of these interventions through to empirical outcomes. Thus, this chapter has examined two organized garden projects through a 'realist' governmentality approach, which aims to explore how, why and in what ways particular interventions create affect 'on the ground'. As previous analyses adopting a similar perspective have shown, no intervention that aims to foster particular forms of citizen-subjects ever fully attains its goals. There is resistance, failure and divergent enactments of goals, as the complexities of individual psychology, collective negotiation and contemporary politics intervene. But as this chapter has argued, this does not mean that the rationalities and aims of interventions like organized garden projects are negated or become totally disconnected and disjointed. Rather, through embodied acts of working-up ethical subjectivities in common with others, and taking 'risks' along the way, the projects detailed herein come to exceed their original governmental ambit. Subjects *do* become enrolled in the enactment of specific political subjectivities, for example productive and responsible citizens. But this works in conjunction with, not against, the cultivating of collective ethical praxis that suggest other sites and modes of engagement that expand the governmental aims into new, and potentially fertile (politically, ethically and agriculturally-speaking) areas.

References

- Armstrong, D. (2000) 'A survey of community gardens in upstate new York: Implications for health promotion and community development', *Health and Place*, 6(4), pp. 319-327.
- Bang, H. and Esmark, A. (2009) 'Good Governance in Network Society: Reconfiguring the Political from Politics to Policy', *Administrative Theory and Praxis*, 31(1), pp. 7-37.
- Cordner, C. (2008) 'Foucault, Ethical Self-Concern and the Other', *Philosophia*, 36(4), pp. 593-609.

- Cupples, J. and Ridley, E. (2008) 'Towards a Heterogeneous Environmental Responsibility: Sustainability and cycling fundamentalism', *Area*, 40(2), pp. 254-264.
- Dean, M. (1994) "'A social structure of many souls": Moral regulation, government, and self-formation', *Canadian Journal of Sociology*, 19(2), pp. 145-168.
- Ferreira, J. (2000) 'Learning to Govern Oneself: Environmental Education Pedagogy and the Formation of the Environmental Subject', *Australian Journal of Environmental Education*, 16. pp. 31-35.
- Guthman, J. (2008) 'Bringing Good Food to Others: Investigating the subjects of alternative food practice', *Cultural Geographies*, 15(4), pp. 431-447.
- Hitchings, R. and Jones, V. (2004) 'Living with Plants and the Exploration of Botanical Encounter within Human Geographic Research Practice', *Ethics, Place and Environment*, 7(1-2), pp. 3-18.
- Hobson, K (2009) 'On a Governmentality Analytics of the 'Deliberative Turn': Material conditions, rationalities and the deliberating subject', *Space and Polity*, 13(3): 175-191.
- Holmer, R.J., Santos Jr., C.A., Sol, G.Y., Lee, S.O., Elorde Jr., E.G., Aquino, A. A., Guanzon, Y.B., Achas, D.M.D., Caseria, J.A., Factura III, H.S., Miso, A.U., Oclarit, R.A and Montes, A.A., (2008) 'Philippine Allotment Garden Manual with an introduction to Ecological Sanitation'. Periurban Vegetable Project, Xavier University College of Agriculture, Cagayan de Oro City.
- Howard, C., Ed. (2007) *Contested Individualization: Debates about contemporary personhood*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Irvine, S., Johnson, L. and Peters, K. (1999) 'Community Gardens and Sustainable Land Use Planning: A case-study of the Alex Wilson community garden, *Local Environment*, 4(1), pp. 33-36.
- Legg, S. (2006) 'Governmentality, Congestion and Calculation in Colonial Delhi', *Social and Cultural Geography*, 7(5): 709-729.
- Merriman, P. (2005) 'Materiality, Subjectification, and Government: The geographies of Britain's Motorway Code', *Environment and Planning D*, 23(2), pp. 235-250.
- Myers, E. (2008) 'Resisting Foucauldian Ethics: Associative politics and the limits of the

care of the self, *Contemporary Political Theory*, 7(2), pp. 125-146.

McKee, K. (2008) 'Transforming Scotland's Public Sector Housing Through Community Ownership: The reterritorialisation of Housing Governance, *Space and Polity*, 12(2), pp. 183-196.

Pudup, M. B. (2008) 'It Takes a Garden: Cultivating citizen-subjects in organized garden projects', *Geoforum*. 39(3), pp. 1228-1240.

Raco, M. (2003) 'Governmentality, Subject-building, and the Discourses and Practices of Devolution in the UK, *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, 28, pp. 75-95.

Rutherford, S. (2007) 'Green Governmentality: Insights and opportunities in the study of nature's rule, *Progress in Human Geography*, 31(3), pp. 291-307.

Rutland, T. and Aylett, A. (2008). 'The Work of Policy: Actor networks, governmentality, and local action on climate change in Portland, Oregon, *Environment and Planning D*, 26, pp. 627-646.

Schmelzkopf, K. (2002) 'Incommensurability, Land Use and the Right to Space: Community Garden in New York City', *Urban Geography*, 23(4), pp. 323-343.

Wakefield, S., Yeudall, S., Taron, C., Reynolds, J. and Skinner, A. (2007) 'Growing Urban Health: Community gardening in South-East Toronto', *Health Promotion International*, 22(2), pp. 92-101.

¹ See <http://www.colbertnation.com/the-colbert-report-videos/174545/june-19-2008/cookie-monster>.

² See <http://www.nytimes.com/2009/03/20/dining/20garden.html>

³ For further information see <http://www.kitchengardenfoundation.org.au>.

⁴ See <http://www.chezpanissefoundation.org/home>

⁵ See <http://puvep.xu.edu.ph/index.php>

and http://www.gardenafrica.org.uk/why_africa_charity.htm respectively

⁶ The chapter draws on qualitative interview and participant observation data collected by Ann Hill in April 2009 in Mindanao. It also draws on a video story produced February to May 2009 and interviews conducted November 2009 in Majura, Canberra, as part of Ann's doctoral research project 'Growing community food economies for a 21st Century world'.
